

Wethersfield Recreation and Parks Advisory Board Mill Woods Master Plan Meeting Minutes - April 15, 2004

Chairman Tom Ragonese opened the meeting at 7:10 p.m. at the Community Center. Members in attendance were Martha Mayer, Wes Sargent, Bill Symers, Joe Slepski, Jeff Kotkin and Tom Ragonese. Also present were staff members Sal Cucia, Assistant Director and Marty Sitler, Recreation Supervisor from the Recreation and Parks Department. Chairman Ragonese welcomed everyone and Mary Ellen Bonelli was introduced to the committee and welcomed as a new member.

1. Public Comments.

No public comments.

2. Minutes - March 18, 2004.

The minutes were approved.

3. Old Business.

A. Report on Meeting with Bill Dest.

Sal Cucia stated that a meeting was held with Bill Dest, Martha Mayer, Kathy Bagley and himself to discuss drainage and irrigation issues for Mill Woods Park. Mr. Dest was familiar with the drainage problems associated with the park and suggested soil testing and irrigation demands be conducted and/or calculated. Martha Mayer further conducted a more detailed discussion on the glacial till, test wells and how soil testing would be sampled. The time frame for identifying dry weather flow could take up to a year. However, soil testing could be accomplished relatively easy in a short period of time with a backhoe and the irrigation demand calculations could be supplied by Mr. Dest rather quickly. Mr. Dest will present a proposal with costs hopefully by the May 20 meeting. A follow-up phone call will be made to Mr. Dest inquiring about the study for the May 20 meeting.

Bill Symers also reported he hopes to have his report on the discussions with MDC on the water lines at Mill Woods Park for the next meeting.

B. Timeline Review.

The committee discussed the timeline submitted and suggestions were made to add soil testing/ground water testing proposal to the months of April/May/June and to move the research/prepare grant application to May/December months. The committee unanimously agreed that the schedule was tentative, in general, and may get revised as we move forward. Mr. Dest's report will hopefully be presented at the May 20 meeting, at which time it will be reviewed by the committee and the report by Chairman Ragonese would be given to the Wethersfield Advisory Recreation and Parks Board at their meeting on May 27. Committee members were invited by Chairman Ragonese to attend the Advisory Board meeting on May 27, if they so wished.

C. Fundraising.

Fundraising efforts were discussed. It was suggested by Mary Ellen Bonelli that the committee tap into the PTO's and approach the principals of each school for involvement/ideas. She suggested that once efforts are under way, the committee may want to consider a "thermometer" be placed at the street to indicate the level of money raised. Chairman Ragonese inquired if Mary Ellen Bonelli would like to chair this fundraising committee, upon which she agreed. He suggested that she contact committee members on the list and inquire if they would like to serve on this sub-committee.

1. Grant Updates.

An e-mail was read from Craig MacGovern. He indicated that he was working on the grant paperwork from Little League. He will be e-mailing the Board of Directions and officers of Little League and inquire if they would consider a donation of \$2,500 for the Mill Woods Master Plan. He will keep us posted.

Joe Slepiski indicated the soccer league would also be interested in donating \$2,500, but they are first requesting an indication of what the money would be specifically used for. Marty Sitler indicated he spoke to John Thibeault, President of the George Ritchie Soccer League, and the league would support the project, when needed, but indicated the league is offering the money in hopes that the town would provide a matching fund.

2. Public Hearing - Town Budget.

It was announced by Chairman Ragonese the Public Hearing is scheduled for Monday, April 26, 2004. Mr. Cucia informed the committee that the Recreation and Parks Department had submitted a request for \$5,000 in the operating budget for the Mill Woods Master Plan. The request was omitted in the Town Manager's budget to the Town Council. Chairman Ragonese suggested that members of Little League and soccer as well as committee members attend the Public Hearing to request the \$5,000 be placed back into the operating budget for the Recreation and Parks Department. Martha Mayer will speak on behalf of the committee. Chairman Ragonese stated he will e-mail members of the committee informing them of the Public Hearing and encourage them to attend. Marty Sitler informed the committee that the Men's Softball League is very much interested in having a member of the league becoming a member of the Mill Woods Master Plan Committee.

D. E-Mail Address.

It was brought to the committee's attention that two e-mail addresses were incorrect. Marty Sitler, his e-mail address is martin.sitler@wethersfieldct.com; the other change is to Jeff Kotkin. His e-mail address is kotki@nu.com.

4. New Business.

A. Proposed Budget.

Questions were asked about the Lycott Study included in the package and the \$25,000 that was allocated for the budget. It was explained the Lycott Study was not a proposal before the Board and had not been implemented. It was a proposal submitted three years ago and was presented as a sample of the type of study this committee may want to pursue. Revisions, additions and deletions etc. are up to the committee. Discussion took place about the Lycott Study. No action was taken and the study was accepted as information.

Mr. Cucia reviewed the proposed budget with the committee and indicated the architectural fees were obtained from Kaestle Boos. The soil study was left blank depending the proposal by Mr. Dest and the utilities costs, could hopefully, be obtained from Kaestle Boos. Soccer field #2 and Little League costs were obtained directly from the Master Plan.

B. Develop Questions to Architect.

Questions from the committee are being sought to ask of Kaestle Boos Architect. Chairman Ragonese indicated if anyone had any additional questions of the architect other than utilities, to please call the Recreation and Parks Department. Jeff Kotkin indicated he would need the electrical costs to conduct his research.

C. Other Business.

Martha Mayer brought to everyone's attention the rocks that are being discovered at the playing fields at Mill Woods Park. Marty Sitler explained that this spring attempts were made to fertilize our fields with mulch. Unfortunately, rocks, debris, etc. were not filtered out properly due to lack of proper equipment and/or supplies and the ability to perform the work was hampered by the weather. Efforts are underway to rectify the problem. Discussion steered to the question "Will we be able to maintain our fields if the Master Plan is implemented?" It was noted that the Plan does call for additional staff and supplies to maintain our park. Discussion of our overall maintenance program ensued. Mr. Cucia indicated education and the perception of the general public will be instrumental in the committee's success. Mary Ellen stated that a public awareness campaign of the project would be important. She suggested news releases possibly to the Wethersfield Post, could be periodically released.

Mr. Sitler updated the committee on the Skate Park efforts by use of Wethersfield. To date, over 100 youths have been involved and have raised over \$10,000.

5. Adjournment.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.