

Burlington Johnnycake Mountain Park Advisory Commission

Meeting Minutes

November 1, 2021

- **Call to order:**

Meeting was called to order at 6:10 pm. Commissioners present: Tricia Twomey, Robert Dunn, Elizabeth Delano, Christie Dockman, Karen Geitz, Craig Battisto, Joan Mack (7:05) and Mark Moriarty. Brian Kent from Kent and Frost was also present via Zoom.

- **Motion to approve the October 18th meeting minutes:**

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

- **Talk about your favorite Halloween costume from your childhood:**

Committee Members (CM) and Brian Kent shared information about their favorite Halloween costume from childhood. The goal with this activity is for the CM to get to know each other better.

- **Mission Statement:**

Karen 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:**

Tom Finan, 130 Deer Run, Burlington

He thanked the CM for all their work. Climate change will effect everything in the future, including the activities in the park. Has the Commission planned for this? Recently Tom walked the park and noted the oriental bittersweet on the trees. It needs to be controlled. It may be good idea to use volunteers and make it a learning experience to show people how to control invasive plants. He noticed that there is a walking trail around the dog park, but will people be allowed to walk their dogs in other areas of the park? He suggested decreasing the amount of wildflower fields and put in pollinator gardens. Pollinator gardens are easier to plant and maintain. He said that UCONN has a continuing education program about pollinator gardens.

He asked about the border trees around the park. He was concerned that the neighbors won't see the views. Tom recommended solar energy for the buildings and to develop rain gardens. The park can provide a way to educate the public by leading with example. People can come to the park to walk and play, but also to learn. Interpretive signs will present the info. At the Town public meeting, will there be a time limit on speaking?

Abigail Dreher, 13 Mountain Top Pass

She thanked the Commission for what it is doing and she appreciated it. They love the park and don't want to see sports fields. Can the Town put up bordering trees? She looked at the budget and it seems that the sports field is a low priority on the list. Please make sure that other things are included that are nice for the community.

Tom Quinlan, 15 Mountain Top Pass

The park has beautiful views. Please don't put bleachers and goal posts in the park and don't have a road that cuts through the middle. Have the pine trees block the view of the fields. The park is in their backyard. The budget also needs to address other needs besides sports fields. There are so many fields in town. The Park is a unique land of open space and we don't want to turn it into parking lots and fields.

Mark responded to the public comments:

Tonight CM will vote on the acceptance of the Master Plan. CM did the community survey, met with different groups and talked about their needs. CM spent two months getting feedback and were very open to organizations.

The MP is respectful to the property and programming list on the survey and it is as minimally impactful on the property. Kent and Frost did 3D renderings so that we can see the grading impacts on the property from the sports fields.

Rain gardens are in the design and it's a sustainable design. There will be minimal lighting and disturbances. The MP accommodates everything that we wanted as a community.

LAX had a 22% need on the survey. Other items had higher percentages of need, but the property was purchased for sports fields. LAX was a documented concern because there are not any LAX fields in town.

Tom Quinlan said that he doesn't want to look at parking lots or fields from his house.

Karen noted that the map of the MP is on the zoom meeting for October 18th. The 3D renderings are also there. Christie said that the view will be improved because the three barns will be removed.

The MP will be an asset for their neighborhood. The park will not decrease values if it's well-kept. Dogs can go anywhere in the park with a few exceptions, the community gardens, buildings, etc. Dog owners and their pets can use the other trails throughout the park. There is a lot of wetlands in the park and these areas will not be developed.

- **Deep Recreational Trails Grant**

Tricia submitted the application today. Mark (CM), Ted (First Selectman), Karen (BLT) and Pete Picone (Sessions Woods Wildlife Biologist) wrote letters of support. K and F helped to put the application together. We don't know when we'll hear from the Grant Committee. There is \$2 million available and there's a lot of competition for these grants. Priority is given to regional trails.

The Master Plan with additional public comment

Mark explained the Master Plan with the visual on the screen for all to see and commented on the different areas of the park.

