

## **Burlington Johnnycake Mountain Park Advisory Commission**

### **Meeting Minutes**

**October 18, 2021**

**This meeting is recorded on Zoom and can be found at the Johnnycake Mountain Park Advisory Commission (current) link on the Town's website.**

- **Call to order:**

Meeting was called to order at 6:05 pm. Commissioners present: Tricia Twomey, Robert Dunn, Elizabeth Delano, Christie Dockman, Karen Geitz (6:10), Craig Battisto and Mark Moriarty. Brian Kent from Kent and Frost was also present. Joan Mack was absent.

- **Motion to approve the October 4<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes:**

Robert made the motion, Christie seconded it and all voted in favor.

- **Talk about the best thing that happened to you in the past week:**

Committee Members (CM) and Brian Kent shared information about the best thing that happened to them in the past week. The goal with this activity is for the CM to get to know each other better.

- **Mission Statement:**

Mark read the Mission Statement.

Mission Statement is to create a feasible and visionary short and long term master plan for the purchased property that provides the multi-generational community of Burlington with opportunities for active and passive recreation. Our recommendations will be based upon considerations and input from our entire community, will support documented community needs, will strive to retain the unique, farm-like character and natural landscape of the property and will be aware of the potential impact to the surrounding neighborhoods.

We endorse the following values:

- Open-mindedness
- Team unity
- Respect for one another
- Commitment to a positive outcome

- **Public Comment (recorded at 6:34):**

Dwight Harris understands there is a revised map. He suggested that CM give consideration on more access to the park. If there are 2,000-3,000 people at the park for an event, one entrance is not a good idea. There has been parking on the corner of Mountain Top Pass and Johnnycake MT Rd., but there will be less parking available along Rock Rd. due to the LAX field location. Dwight recommended putting the LAX field where the barns and event field are. The LAX field as it is located now will change the open sunset view along Rock Rd. He'd like to see the practice field on the corner of Johnnycake Mt Rd. and Rock Rd. You can install a catch basin and curtain

drain there and not that much grading would be required. You don't see that corner until you're on it and it's hidden much more. It's important to maintain the rural character. There are lots of wildflower fields on the plan and they are expensive and take a number of years. What will they look like in the winter? The dog park is at an excessive distance, one-fifth of a mile, for seniors to walk to. During the public meeting, will people be limited to a three minute time? How are you going to run a town-wide public meeting?

Robert said we haven't discussed public meeting structure yet. CM want public to have a voice in the process. Mark also said it's important to give the public a voice. All the things Dwight brought up have been discussed by the CM, but we don't think we'll be changing the MP. Dwight understands that the MP may not be changed, but he wanted to make sure that his ideas were mentioned.

- **CT DEEP Recreation Trail Grant (12:20):**

It's due November 1<sup>st</sup>. Brian is going to help Tricia out a lot with the application. Are the trails to be considered multiuse (walking and biking) or just for foot traffic? There are more points available for the application selection process if we call it multiuse beyond foot travel. For example some of criteria for the grant include: Is the trail in an urban area? Does it connect two towns? Our trail does not fulfill that criteria. The Commission will write a letter of support and so will the Burlington Land Trust. The BLT should talk about the initial the trails it made on the property. It'll be important to get letters from Ted and the Board of Selectmen. Karen will ask Pete Picone from Sessions Woods if he can write a letter. Mark will give Karen and Tricia a sample letter of reference.

- **Park Masterplan Progress & Possible Vote (21:40)**

Brian wanted to start with the last plan we worked on from September. He looked in more detail at **the grading for the LAX and multipurpose fields**. There's a surplus of soil to deal with. He took advantage of that and looked at enlarging multipurpose area. The multipurpose field can be enlarged by 40'. It modifies the location of the two trails. Brian ran some tests in this area to see what's going on below ground. Scott Tharau from Public Works dug **four test pits**: two in lax area and 2 in the multipurpose area. He used a backhoe to dig the test pits. He went 6' down on the left in the lax field and 8' down on the mp field. It demonstrated that we can get to the depth we wanted in order to do the grading on the field area. There was water on the bottom of the two pits in the southernmost area. You can use curtain drains to fix that. Brian wanted to be sure that excavation grading is feasible by running these tests.

**The third MP model is in 3D view.** The CM looked at it and Tim and Brian explained the map. They talked about the two fields and the soil excavation. They've only done four test pits for ledge and it looks like they will have a cut and fill balance without having to excavate ledge.

The CM discussed the **Lacrosse nets** (20' poles with netting to catch the balls placed at the ends of the field) and how they will impact the view. There are footings with a concrete piers that the poles slide into. They can be removed and at the top is a pulley. You can lift and drop the fence as needed. There are nets along the fence at Nassahegon. If we had trees placed in front of the posts, the posts would be less prominent. We should discuss trees with Public

Works. Mark said that the grading in the 3D rendering makes the grading look better. It's less impactful. Brian took care to grade the cut and fill slopes as moderately as they could. They also taper out the slopes. It's a very gentle transition. Everything is rounded, they are no edges. When it's all covered in green grass, you won't notice the fields. Because of the wetland setback, they pulled back the mp field from the little pond. A full lax field (high school regulation) won't fit in the practice field or mp area. But, it will fit a junior lax field or a soccer field. There may not be enough space for trees on the north side of the LAX field to camouflage the LAX poles. Brian should render the model with the poles and trees. Brian and CM should include Scott in this conversation due to snow drifts along Rock Rd. If the trees are inside the park, it should not be a problem. A black net is on the inside of the trees at Nassahegon and it is camouflaged.

