

Twin Brook Advisory Committee Minutes 1/10/12

Attendance:

Councilor Steve Moriarty
Councilor Shirley Storey-King
Chairman John Leavitt
Brian Bickford, Recreation Director
Christopher Bolduc, Public Services Director
Laura Neleski, Administrative Assistant
John Eldredge
Iwona Tarling
Kay Fowler
Anne Witte
Joe Loring
Terri Maloney-Kelly
Jackie Stowell

Call to Order 6:30pm

Motion to Accept the Minutes of 12/13/2011

Made by Ms. Mallony-Kelly
Seconded by Ms. Witte
Vote – Unanimous to Pass

Old Business

Park Fees:

Q: Do the budget numbers we are looking at include the upkeep of West Cumberland?

A: Yes. The Parks budget includes the mowing and upkeep of all Town parks.

Mr. Loring asked 'how much money we wanted to raise in fees?'

Mr. Bolduc said there was no target amount. We wanted to at least make sure we were recouping the expenses associated with these large events and the potential damage to the park.

There are two types of large gatherings, major and minor mass gatherings. A major mass gathering is 1000 or more and minor mass gathering is 500 to 999 participants.

Mr. Loring wanted to know if we were going to tell these groups that changes in fees was coming?

Mr. Bolduc responded and said that all knew changes were coming and we would certainly let them know what fees they could expect.

Mr. Leavitt asked what part of the Parks budget was applied to Twin Brook and was told about 85% of the budget went toward Twin Brook. He asked if we should make a collection target of 85%?

Mr. Bolduc said that was very high, and 25% would be more in line but even that would depend on how many events took place at the park.

Mr. Bickford asked if there were any questions regarding the fee structures and information from the committee's last meeting.

Councilor Moriarty stated that he wasn't here for the last meeting and asked why we don't charge at the gate as so many events do?

Mr. Eldredge replied that the group considered it too much of a challenge to stop every car at the gate, traffic would back up onto Tuttle Rd. which would not be ideal.

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Mr. Bickford acknowledged that it could be done but that it would require significant changes to how it has been done.

Ms. Witte spoke to the topic of fee increases needing to somehow cover the cost of repairs for damage done to the park; many times that damage is done by car parking at the events.

Mr. Bolduc told the group he was looking for direction from the group on what type of changes to the fee structure they would like to see going forward; i.e.: funneling foot traffic or car counters, etc. Does the Committee have any new suggestions?

Mr. Eldredge thought the logistics of direct parkers and direct car charges could be worked out with enough volunteers or staff.

Ms. Witte said volunteers could be organized to collect car fees if we go that way and events could be well signed to prevent people from being caught unaware of the car charge.

Mr. Bolduc said we could also pass the per car charge on to the booster/organizer of that event instead of directly to the car. The organizers would know in advance that the charge would be coming at the end of the event when we had an actual car count. This would mean events with large car attendance would get a bigger bill than events with smaller car attendance. The result would be one bill to the event sponsor instead of a small charge per car.

Mr. Bickford said this would keep things simple and keep cars moving smoothly.

Mr. Leavitt said that a parking premium would help cover any damage to the park and encourage event organizers to use buses to shuttle event attendees from the schools to the event. Bus parking on the Greely side of the park worked well this year.

Mr. Bickford acknowledged that the plan worked well and they will continue to do this.

Councilor Moriarty suggested that the SAD and the MPA be notified regarding any fee changes or increases so the charges will not be unexpected.

Ms. Witte said the process should be kept simple.

Mr. Eldredge wondered if we should get all fees from each event upfront – might be hard to collect after the event.

There was general discussion on how to bill different participants or towns that are participating in mass gathering or events.

Mr. Bickford said however we decide to set the fees, we will only bill the event organizer, not groups or teams within the event. How the organizer/sponsor determines how to cover the fee by billing the individual participants is up to them.

There was some discussion on how the park could track where the cars were coming from but it was determined that there was no easy clear cut way and to stay with billing the event sponsor.

Mr. Bickford suggested he take the overall fee preferences of the committee back to the office but let the town staff work out the billing issues and procedures.

Mr. Loring wondered if and then why North Yarmouth paid nothing toward Twin Brook expenses?

Councilor Moriarty said that research has been done and that there is no factual basis to charge another town. Many residents from many towns use the park; it is hard to charge just one town.

