

Town Common Committee Meeting Minutes

December 19, 2023

Approved January 23, 2024

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

Members Absent: none

Staff: Alex Weinhagen (Director of Planning & Zoning)

Dubois & King Representatives: Emily Lewis, landscape architect; Brett Graves, civil engineer (joined via Zoom)

Public Present: Andrea Morgante (working on tree grant)

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

1. Agenda Changes - none.
2. Minutes of Prior Meeting - Maggie motioned to approve the minutes from October and November, Lenore seconded. Minutes approved by voice vote.
3. Dubois and King Discussion
 - These engineered plans needed for Act 250, to go before Development Review Board and so we can get work started.
 - Not doing parking lot or splash pad engineering. Work is limited to the first phase and will include engineered plans for grading, drainage & stormwater, and landscaping.
 - Maggie questioned if this plan will include details about the paths. Emily clarified that the plan will not have final construction detail level but will be ready to do sitework. Andrea advocated that the more complete the sidewalk plans the better (won't have to go back for another Act 250 review).
 - There seemed to be consensus that we should explore the possibility of a base for the paths in phase one (though not complete the surfacing).
 - Brett thought sidewalk will be a big part of addressing drainage issues so may make sense to look at in phase one.
 - Emily questioned if Town Common Committee had decided on gravel or concrete paths. The committee will discuss - no decision has been made yet.
 - Nathan questioned if the sidewalk number includes excavation for the paths (seems low). Emily will look into that.
 - Lenore questioned what berms will look like and if they will be addressed in this phase. Committee members felt they should look like a gradual part of the landscape and not be too high.
 - Committee talked about benefits/drawbacks to berms (what are the slopes, can they be easily maintained?) - we'd have gradual ones, easily maintained.
 - May need to shift berms a little toward the middle to protect existing trees.
 - Committee had discussion about where berms and walls will go. Freestanding wall on 116 side and two corner stone walls are considered most important. The berm with

plantings for screening on neighborhood (west) side is also a priority (could do that without a stone wall and plant the back side with shrubs).

- Hoping to do planting in fall (Urban Forestry grant dependent) in berm area. Andrea Morgante will send tree list to Emily - need to specify tree species in grant (we won't be tied to that; ok to tweak based on what's available).
- So far, Dubois and King have worked with Highway foreman to do infiltration test, and groundwater was quite high. Will definitely need to think about stormwater management strategy.
- Dubois and King have not done any initial work beyond infiltration test. Emily will update Alex about getting surveyors there.
- Rain gardens won't meet any permitting requirements - Andrea emphasized that gardens will still help filter the water, so we may still want.
- Committee questioned Dubois and King if March was a reasonable time to have plans done. Emily reminded there was no schedule as part of the scope of work, so that will still have to be discussed.
- Rough grading for the pavilion will happen in this phase.
- Protection for the existing ash tree is important (needs root protection - wet spot might have to remain there so tree isn't disturbed). Dubois King will involve a certified arborist to make a plan for tree protection.
- Committee needs input from tree experts about which trees should stay/go (also consider driver visibility).
- Committee expressed that we need a detailed cost estimate (bid ready document).

4. Post- Creekside meeting discussion

- Maggie contacted individuals who had mentioned on Front Porch Forum that they wanted to help.
- Members wanted to respond in a positive way to discussion on FPF - what's going on, what we're excited about. Lenore will draft.
- Could post that we're applying for a grant to support volunteer efforts to do tree planting.
- Takeaway from the meeting: people wanted park functional on a quicker timeline and would like the community to be involved.
- Maintenance issue came up on FPF - town doesn't have budget/staff for that - could involve a group of people for the maintenance, Bristol has something like a beautification committee; there will have to be a line item in the town budget to maintain this going forward.

5. Timeline

- Nathan worked on a timeline tied to a master "preliminary" cost list.
 - Need to discuss sequence and look at timeline and grants next meeting.
 - Think about a separate committee that plans fundraising events.

6. Grant Update/Tree planting

- Lenore, Maggie and Andrea working together on an Urban Forestry proposal.
- Can possibly use to purchase (but not spread) topsoil.
- Hope to have excavator bid the work in May to be able to plant 20 trees in October (rest of trees would have to be planted after sidewalks - others on edges can be done first). Sidewalks would be better in 2025 to accommodate tree planting plan, but we had planned pavilion for 2025 so will need to discuss.
- Could get rid of sidewalk on Parkside Cafe side (redundant).
- Could put stakes in the ground at Green Up Day to show people where trees will be planted.
- Could start tree nursery in back of Fire Station as long as not too wet (or we have drip irrigation w/ pots above ground - needs to be maintained, so this cannot be a long term project).

7. Next Regular Meeting 1/25/23

- Discuss timeline in detail and examine other grant sources.

8. Assignments

- Lenore to draft FPF update and research Land and Water Conservation grant.
- Maggie and Andrea will meet with Todd re: the Urban Forestry grant proposal.
- Alex will work with Emily on getting surveyors to the site soon.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15

Respectfully Submitted,
Rachel Kring, Secretary, Town Common Committee