

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

Meeting Minutes
January 16, 2020

Present: Jim Kerney (JimK), Suzanne McGinn (SM), Ken Pierce (KP), Mark Russell (MR), Lauren Springer (LS) and Doreen Theriault (DT)

Absent: Jim Walsh (JW)

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

Public: Angela Best, Maya Cohen and Joan Benoit Samuelson, Beach to Beacon Board
Greg Gordon, resident

Call to Order: Mark Russell called meeting to order at 6:04 pm.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

The November 21, 2019 draft meeting minutes were approved. (5 - Yes, 0 - No)(LS did not vote/new to board)

Welcome Town Councilor Liaison, Jeremy Gabrielson and new committee member, Lauren Springer

MR welcomed Councilor Gabrielson, explaining how important this year will be with the development of the Master Plan and how constant contact with the Town Council is vital. Councilor Gabrielson introduced himself, explaining he was here due to the Town Council's focus on the Master Plan and his work will be to keep the lines of communication open. MR then welcomed our newest committee member, Lauren Springer. MR suggested some reading materials to bring herself up to date and explained how this was an exciting and important time to be involved on the committee. LS told the committee a little about herself and her excitement at being on the committee. MR then welcomed returning member Ken Pierce back to the committee.

KR explained the need to elect a new committee chair. MR made a motion to nominate a chair. KP asked where JW stands? Does he want to stand down as chair? KP commented he felt JimK would be ideal. JimK explained he would be interested but at some point next winter he may be going away for a time, not sure of exact time. The discussion around the committee chair and the master plan took place. Would the chair lead the master plan discussion? KP made a motion for JimK to be named committee chair, DT seconded. MR nominated JW and suggested that one person lead both the committee and the master plan work. No second so MR asked for a vote for JimK as chair. Vote unanimous, 6 – Yes, 0 – No. JimK elected 2020 Chair.

Public Comment Opportunity for Discussion of Items Not On the Agenda

None

Beach to Beacon Fee Discussion

JimK set the stage and explained the fee history and why the discussion on a fee increase was taking place. At the direction of the Town Council the committee reviewed the fee for Beach to Beacon. The committee voted in April to increase the fee by 10% per year each year for 3 years and to revisit at the end of the 3 years. The Beach to Beacon board reached out to the committee and asked to discuss the increase. Angela Best, VP of

Beach to Beacon board addressed the committee. Explaining all-inclusive nature of their use of the fort, visitors not excluded from using the fort at any time. They have paid fees on top of the \$25,000. KR will look into where these monies have gone. The board made a counter proposal of \$27,500 to remain flat for the next 5 years. JimK acknowledged that B2B is a great partner of the fort, however there was public input that felt the fees should be increased even more than the committee had suggested. There needed to be a balance between the town, the race and the park. KP wanted to acknowledge that he felt the B2B was the greatest thing that happens in the park however there is pressure from the outside. Maya Cohen spoke to how wonderfully we have all worked together in the past, understood the public perspective but noted the public doesn't necessarily appreciate all the expenses. Joan then spoke to the history of the fort and the race and how they came to be. She thanked the committee and the town for doing such an amazing job with the fort. The B2B committee takes into account the tent placement, trucks etc. to not restrict the scenic vistas. JimK thanked Joanie for everything but went back to the fact that the fee had not been increased since 2011 and fiscally responsible to review. KP made a motion to accept the \$27,500 increase for 2020 and come back and revisit the fees for future years. MR seconded, vote to accept 6 – Yes, 0 – No.

FWPF Update

1. Planning: Working with various volunteer groups to plan invasive plant removal projects (Rotary Club, etc.). Trying to re-establish connections with Tom's of Maine.
2. Considering an event near Earth Day for restoration, or maybe a "bioblitz" to generate interest/support for restoration work. Not sure yet.
3. Getting estimates for herbicide treatment for Cliff Walk (it won't need much this year), Battery Blair, and other areas of the Park.
4. In contact with Russ Cohen, native plant expert. He's going to donate a large amount of native plant material that also produces food for wildlife. Most of these plants will be planted in the Cliff Walk Landscape, but a few will be tucked-in Cliffside, etc. Coordinating with Todd Robbins.
5. Working with nonprofit partners Maine Audubon and Wild Seed Project to plan various projects for this year. Last year, for example, FFWP bought the plants that weren't sold at Maine Audubon's Native Plant Sale. This year, we are pre-ordering specific plants and working directly with Maine Audubon. Cool!
6. Planning adult education workshops and classes for the year. Reviewing our Bring Kids to the Park program and looking for additional funding sources.
7. We received a donation for a tree grove to be planted next to the Children's Garden, with funds also going towards Tree Succession. James McCain will design the space.
8. After the slide extension is added to the Children's Garden slide, and steps are added, we're going to replant that hillside and also add plant material to the woodland area (which is currently a sea of wood mulch).
9. Reviewing potential grants for restoration work and education.
10. Reviewing volunteer database and working on corporate donors/volunteers. Revising Adopt-a-Plot program. Our website needs revision, but that might have to wait!