Ms. Witte mentioned that it might be getting close to time to start have resident stickers. Non-Residents would have to purchase a park sticker which would help cover the costs of the park.

Report on Parks by Christopher Bolduc:

1. Ms. Neleski is working on signs to go with the new iron rangers

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2. The snowmaking last week was just one day as a training exercise, not an ongoing event
3. As time allows we will be working on some trail improvements
4. We can develop some type of open/closed sign for trails when they become too wet.

Mr. Eldredge inquired about wood cutting and is there a plan to thin out the canopy and undergrowth which would also help the trails.

Councilor Storey-King asked if the Town Forester had been asked to look at Twin Brook.

Mr. Bolduc would look into it.

Ms. Witte asked for an update on the large cement culvert on the Wilderness trail.

Mr. Bolduc said that we are still working with the DEP on this issue. If it is determined that it is a maintenance issue, it will not be as expensive and we can possibly proceed this year. If it is a new permitting issue, it could be very expensive and be more of a long term project.

Ms. Tarling commented on the drainage problems with the Wilderness Trail in particular.

Ms. Witte said the Wilderness Trail was beautiful and could be a great place to walk if it was in better condition.

Mr. Bolduc reminded the group that we couldn't get any heavy equipment in to that trail to do trail work until the culvert was repaired.

New Business

Ms. Witte commented on the large amount of passive recreation use the park gets and the large number of dog walkers the park sees on a daily basis.

Ms. Tarling has noticed several dog walking and dog training businesses that are operating in Twin Brook. She would like to know if there is or should be a limit on how many dogs any one person can have in the park?

Mr. Leavitt posed the question 'should we let people use Twin Brook to run their business? How should we treat those people?'

Councilor Storey-King suggested just not allowing any business to use Twin Brook as a facility in which to conduct their business.

Mr. Leavitt commented on the difficulty of enforcing any policies we made.

Ms. Witte suggested we look at the policies and see how we might want to change and update some of the older, less specific policies such as Biking in the park and Dog Walking in the park.

Mr. Loring said that people walking their dogs may make up a large portion of the people who use the park but the ripple effect of dog walkers is huge – impacting many others at different times.

Councilor Storey-King suggested one thing the committee could think about was limiting the times people can walk their dogs off leash at the park.

Mr. Leavitt asked that Dog Walking and Biking be added to the next agenda so the group can be ready to discuss any changes in these policies. They would like some feedback from members of the community.

Mr. Moriarty asked how the group would enforce any policies they made? He suggested the group think carefully before banning or further restricting any group of users. 'Don't go over that cliff'

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There was general discussion on having resident stickers and having non-residents purchase stickers. These monies could assist in maintaining the park, but how would you enforce? Examples of problems with charging were given such as the problems and feedback at the proposal to charge admission at Fort Williams for Cape residents.

Mr. Bolduc says the Police Department does go through the park but cannot be the 'park police' and cannot enforce any policies or stickers on a regular basis. There isn't any way to enforce the current rules, let alone any new rules. More donation boxes are going up.

Mr. Leavitt said there may come a time when we should ask the Town Council to consider the Twin Brook Policies as ordinances instead of just rules.

Ms. Maloney-Kelly asked if there were any other programs that the Recreation Department could sponsor where the fees could go to maintaining the park, such as star gazing events, snow shoeing tours, etc.

Mr. Bickford said the Rec Department was very open to new ideas and to please feel free to call them.

Councilor Storey-King reminded everyone that we are stewards of our facility. Report any violations that you can.

There is an email tip line posted on the website for anyone to email a complaint or if you notice an infraction of the park policies. Please send as much information as you can.

Mr. Leavitt said that with the New Year starting, the group should think of long range projects that should be explored and called for a little brain storming. The follow topics came up:

Short Term Projects

1. Dog Usage
2. Park Usage
3. Signage
4. Community Garden

Long Term Projects

1. Playground
2. Improve Wilderness Trail
3. Forest Management
4. Interest new user groups
5. PAR Course
6. Field usage and upgrades
7. Wildlife habitat
8. Connectivity to Val Halla

Motion to Adjourn

Made by Ms. Stowell

2nd by Ms. Maloney-Kelly

Vote: Unanimous to pass

Adjourned at 8:30pm

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