

Town Common Committee Meeting Minutes
February 27, 2024
Draft

Members Present: Maggie Gordon, Lenore Budd, Rachel Kring, AJ Driscoll

Members Absent: Nathan Fry

Staff: Alex Weinhagen (Director of Planning & Zoning)

AJ Driscoll called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00 PM.

1. Agenda Changes:
 - Added Town Plan discussion
2. Minutes of Prior Meeting - Maggie motioned to approve the minutes from December, and Lenore seconded. Minutes approved by voice vote.
3. Town Plan Discussion:
 - Planning Commission is rewriting the Town Plan in 2024 and is seeking public input and input from Town committees.
 - Town Common is not mentioned in the Town Plan but group agreed it needs to be.
 - For further discussion: park and ride mentioned for behind the fire station in the current plan. How does that fit with Town Common plans/goals?
4. Funding
 - Urban Forestry grant
 - Awarded about \$30K will pay for 50 trees, pruning in the Creekside neighborhood, soil and a “kickoff” type event to get people excited.
 - Alex wrote a press release to local news outlets re: acquisition of grant.
 - We should also get local coverage for Green Up Day. Andrea Morgante will work with us to have an opportunity for townspeople to walk around the Common that day and see where the new trees will go.
 - AJ thought may be a good idea to get something going for fundraising/food truck/some sort of buzz - group discussed pros and cons and decided to do something separate from Green Up Day.
 - Alex mentioned that another town had done a “town picture” from overhead using a bucket truck. Group discussed this could be a fun opportunity to do in Hinesburg when we start sitework.
 - AARP grant application
 - Will be submitted for benches on 3/6. If we receive, work needs to be done by end of 2024.
 - Will need to have future discussions on aesthetics, but will submit a general request and decide about type of benches (metal, wood, plastic, etc)
 - Vermont Arts Council

- “pitch” due March 18, and if they invite a full proposal that is due in June. This grant would be used to pay an artist to design public art for the Common. We could also apply again for a grant for fabrication/installation.
- Discussed many options for public art and decided to target the “entryway” with this proposal).
- Better Places Program grant
 - State program that helps fund public improvements; matching program, so we do crowdfunding and state will match 2:1.
 - Alex met with Richard Amore (grants manager) and found out grants are first come first served and they’re out of money for this year.
 - We will wait until legislative session ends to apply and hope to raise funds to construct the pavilion (shoot for running a campaign in Sept or Oct and run for 60ish days). We have to have gap funding in hand before starting the campaign.
 - Need to start having conversations about pavilion design and cost this summer.
- Entry sign:
 - Maggie took example picture to Giroux’s Body Shop to see if possible to fabricate, and it is possible.
 - Finer items/lettering would need to be laser cut, and that is possible locally.
 - Cost could be around \$10K.
 - We need to figure out timing of entryway sign installation w/ sitework.

5. Timeline

- The group discussed the need to shift the timeline.
- 2025 - pavilion and entryway/sign
 - Agreement last meeting about doing the entryway sign earlier to start to establish a presence/get people excited about the space taking shape.
- 2026 - paths
 - Paths will be important so people can get to amenities we are putting in, and they are a very important structural piece (define where other things will go, and we also don’t want to disturb plantings if we wait too long).
 - Group discussed where paths should go (need to decide for sitework to happen) - agreement that we should put in the paths as pictured on the map but leave off the path on the north side that’s very close to an existing sidewalk (unnecessary).
 - Need to confirm tree planting and pathway timing - do we need pathways done before second phase tree planting?
 - Paths will be super expensive. Need to get to work on funding for that ASAP. Difficult to fund by donation because it’s not as exciting as the pavilion. LWCF still has no info about upcoming grant rounds, and they were looking like our best bet for paths.
 - AJ proposed that we think about selling bricks for pathways w/ donations (or some similar concept)? Group decided may be a better fit for entryway, but let’s keep brainstorming.

- Group decided we need to push playground out on the timeline. There are more important pieces that need to happen first.
- Water feature is lowest priority, and many have questions about whether or not we want this (concerns: ongoing maintenance, cleaning, treatment to prevent waterborne illness, etc.)

6. Next Regular Meeting March 26

- Design conversation about kinds of benches/aesthetic direction of the Common.
- Start discussion about pavilion.

7. Assignments:

- Lenore to draft an addition to the Town Plan on behalf of TCC
- Lenore to talk with Rolf Kielman about pavilion design
- Maggie to be committee liaison to Andrea Morgante re: tree “event” for Green Up Day
- AJ to talk up Green Up Day tree planting info to Creekside neighborhood
- Alex and Rachel to put in LOI to VT Arts Council
- All: look at pavilion at HCS before next meeting - get a sense of size/is ours planned for the Common big enough? Check out benches in your travels - see any you really like?
- Maggie to follow up with Will Patten re: business and individual donors
- Maggie will get design estimates for entryway sign
- Rachel to send Nathan a note about our convo re: timeline
- Maggie to set up a Google Drive for the committee to use

Meeting adjourned at 8:50

Respectfully Submitted,
Rachel Kring, Secretary, Town Common Committee