

Minutes
Watertown Conservation Commission
Town Council Chambers
Wednesday, December 6, 2017

Conservation Commission Members Present: Leo Martin, Marylouise Pallotta McDermott, Patrick Fairbairn, Maria P. Rose, Charles C. Bering, Jamie O'Connell

Commission Members Absent: Louis Taverna

Staff Present: Steve Magoon, Susan C. Jenness

Martin Chaired.

1. Minutes from the October 4, 2017

After a review and modifications, a motion was made to adopt the minutes from the October 4, 2017 CC meeting.

Motion: Pallotta McDermott made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 4, 2017 Conservation Commission meeting with modifications. Rose seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached approving the minutes of the October 4, 2017 Conservation Commission meeting with modifications.

2. Minutes from November 1, 2017

After review, a motion was made to approve the minutes of the November 1, 2017 Conservation Commission meeting.

Motion: Fairbairn made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 1, 2017 Conservation Commission meeting. Rose seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached to adopt the minutes of the November 1, 2017 Conservation Commission meeting.

3. Review and Adoption- 2018 Meeting Dates and Filing Deadlines.

After a review of the Meeting Dates and Filing Deadlines for the year of 2018 a motion was made.

Motion: Pallotta McDermott made a motion to approve the Meeting Dates and Filing Deadline for the year of 2018. Fairbairn seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached to approve the 2018 Meeting Dates and Filing Deadlines.

6. **Discussion – Arsenal Park Planning Process** – Continuance of the Review and analysis of information that was obtained at public meetings held on August 15, 2017 and October 11, 2017.

Steve Magoon, Director of Community Development and Planning/Assistant Town Manager appeared before the CC to continue the progress of the Arsenal Park Planning Process.

Magoon discussed the points made in a letter he wrote to the Conservation Commission (CC) dated November 30, 2017.

Magoon explained the town's involvement in discussing the Arsenal Park Master Plan Design at this time attributing it to a number of factors unfolding at once, and that the town would benefit greatly if this opportunity was used in both a timely and thoughtful way.

The letter stated that there are a number of amenities in the park in need of repair or replacement, and the Recreation Department has requested funds to repair the hard surface courts at considerable costs.

In addition the Athena Campus and Arsenal Yards projects are presenting an opportunity to bring financial resources to the renovation of the park not otherwise available.

Considering the history of the park and both the restrictions and current uses of the space, the Department of Community Development and Planning is hoping to use all things considered in a way that will enhance the park, and bring new life to areas that have been underutilized in the past.

Documentation to the CC in addition to the letter from Magoon included a letter from the Recreation Department with a brief assessment of the facilities managed by them offering insight into the demand for various uses. Notes from the initial kick off meeting resulting in the selection of the public process chosen for the Arsenal Park Master Plan, along with the meeting agendas was provided as well.

Magoon reported that the public meetings have been well attended by the CC and residents and that great ideas have been generated throughout that have been utilized in the formulation of the final plan.

Magoon said that the CC has provided guidance to the park's entrance, the area further east, and the existing play area and the Department of Community Development and Planning and their consultant hoped to further refine these suggestion and receive feedback from the CC at the December 6, 2017 CC meeting.

Magoon said that the final plan will undergo a formal review and recommendation by the CC with the first part of that process which began at their monthly November 1, 2017 meeting.

Martin handed out an outline he prepared to lead the Arsenal Park review and discussion with the CC referred to as Direction to Planning Department for Concept Design at Arsenal Park, December 6, 2017.

Gideon Schreiber, Senior Planner was present at the meeting to receive feedback from the CC and the public and review and discuss their ideas in relation to the plans.

Martin led the CC through the carefully laid out plan to review and discuss each aspect of the proposed plans for the park planning process which were to implement an open lawn area with a knoll and natural amphitheater.

1. **East End of the park** – Use combination of the Open Lawn Area and Knoll concepts
 - Could include sitting wall or other items.
 - designed to create informal amphitheater
2. **Hard Court Area- tweak Enhanced Passive Design**
 - Add back lights, tweak enhanced passivity, consider multi- purpose court or courts
 - Court area perimeter treatments: Consider long planters along the north side of the courts. Could add to the border of that area with flower/perennial plantings.
 - Basketball courts should be near skate park if possible
 - Existing restrooms, ADA compliance updates
3. **Entrances –**
 - Main Entrance- use the East Knoll Garden Scenario (with a goal to provide wide enough paths to separate pedestrians from bicyclists and make it safe)
 - Modify to remove paved areas on the westerly side of the old island (look to add green space were feasible)
 - Talcott Rd.- Consider a new pedestrian entrance to the north of playground
 - Enhance the existing pedestrian access point
 - Create an entrance where the opening is for equipment access the park
 - Enhance the entrance near the North Beacon St Gatehouse entrance
 - East End of Park – connect into the pathway to be constructed by Arsenal Yards down to Little Greenough
4. **Recreational Fields- keep as is but look at beautifying backstop.**
 - Update irrigation heads in field
 - Look at backstop; look at options for softening perhaps with green wall/plantings?

5. **Picnic Area/Splash Pad** - maintain and update but keep general location
6. **Play Area (Tot Lot)**
 - Ensure there are more shaded areas available
 - Make it accessible
 - Fix sinking area
 - Update tables and add shade on the east side
7. **Smaller open lawn area** – leave it as is
8. **Paths**
 - Surfaces- can use asphalt for multi-use paths (does not need to be pervious)
 - Ensure path width is widened in areas shared with bicyclists (minimum of 12')
 - Lighting – consider options for lighting for safety
 - Concern about lights-look into options for path lighting and make sure it does not take away from night and darkness
9. **Amphitheater- Allow this area to revert and not be maintained as an amphitheater**
 - Consider converting it into a natural play space, built in to 'ruins', different ideas for a play area
 - Make this a natural play area (example was from Fresh Pond)
10. **Exercise Stations** – consider adding this as a single installation (ask consultants for good placement)
11. **Parking Lot- Replace/Add lights**
 - Can consider slightly modifying parking area on north and/or central island to allow some additional parking on north side.
12. **Wayfinding- Add to park and tie to sites beyond**
 - Look at pedestrian scale signage for paths
 - Look at interpretive signage for areas of the park

Schreiber took notes on all the feedback from the CC and from the public and will take it all back to the consultant to be integrated into the concept plan

7. **Agent report- Bridge Replacement Project**

Martin reported that the fabrication of the pedestrian bridge is ongoing. Martin explained that the bridge needs to be galvanized, painted and mobilized. He said it is unlikely that the bridge will be installed by December.

Motion: Pallotta McDermott made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 PM. Rose seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 PM.