### **Which 3D renderings to pick for the public meeting?**

**Community meeting on Oct 25 is not going to take place.** The public meeting for the park won't take place until after the election.

When are we going to vote on the Master Plan? Joan is absent. Should we vote tonight? We need to agree on an overall plan and first phase.

We contracted Brian for a certain period of time. Are we at risk of expanding their services?

We'll wait until after election to protect the integrity of our project. It may be a long discussion to decide the first phase.

Brian is fine with the contractual obligations. The time required to prepare the renderings is substantial. They need at least a week to prepare them. Tonight they want us to select the viewpoints for the renderings. If the public meeting is postponed, the renderings can be parceled out in their schedule. Brian can do light sketch depictions of other views. He looked at some options. If they have more time, they can do the photo realistic renderings and he can also do additional views. Within their current scope of work, they can do a couple of these sketches. Brian can select some of the better views and send them to Tricia. The CM can look at them and do a poll to decide which ones to use. The time constraint is not a problem for Brian. CM can vote on the options via email.

**Can we vote on the plan now? Joan's not here. We'll postpone the vote.**

- **Upcoming Meetings:**

Can we meet next Monday, October 25th? Next Monday was supposed to be our Town presentation, but we're not ready to present yet. Let's pick a date in November and publicize it now. It will also hold us to a schedule. We should also put drafts of the project on the website as soon as possible.

For our next meeting, we'll vote on the Master Plan.

For tonight, Brian and Tim prepared some initial costs of the project.

The BOS has suggested that we do two public meetings. Tricia will check out the locations. November 8<sup>th</sup> and the 10<sup>th</sup> are possible dates.

It's a good idea to get the Master Plan out there to the public as soon as possible. Let's wait until after CM vote on it to put it on the website.

Next week, we'll talk about the public meeting.

- **Motion made to approve payment of invoice number 2 to Kent and Frost: (1:45)** Craig made the motion, Robert seconded it and all voted in favor.

- **Master Plan Phasing Plan: (1:46)**

Brian presented potential first phases for the \$1.3 million budget and the BOS asked us to look at what we can do with what we can have now. Outside of the monetary value of the phase, shouldn't the community priorities be considered?

Brian presented three phase one projects. **The lists are available on Zoom at 1:48:20.**

**Two first phase options at \$1.3 million:**

Option 1: Phase 1 without the LAX field.

LAX field is one of the most expensive components of the plan. What would provide the most passive recreation in phase 1? Includes all passive recreation except for the playgrounds. Look at the list on Zoom (1:50)

Option 2: Phase 1 with the LAX field

\$500,000 for LAX field and do the upper trails, entry road, parking, etc. Use aggregate surface for all roads and parking. (1:52)

Option 3: \$750,000 budget

Passive park with trails that has a roadway and parking area.

It's a reality check to see what you can get for your money. The plans also provide you with choices if you have additional money.

Every time we try to break the project into smaller components, the costs go up. We don't want contractors to come in and do the same work over at different time. An example of doing projects together is excavating and grading the lax field and the practice field at the same time. The cost of the practice field is included in the LAX field. Does it include the parking area near the LAX field? No, it's about 40,000 with the landscaping.

The barn removal cost comes out of our budget. The Town will apply for a Trails Grant, but it may take 6-9 months to find out if the Town received it.

The Commission will give its recommendations for phase 1 to the BOS and they will have to decide what to do.

\$1.3 million budget should have an active and passive components. The highest survey results were for passive recreation, but the referendum was for active recreation.

CM won't determine what gets put into place. CM will give the town some options of ways to implement the project. The whole plan for \$2.5 million can build everything, but the community building. The \$1.2 million in actual tax dollars per household is not much at all. Can the Board of Finance come up with numbers for the citizens? Tricia worked with the Tax Assessor to present those numbers as well in the first design project. The Commission needs to find out the per household cost and present that information with the Master plan.

The Community Building is equal to all other costs. This was a want and it's a great asset for the community. You can't tie the Community Building back to the needs assessment and survey results. The community building was on the survey and it earned 19%. Brian said that the CB is not as programmed as everything else. If the town is serious about the CB, the town needs to program it out and fit it to a budget. The CB deserves to be studied so the most appropriate costs can be determined. Costs for the building would be \$700 per square foot at 3200 square foot. There are also cost escalations to consider. This cost captures a very nice building.

Give the public all the options and the costs to the taxpayer and CM have done their due diligence. The Commission can say the price for the CB is an estimated cost. In the estimate, can we give a cost range for the building? We should separate out the site costs for the CB from building costs. We have enough scenarios for the BOS to make a decision.

Robert was contacted by the neighbors on the perimeter of park to put some trees along their property. They would be appreciative of that consideration. The trees will be on park property and not in their yard. When you look from the park out to Mt Top Pass, you want to see trees placed in a natural way.

For the next meeting, we'll work out funding and phasing.

- **Other Business:**

None

Brian and Tim have done a great job on the plan, rendering it and walking us through it.

- **Meeting was adjourned 8:38:**

Tricia made the motion, Liz seconded it and all voted in favor.

Minutes respectfully submitted by,

Karen Geitz

October 24, 2021