

Parks Commission Meeting
Wednesday 11/1/23
1750 Washington St or Remote

In person attendees: Shaw Lively, Brian McDonald, Richard Morse, Melissa Kaspern, Bob Nemet, Mark Frank, Shannon Cornwell, Chris Marden

Mr. Chris Marden spoke to the group regarding an instance where he was told that he cannot bring his service dog on the sidewalks approaching the elementary schools. He was told by a school administrator that the sidewalks are under the Parks department purview and our policy is that no dogs are allowed. Mr. Frank confirmed that service dogs are the exception to the policy. He has spoken with the town administrator regarding this issue as well and will forward along a clear policy to that office.

Project Updates:

Mr. Frank updated the group on the status of the high school back stop project. During the fall town meeting \$220,000 was approved to fund the updates and bid documents are in. The commissioners agreed to move forward with the process and not wait until after the upcoming season.

The Goodwill Park project continues to move forward, bid documents are in. With the current and potential delays in the spring, at this time the plan is to move Camp Goodwill and the summer concerts to Stoddard Park to allow plenty of time for the project to be completed.

A preliminary report on the Stoddard Park fields has been received and the working group is planning to meet to discuss the potential options. The group will update the commission at an upcoming meeting.

The reconfiguration of the main level of the building at 1750 Washington Street has been completed. An open house may be scheduled in the future.

Mr. Lively shared that the piece of property at 260 Woodland Street is continuing to be investigated for use as a public space. Further research is needed to determine what the actual access is to the property and what the site can support. A state allocation of \$50,000 has been awarded to the department to explore the uses of the site.

DPW/Grounds Discussion and check-in:

Robert Walker, DPW Deputy Director, and Nick Murray, Grounds Foreman, joined the meeting to discuss potential expansion. Mr. Walker noted that progress is being made and people are happy with what they are seeing. There's more to be done and additional help is needed. Mr. Walker has had to supplement two highway employees to keep up with the work despite having a dedicated grounds staff. The invested parties will work to see what can be done and what the best approach should be when addressing the finance committee.

Mayflower Path Discussion:

Members of the community approached the town administrator regarding developing a piece of property near the end of Mayflower Landing. Mr. Frank and Mr. Lively started looking into the space to see what potential issues and restrictions we may run into. There is a town well and wetlands in close proximity. Pritha Patel and Ishika Gandhi joined the meeting to share that the local neighborhood community would like to see a park/gathering space at the location. Further research is needed to narrow down specifically what types of equipment and use they are envisioning. Access to the property needs to be evaluated, currently people need to drive or come by via the rail trail. Discussion will continue to develop a plan. Mr. Frank will work with Ms. Patel and Ms. Gandhi to create a survey to send out to the community.

Other Business:

Mr. McDonald would like to review the current list of priorities to make sure we're on track and update it as necessary at the next or an upcoming meeting.

Mr. McDonald noted that various signs and bake sales are popping up in Blair Square. It's something to keep an eye on and address the process of what can and cannot be set up there.

Mr. Lively inquired about the former Flagg School site project. Ms. Daniels continues to review all the input from the stakeholders to be able to present a finalized plan.

Mr. McDonald made a motion to adjourn, Ms. Kaspern seconded the motion. All were in favor.