Conferences, presentations, etc.:

1. Writing an article for Wild Seed Magazine.
2. Presenting a workshop at Maine Garden Day on March 14th.
3. Presenting at the Cape Garden Club meeting on May 5th.
4. Hoping to attend the Ecological Landscape Conference in Amherst on March 4th/5th.
5. There will be many more :)

Andrea brought committee up to date on the slide and work has begun. Discussion regarding tree succession area and work to be done. MR thanked Andrea for having all information available for review.

2020 Group Use Approvals

The FWPC voted unanimously 6 - Yes, 0 - No on the following Group Use requests.

Cape Elizabeth Little League
2020 Season
Opening 3/24/2020

Walk To Cure Arthritis Walk
Saturday, May 30th

Cape Elizabeth High School Graduation
Sunday, June 7th

Cape Elizabeth Family Fun Day
Saturday, June 13th,
Sunday, June 14th - Rain Date

Beach to Beacon
Tuesday, July 28th - Saturday, August 1st

JimK just wanted clarification that Walk to Cure Arthritis will pay Group Use Fee, they will also be renting the Picnic Shelter and will be paying for that as well. All non-resident users will pay to park unless using the overflow parking area.

2020 Budget Discussion

KR presented the budget process and need to submit the requested budget for FY 21 on Friday, February 14th. KR provided the revenue to date and estimated through end of FY2020. Project considerations for FY 21; Battery Blair restoration, replacement of concrete retaining wall at end of Central Parking lot, Invasive Plant Control Management, Children's Garden Slide work, and signage. Areas of additional discussion for consideration are the stairway and fence for Battery Blair, paving of the picnic shelter parking lot and additional funding for the Master Plan. KR will obtain costs for additional items, clarify those already considered and finalize the revenue. All will be presented to the committee for consideration and vote at the February meeting. Resident, Greg Gordon was asked by MR if he had any input. Mr. Gordon asked if the revenue from the Fort Williams Museum could be utilized for any of the projects. MR explained the funds are restricted. The revenue from Pay & Display was discussed and how this fits into our budget. JimK and MR feel it should be a line item in the Fort Williams Park Committee budget. KR will present this and obtain a clarification on the Master Plan monies from Matt Sturgis.

Master Plan Discussion

JimK led the discussion, feels the committee should utilize the 2011 Master Plan as the foundation for the new Master Plan with a model included for the communication process. KR shared she had met with Maureen O'Meara who was very helpful in outlining how the Comprehensive Plan was formulated. KR shared how the committee should determine a plan vision, take into account users and uses, and take an inventory of what big picture items being considered. KR shared how Maureen feels the committee needs to outline the time period to be involved, number of meetings, number of public forums and sub-committee meetings. Major areas of consideration are: use of public forums, website, social media (Loomio), meetings with different stakeholders, surveys etc. JimK felt the need for the committee to develop a list of areas of focus, list of big picture items to be discussed. MR suggested committee start listing stakeholders. KP shared he feels the park is now so popular, committee should be defining what the park is for? JimK shared how strongly he feels the communication piece is. KR outlined some of the major areas to be considered; Pedestrian Circulation Safety, Vehicle Circulation Safety, Utilities (rest rooms, visitor center), Battery Restoration and Agriculture. JimK will discuss with JW and perhaps meet with Maureen again to clarify some points going forward.

Public Comment Opportunity for Discussion of Items on the Agenda

None

The meeting was adjourned at 8:19 PM

The next meeting will be Thursday, February 13, 2019 @ 6:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathy Raftice