

Lancaster Recreation Committee Meeting Minutes 2/16/17

Attendees:

- Recreation Director: Christa Duprey
- Recreation Committee Members: Johnna Doyle, Joe Kennedy, Win Clark, Ted Manning, Jeanne Blauner, and Katie O'Riorden
- Public: Kathy Pierce, Janet E. Brown, Frank Ciampaglia, Marcia Ciampaglia, Charlie Lefebvre, Michael Lukasevicz, Tom Christopher, Sarah Spencer, Cliff McMullan, Susan Smiley, Kathy Foell, Jim W. Ford, Peter Garofoli, Deb D'Eramo, Joe D'Eramo, Mary Pratt, Elizabeth Ostroff, Jennifer Leighfield, Ted Leighfield, Peter Murphy, Ford Ogden, Heidi Horton, Michelle Currier, John Crivello, Jean Shackelford, Marie Sullivan, Ted Manning, Matthew Hourihan, Edwin Burgwinkel, Alix Turner, Amanda Cannon, Mandy Kifer, Lynn Hudak, Jessica Ritter, Daniel Lapen, Jennifer Lapen. (Also see attached sign-in sheet.)

Meeting Agenda:

- Information on Nathaniel Thayer Memorial Park
- Opportunity for questions and comments regarding Nathaniel Thayer Memorial Park

Meeting Summary:

Meeting called to order at 7:05 pm

Information on Nathaniel Thayer Memorial Park

- Win shares contact information for questions and comments:
clarkbars5@comcast.net
- Win shares the purpose and general layout of the field as it is now
 - o Fields, school, pump track, woodlands, trails
- Addresses tonight's meeting's purpose
 - o Park layout
 - o Phased Approach
 - o Character of Park
 - o Concerns
 - o Questions/Comments
- Phased Approach
 - o Would add to park as funding becomes available.
 - o Playground is Phase 1.
 - o Other phases are to be defined later this month at the meeting with Beals and Thomas.
 - o Each phase will go through a public review.
- Character

- Aimed at enhancing the neighborhood and community and creating a sense of pride.
- Would like the park to be a gathering place for cultural events, sports, etc.
- Will be a mixed use park for various activities and ages.
- Playground
 - Will be in the current location of the basketball courts.
 - Does not include a splash pad.
 - Win shares a photo of a playground from Holliston, MA that shows examples of structures and landscaping.
- Park
 - Currently an open grassy area.
 - Would add landscaping and planting. This would be a place for passive recreation, walking, picnics, raised garden beds, etc.
 - There is a possibility of reusing the Memorial School in the future; this plan would blend with that purpose.
- Woods/Nature Area
 - The plan aims to bring walking trails back to the property.
 - Accessible paths throughout the park.
 - The aim is to have everything be handicap accessible.
- Field House
 - Would include storage, concessions, bathrooms, and a gathering place.
 - Centrally located on the plan.
 - Might include a covered pavilion adjacent to the field house.
 - Skating rink would be adjacent, as well.
 - Win shows pictures of Near and Far park in Shirley, MA.
- Amphitheatre
 - Win shows examples of amphitheaters.
 - It will go in a location that already has a natural slope to the property.
 - Would like a natural look to the seating.
- Parking
 - Parking lots would also be landscaped.
 - Could use the runoff for rain gardens.
- Basketball Court
 - Landscaping and trees would all be part of the design.
- Tennis Court
 - Win shows pictures of courts with black fencing and posts.
 - The court could have alternative uses such as volleyball and pickleball.
 - The question is asked if there was ever money for the tennis courts. Ted responds that there was, but it wasn't enough for much more than fixing it up. Community member responds that \$10,000 was allocated for that purpose; \$7,000 was used to clear the brush.
- Baseball/Softball Fields

- The fields have been pushed south on the property so that a regulation sized softball field can fit. It also allows more space for a utility field.
 - Win shows pictures of dugout possibilities.
- Utility Field
 - The purpose of the field is for local youth sports; youth soccer, flag football, lacrosse, Frisbee, etc.
 - Town leagues would pay to use the field.
- Lighting
 - There will be no lighting for the baseball and softball fields; the towers didn't belong in the neighborhood.
- Dog Park
 - Win shares pictures of dog parks with a natural look to them.
- Pump Track
 - A pump track is a dirt track that requires a lot of maintenance: dirt, compaction, and a great amount of effort.
 - A picture is shown of a plastic skate surface that might require less maintenance.
- Other
 - Could consider other options such as a gaga pit, bocce court, etc. to be included in the design.
- Borders and Berms
 - Boundary lines would be addressed with the planting of trees and berms for the purpose of providing privacy to the neighbors.
- Parking
 - Parking is pushed deep into the interior of the park. There will be 120 plus parking spots.
 - Parking would no longer be on the road.
 - Community member asks how the parking will be secured at night. Police Chief Burgwinkel responds that there are a number of ways that it could be addressed. Patrolling or gating the parking lot are possibilities.
 - Parking lot will be lit with safety lighting.
- Chart comparing current features to features of new park is shown.
- Phase Order
 - Playground
 - Middle Area of Park (Field house, etc.)
 - Parking
 - Courts
 - Baseball and Softball Fields
 - Dog Park
- Issues from Planning Board Meeting
 - Lighting: There will be no lighting for the baseball and softball fields. We would still like to consider it for the basketball court.
 - Character: Will be addressed with landscaping, etc.
 - Woods and Trails: Some trees will need to be removed, but we would like to have trails put in.

