

Town Common Committee Meeting Minutes  
January 23, 2024  
*Approved February 27, 2024*

**Members Present:** Maggie Gordon, Lenore Budd, Rachel Kring, AJ Driscoll (Zoom), Nathan Fry

**Members Absent:** none

**Staff:** Alex Weinhausen (Director of Planning & Zoning)

**Public Present:** Will Patten

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

1. Agenda Changes - none.
2. Minutes of Prior Meeting - Lenore motioned to approve the minutes from December, and Maggie seconded. Minutes approved by voice vote.
3. Dubois and King Follow-Up Discussion
  - Path surface - Emily Lewis from Dubois and King confirmed that cost does include excavation for the pathways.
    - Base will be the same whether the path is concrete or gravel. Maggie believes VTrans grant would require concrete.
  - Having engineering plans for the end of March is possible. We will have bid-ready documents by then for grading, drainage and landscaping.
4. Funding
  - Urban Forestry Grant - has been submitted and hope to hear by February 1. Amount was approx. \$36,000.
  - Lenore had discussion with a few Selectboard members about ARPA funds - some more receptive than others to spending on Town Common; the ones who were open to that use of funds wanted to see a specific ask and a timeline.
  - Other grants
    - AARP for benches - No match, up to \$30K with an average award of \$12K. Lenore and Rachel to work on.
    - Better Places grant - uses a crowdfunding platform, and State provides a 2:1 match, may be a good grant for the pavilion, and group agreed it would generate good publicity for project.
    - LWCF - not sure when materials will be available, but it seems a new cycle should be available this year - this is a big grant that could influence our timeline, depending on how many things we could bundle into the application.
  - Donations and Fundraising
    - Bissonette Fields - Want to make sure we are not in competition for the same projects. Alex said the group fundraising and doing improvements are mostly parents whose kids use the facility; next steps for Bissonette are tied to Haystack Crossing development happening (donating land). We should coordinate what

we're building with what they plan to build, but the two are not competitive projects and have different aims (family recreation vs. community gathering space).

- Will Patten encouraged the Committee to start asking the community for funds - he believes there are people who would be happy to support. Many people would like to leave a legacy, so think about naming rights, people supporting individual elements, etc.
- Group requested Will's help with donor ideas, and Will agreed.
- Tax concerns
  - People worried about taxes going up. We are using ARPA funds and fundraising.
  - Town Common allocated \$10K for this year from the Town, but committee does not see Town funding as being a major part of building this project.

## 5. Timeline

- Nathan came up with a timeline, tied to costs, by quarter; described by year what the Common will look like. ([link](#))
- Nathan noted "mobilization" fees pretty steep (work needed to move in/out heavy equipment) - need to pay those each time sitework is done
  - Group agreed it may make sense to "bundle" projects/improvements where we can.
- Rachel advocated for building an entry sign in 2024 and maybe a "coming soon" type sign with info about the project/how to contribute.
  - Agreement among Committee to pursue sign earlier than originally planned - will help with establishing a sense of place for the Common and could help people envision what's possible/hopefully encourage support if it starts to look like a park sooner (benches, trees, signs in first phase).
  - Group liked a sign example from a park included in example photos [here](#) (scroll down for Improvement Example Photos).
  - Group liked a lot about the example sign - metalwork, gears reminiscent of old Town logo and tied to Town manufacturing past, place for notices (maybe info about Common development).
  - Maggie and Will to look at sign possibilities and contact local vendors for construction (ideally with donated labor if we cover materials).
  - Will need DRB approval for signage.
- Timeline looked good to the Committee as written, and all thanked Nathan for his work
- The only question mark is having a water feature on the Common (costly/complicated to maintain) - agreement to save the water feature for final years (if we do at all). This will need further discussion, but Group wants to work on other elements of the Common first and save this discussion for "last."

## 6. Next Regular Meeting February 27

- Need to discuss timeline and funding by phase.
- Grants and fundraising.
- Sign update/discussion.

#### 8. Assignments

- Lenore and Rachel work on AARP grant for benches.
- Maggie to talk with Forestry Committee about harvesting timbers for pavilion (may need time to cure).
- Maggie and Alex to reach out to Better Places contact to see when to apply.
- Nathan to refine and share timeline and share with group.
- Alex will send picture of entryway we liked to the group - Maggie will take lead and will collaborate with Will on research.
- Will to write down list of donor ideas.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45

Respectfully Submitted,  
Rachel Kring, Secretary, Town Common Committee