Stacey Quinlan, 15 Mountain Top Pass

She wants the town to put trees around the sports fields to shield their view from Mountain Top Pass. Mark told her the park is a combination of active and passive recreation. Mrs. Quinlan was also concerned about outsiders visiting the park to use the two playscapes. Mark said that there are things in the park that are appealing to all ages. Stacey also expressed concern about traffic due to the park. Robert said that it's going to be different. She wanted to know about litter and trash. Public Works will take care of that. All parks are open dawn to dusk and police will have to monitor it. Overflow parking can be located in the field on the corner of JM Rd and Mt Top Pass.

- **Public Meeting Preparation:**

Two meetings will be held: one at LMHS Auditorium on Monday, November 15th at 7:00 pm and the other will be a Zoom meeting on Wednesday, November 17th at 7:00 pm.

CM want to make the meetings as much the same as possible. At the public meeting CM want to explain our process and how we came up with the programming. Brian will present the MP design on the 15th in person. Brian will have the renderings done by next week so that we can have a preview.

- **Commission Vote for Master Plan**

Motion to recommend Kent and Frost's master plan as shown at the November 1, 2021 Johnnycake Mountain Park Advisory Committee meeting to the Board of Selectmen for consideration of implementation.

Karen made the motion, Mark seconded it and all voted in favor.

There may be minor changes to the MP after the public meetings.

Tricia will work with the First Selectmen's Office to send out the postcards with the design and public meeting dates this Friday. People should receive them next week.

Topics to cover at the Public Meetings:

Introductions, referendum, how town sought and selected the CM, Mission Statement development and usage, farm walk with Karen, public outreach meeting, community survey (how we developed it and compare the one from 2017 with the one from 2021), development of park programming with survey results, RFQ, interviews with consultants, RFP. It's also important for the community to see that the CM are a team. 800 residents responded to the survey. It represents a lot of input from the community. CM have to demonstrate to the Town that we've done our due diligence in planning the park. CM represent a good cross section of the community. The design maintains the bucolic atmosphere of the area and the views. CM also have to describe the consultant selection they did. CM thoroughly vetted 5 consultants. In our introduction for Brian, we need to tell the public that we selected a quality consultant to put our vision on paper. Brian will do his presentation and show the 3D renderings and gestural views of the park at the end of the presentation for the greatest impact.

Finances

CM need to present a long and short term plan. The Commission has to provide the Town with a cost estimate and then it's up to the Town to decide how to implement it. Brian created three different budgets.

Public Comment at the Public Meetings:

How will the Commission manage the comments? CM can document the names, addresses, questions and comments and speak about them after all have been heard. CM will aggregate the questions into groups or themes and address different themes or questions. . CM talked about having a sign in sheet at the door for people who want to speak.

COVID protocols for the meetings require masks indoors.

There will be a podium and big screen at LMHS auditorium.

Presentation:

Introduction- Mark

Mission Statement- Christie

Due Diligence and Programming- Robert and Joan

RFQ and Consultant Selection- Craig

Master Plan Presentation- Brian from Kent and Frost

Finances- Craig Tricia will work on the wording about finances.

Liz, Karen, Christie, Tricia will take notes on the public's comments and questions.

How much time will the public have to comment? It can be from 3-5 minutes depending upon the number of people who would like to speak. How will CM keep track of time? A visual time clock?

CM will ask Ted if he wants park phasing before or after the public meetings.

PowerPoint:

CM will send their info for the PPT slides to Tricia. She'll put it together and send it back to CM to look at. Joan will add the finishing touches to the PPT.

Upcoming meetings:

There will be no meeting on Wednesday, November 3rd. There are two meetings for next week on Monday, November 8th and Wednesday, November 10th. CM will discuss the phases of the project and do a dry run of the presentation on Monday. If CM need additional time to prepare the public meetings and discuss phasing, they can meet on Wednesday.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 pm:

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

Minutes respectfully submitted by,

Karen Geitz

November 3, 2021