

Wethersfield Recreation and Parks Advisory Board Mill Woods Master Plan Meeting Minutes - May 20, 2004

Chairman Tom Ragonese opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. at the Community Center. Members in attendance were Martha Mayer, Wes Sargent, Joe Slepski, Peter Gardow and Mary Ellen Bonelli. Staff members present were Kathleen Bagley, Director, Recreation and Parks Department and Marty Sitler, Recreation Supervisor.

1. Public Comments.

No public comments.

2. [Minutes - April 15, 2004](#).

The minutes were approved.

At this time, Chairman Ragonese introduced Town Manager, Bonnie Therrien and welcomed her to the meeting. The Town Manager discussed the issue of a cell tower being constructed in Mill Woods Park. She explained that a company is looking to locate a cell tower in Wethersfield in the vicinity of Mill Woods Park. This company has not only approached the town, but has talked to a couple of private landowners in that area. Ms. Therrien explained that the request has gone to the Town Council and they are willing to consider the proposal. The Town Council would like input from the members of the Mill Woods Master Plan Committee and also from the Advisory Recreation and Parks Board. Ms. Therrien distributed information from the company identifying a proposed location for the cell tower in Mill Woods Park and the company's willingness to construct the cell tower to resemble a flagpole. She explained that this cell tower would be a monopole tower with internal antennas, it would look like a flagpole with a large American Flag on it. This tower would extend high into the air and would also come with an equipment building approximately 20 x 20. The proposal from the company was to situate this flagpole and equipment building on the island in front of the bathhouse in Mill Woods Park. The Town Manager explained that the cell tower would generate revenue for the town both through the licensing fees and personal property taxes. She explained that the Town Council is willing to give a percentage of these fees to the Mill Woods Master Plan fund.

Committee members discussed this concept. They realize that this tower will be situated somewhere in the area and felt it would be possible for the town to benefit from this. Peter Gardow suggested that the location was inappropriate and made a suggestion to move the flagpole to the area of the new proposed lighted Little League field. He explained that it would be out of the way. It could be shielded by the trees. He suggested leaving it as a pole and not putting the flag on it. The original proposal called for the company to build their 20 x 20 equipment building to match the bathhouse. With the new location as suggested by Mr. Gardow, they could put up a different type of building and not have to spend additional costs to match the bathhouse and concession stand. Committee members felt this was a good suggestion. They asked the Town Manager to talk to the company and see if it would be possible to move the location. Chairman Ragonese thanked the Town Manager for attending the meeting. The Town Manager reported that further information will be presented at the Advisory Recreation and Parks Board meeting on Thursday, May 27.

3. Correspondence.

The Committee discussed Little League's willingness to contribute \$5,000 to the Mill Woods Master Plan if the town had matched these funds. Ms. Bagley reported that the Town Council is looking to find these matching funds in surplus money left in this year's budget. Ms. Bagley will keep the Committee updated on this process. Also, the town soccer organization is interested in helping towards the fund. These details will be worked out when it is determined that the town can match some funds. Committee members thanked Jeff Kotkin for the nice job he did at the budget hearing and Little League's letter to the Town Council regarding this issue. Martha Mayer reported that she attended a town budget session and spoke in favor of the town providing funds to match

these contributions. Chairman Ragonese thanked Martha for her efforts, too.

4. Old Business.

A. Report from Bill Dest.

Committee members read Mr. Dest's report and had a few questions regarding the report. They asked Ms. Bagley to contact Mr. Dest to get some additional information. She will meet with Mr. Dest and Martha Mayer, a representative from the Committee, to follow up on the soil survey for Mill Woods Park. Some of the questions are as follows:

1. Will water table measurements be taken and where are the hole locations?
2. To clarify the fees for committee meetings. Ms. Bagley reported that Mr. Dest did not plan to charge for attending Committee meetings, but any formal Town meetings would have a charge associated with it. Ms. Bagley will coordinate with Mr. Dest and Ms. Mayer to set up a meeting to review the proposal.

B. Timeline Review.

Committee members made some adjustments to the timeline review and are now in the process of keeping a record of the status of each objective. Ms. Bagley will update the timeline for each meeting and distribute it to members as part of the Agenda packet.

C. Fundraising.

Mary Ellen Bonelli gave a brief update to Committee members on her ideas for fundraising. She will contact Craig MacGovern regarding the pursuit of a golf tournament as a possible kick-off fundraiser. She asked if a fund treasury has been set up. Ms. Bagley reported that the town has set up a fund account for the Mill Woods Master Plan. Mary Ellen suggested having a coin jar at the concession stand to collect funds for the Master Plan. Also, this would be a way to publicize the plan itself. A question was asked if the Park Board would approve these ideas. Tom Ragonese will discuss with the Board the fundraising ideas. He did not feel the Board would have any problem with these suggestions. Committee members discussed having ongoing publicity regarding the status of the Mill Woods Master Plan. Ms. Bagley will follow up on the appropriate press releases, as needed.

D. Update on Town Budget.

Ms. Bagley reported that the budget had been approved and that the Town Council did not appropriate any money in next year's budget for the Mill Woods Master Plan. However, as reported earlier, they are looking to see if any surplus funds become available this budget year to help towards the funds for the Master Plan.

E. Update on Utilities.

Wesley Sargent reported that he and Bill Smyers have talked with representatives from MDC. There can be enough pressure in the park to handle the water needs for the Master Plan. He also explained that there is water coming into the park off of Prospect Street and the Town has the ability to bring in water off of Griswold Avenue. He reported that the furthest field to bring water is about 1600 feet to the upper field. He suggested one area to look at is a loop for the water pipes to go around the park and draw water from Griswold and Prospect. An approximate dollar figure to bring water to both ends of the park for the soccer field and the Little League field would be about \$100,000. They felt that the water pressure and volume would work with this plan. Committee members decided at this point that utilizing MDC water for the irrigation system would be the most cost effective and practical for the operation in Mill Woods Park.

Ms. Bagley reported that Bill Smyers submitted a design for a different type of irrigation system for the park. He is willing to let the Town use it under a non-exclusive royalty free license, if he patents it. Committee members felt that this system had a lot of potential. It seemed very reasonable and Committee

members were excited about the prospect of trying this in the park. Ms. Bagley suggested looking at one of the current fields not being renovated during the Master Plan process and use that as a test case for this particular type of system for draining and irrigating athletic fields. Ms. Bagley will talk with members of her maintenance staff and with Bill Smyers to discuss this issue further. Committee members thought softball Field #2 would be a good candidate for trying this process out. Other fields could also be considered for this system.

5. New Business.

A. Report on Fees Collected for Field Use.

Mr. Sitler reported that the Town has instituted a fee for athletic fields being used by outside groups. The Recreation and Parks Department has begun to collect fees for field use. These fees will be placed in the Mill Woods Master Plan fund. Ms. Bagley will report on the status of these fees at the next meeting. Mr. Sitler reminded members that about the only time we would collect these fees would be the early spring and early fall.

6. Adjournment.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.