

**Town of Cape Elizabeth
Fort Williams Park Committee**

Zoom Meeting Minutes
Thursday, January 28, 2021

Present: Jim Kerney (JimK), Jon Dienstag (JD) Suzanne McGinn (SM), Ken Pierce (KP), Mark Russell (MR), and Doreen Theriault (DT)

Absent: Lauren Springer (LS)

Staff: Kathy Raftice (KR), Community Services and Fort Williams Park Director, Chris Cutter (CC), Fort Williams Park Coordinator, Jeremy Gabrielson (JG) Town Councilor/Liaison and Andrea Southworth (AS), Friends of Fort Williams

Guests: Todd Richardson (TR) and Ken Studtmann (KS), Richardson & Associates, Will Haskell (WH), Gorrill Palmer Consulting Engineers and Kayla Caron (KC), Simmons Architects

Public: Town Councilors, Jamie Garvin and Valerie Deveraux and Friends of Fort Williams Board Members, Mike Beck, May Hodgkin and Lynn Shaffer

Call to Order: Chair, Jim Kerney called meeting to order at 5:05 pm.

Introduction to process for the evening. The best way for vendor to get through efficiently, team will present material and our committee will hold questions until most of material presented. Any questions on clarity please send to KS and he will share. JimK felt excellent package and looking forward to sharing of information. Thank you to TR and team.

Vendor Analysis Overview and Discussion

TR had team introduce themselves and shared a summarized package of findings and observations hopefully providing a new perspective. All have shared it is a community park and will share the community questionnaire findings and the user group findings. KS shared comments received. SM suggests a meeting with the town on the Shore Road project to be done.

Discussion highlights:

KP overall common themes to him: the lack of knowledge by general public about the parking fees etc., perhaps an article in the Courier would clarify. He also understood the comments from the public who felt the park is “too manicured” and a need to limit buses and finally the safety issues. TR confirmed the bus issue however the need for commercial visitors to pay increased fee as a balance. DT agreed the raising of the bus fees may help. JimK agreed general public not aware of the fee structure, feels education and better communication needed. SM feels maybe we limit the amount of buses as well as increase fees. DT felt the comments regarding carry in/carry out policy were interesting and does not want to see trash receptacles. SM comments: is there some way to stop the sewage into Casco Bay, how important is cell service at Fort Williams, she likes the idea of a more bike friendly park and are we going to look at the structures from a structural integrity perspective, do we remove or fix, needs to be a balance between parking near the water and ADA accessibility. TR shared there are options but a

balance needed. JD echoed the bike issue, perhaps the “Blue Bikes” option. TR a lot of people walk and/or run into the park multiple times a week. SM perhaps comprehensive plan may influence how we treat bikes going forward. MR comments: this is town committee looking at a town park from a regional perspective however the park is now a national destination and almost anything we do will increase traffic to the park and we need to be conscious of that. Limited ADA accessibility needs to be addressed. JimK asked CC how often ADA spots full in Central Parking lot. CC shared not often nor in the Ship Cove lot, more in Parade Ground lot. JimK shared that needs to be awareness of enough spots but that they are in the right place as well. MR 44% of usage local, people walking or running in and if we make it easier more will come. TR feels make it more easy to residents but increase costs etc to outside to balance. JimK in last few years spent time and money on safety; parking, buses, and fencing so now time to dedicate time and focus on community aspect. JD focus on community engagement; events and activities that will bring in revenue however will be for the community. MR goal/s should focus on residents. We want it better and safer but for residents. KR shared goal focus should be towards residents. KP also felt the winter events would be resident focused. DT felt it was very clear that no welcome center wanted. JimK trying to figure difference in the bathrooms versus welcome center. MR feels a welcome center would make us leaders and still need to look at park from high view and a 10 year plan. TR use of word “visitor center” may skew the perception. Maybe more of a local use if terminology different. JimK feels need for commentary on center or bathrooms, possibly more of an educational center. DT feels more permanent bathroom option, needs to be a balance. SM has been brought up in the past however the cleaning was prohibitive. MR feels more than one group in town would benefit from the facility. Maybe space in the park could satisfy the need. JG noted some questions in Q & A need to be addressed. JG bus fees and use of facilities fees cost drivers and additional revenue drivers and Town Council would benefit from suggestions from this committee. JimK comments: some of the pathways can be heavily used by pedestrians and those on bicycles and plowed by public works which provides a safe walking area for residents in winter. Comments on consistency with signs, sign placement, fencing etc and we appreciate the comments. Help with the prioritization on projects as we move forward. All from the committee thought the vendor hit on all the areas and thanked them for all they inventoried. AS comments: “too manicured” ways to deal with invasives and make it look less manicured but the work does take time and education/communication will help. KR comments: appreciated all the time and effort of reaching out to many different groups. Education and communication needs to improve. Financial responsibility which does need to balance out. Different groups involved in the management however each have their distinct responsibilities and focus, to simplify: Public Works takes care of the roads and grass, Facilities the buildings and Community Services the Customer Service. CC feels communication and education of those who utilize the park would cut the survey results in half. Data from the survey will be helpful going forward. KR shared the questions from the chat; KR shared the questions are directed to the pond work and if other projects the team has worked on may help with this project. TR shared that team has been involved in projects such as this and actually one recently that involved a pond and look forward to sharing that as we move forward. JimK feels pond is valued but a challenge especially the rock work around the pond, the support of the Children’s Garden and the winter use and needs new increased focus. JimK expressed his thanks to the team for diligent work done to date and now recommendations to bring to the next level for the next decade. SM brought up the goal requests. Goals will be sent to KR and she will send out for anonymous prioritization by

committee. Then the committee will meet with the vendor hear the recommendations and ensure they fall under those goals. Vendor will submit goal suggestions as well.

Public Comment Opportunity for Discussion of Items Not On the Agenda

None

The meeting was adjourned at 7:12 pm.

Next Meeting:

Vendor Update Meeting: Thursday February 4, 2021 @ 4:00 pm

Regular Monthly Meeting: Thursday, February 18, 2021 @ 6:00 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Raftice