- Buffers: Buffers will be included in the form of tree and bush plantings.
 - Parking: There will be many parking spaces in the interior of the park.
- Issues from Planning Board meeting that are not related to the design of the park.
 - Traffic
 - Maintenance: User fees and perhaps a summer program will bring in money for maintenance.
 - Hours of use: The park will be open until dark.
 - Noise: The new design brings the activity to the middle of the park.
- The goal of the new design is to increase the use of the park and minimize the disturbance to neighbors.

Questions/Comments

- Cliff McMullan asks what organized sporting activities are going to be using the utility field and what portion of the woods are expected to be removed.
 - Win responds that the youth teams in Lancaster would be the ones to rent out the field. When it is not in use, others are free to use it.
 - Cliff would like to see a more passive park, not focused on generating funds. He has concerns over adding sports to the fields and pushing the baseball field into the wooded area.
 - Other community member expresses concern about the drainage and the loss of current wetland.
 - Cliff suggests that fields are left where they are.
 - Johnna responds that balls are being hit into the adjacent yards.
 - Cliff responds that a temporary fence could fix that problem.
 - Kathy Pierce is the owner of the adjacent property and says that the softballs in her yard are not an issue.
 - Cliff asks how much length needs to be added to the field to make it regulation size. The response is that it is not much length.
 - It is discussed that the fields are used into the summer.
 - Win reminds everyone that the fields are in a later phase.
- One community member brings up that this plan is for all the residents of Lancaster, not just for those with neighboring properties.
- Catherine Foell asks how long it will be until all the phases are done.
 - Win responds that the hope is that more money will start to come in once the project has been started.
 - Catherine says that there are over 100 pickleball players who would love a place to play in the summer. She asks if there is any way to make the tennis courts playable now.
 - Charlie Lefebvre explains that he believes the problem is the drainage and the fact that it slopes toward the courts.
- Cliff McMullan comments that moving the fields is going to cost a lot of money and if Beals and Thomas has put a number on that cost. The response is that they have not.
- Sue Smiley asks if we are going to be retracting the Planning Board Variance.

- Johnna replies that we will still be going forward with the variance.
 - Sue asks Noreen Piazza if the grant for \$150,000 for the playground and trails are being used for trails and what portion is being allocated toward the trails.
 - Noreen responds that the money will go toward taking down the basketball court and fence, putting down the infrastructure, water line, sewer lines, prepping the playground surface, and for connecting paths from the bathroom to the playground area and throughout playground area.
- Jessica Ritter comments that she thinks this is a great concept and is looking forward to what it is going to be.
- Peter Murphy adds that he is excited about the amphitheater and is thankful that it is being considered as part of the plan.
- Michael Lukasevicz asks if we can take donations that can be matched by employers. He would like more information on the fundraising piece.
 - Win responds that the Thayer Field Foundation is able to take such donations, however, we need the plan confirmed first before we can start taking donations.
 - Noreen asks if there is somewhere online that will accept donations. Win responds that you can go to Thayerfield.org to do so.
- Jeanne Blauner asks if Beals and Thomas has seen the pictures that were shown tonight. They have not. She also said that she is concerned that it might be too expensive.
 - Win would like to see if we can get local volunteer help to help with the cost.
- Sherri Cutler shares that Harvard Rd. is already too narrow and is concerned with the future plans as there is already an issue with speed and traffic. She comments that she is in support of the plan.
 - Cliff McMullen suggests making it one-way street.
 - Community member asks who is in charge of traffic.
 - Sherri shares that concerns were expressed at the Planning Board meeting.
 - Win comments that a separate meeting with the tech team and police will need to occur.
 - Police Chief Burgwinkel said that the issue can be addressed when the fields are in use and they see how many people are using the road. They can address concerns as they happen. A possibility may include making it a one-way street during certain times and that police will be on top of it and will communicate with people as needed.
- Jen Lapen asks why the playground is situated on the corner of the property near the road.
 - Sherri explains that the access to the playground is actually on the interior of the park.
 - Malissa Miot shares that it is more cost-effective that way.
 - A community member asks about the parking in the circle. There will still be parking in the circle.

- Susan asks if there might be a need for an additional court for pickleball.
 - o Community member asks if those courts can be made playable now.
 - o Win responds that it is not really a possibility. Johnna adds that there are courts at the high school that can be rented out.
- Jean Shackleford shares that she is a neighbor of the park and loves the plan. She has young kids and thinks that it will be a great place for the kids to be.
- Rose Omlor asks if there would be no basketball court until later in the process.
 - o There would be no court until phase 4.
- Cliff McMullan asks why the current fields aren't being updated.
 - o Johnna shares the update to the parking and how it increases safety.
- Lynn Hudak shares that she runs the Lancaster Girls' softball program and that the program is growing. She said that there is a drive for recreation. People are currently leaving town to play flag football and lacrosse, but families want to be together in town.
- Sherri Cutler asks what the best way is for people to get involved in each phase.
 - o Win said that they are free to email him, recreation will continue to get out information through the webpage. As funds become available, as will the opportunities to get involved in the phases. Johnna also adds that there will be monthly meetings designated for talking about the plan that anyone can attend.
- Malissa Miot comments that Win did a great job presenting the project. She likes that it brings the community together and also says that, as a community field, not everyone will be happy with everything.
- Dave Carr asks what the next steps will be.
 - o They will be going to the Planning Board and determining a budget.
- Johnna said that the concerns of the lighting and the hours have been heard and addressed.
- Charles Lefebvre shares that he has a concern about water drainage and parking. He doesn't feel there are enough spaces. He is also concern over the layout of the park and why certain elements were placed as they were.
 - o Johnna replies that the plan was designed to keep youth activities on one side and all other activities together on the side of the Memorial School.
- Sue Smiley said that, rather than waiting so long to implement the new plan, a quick fix can address issues now.
- Matt Hourihan shares that the baseball and softball fields were also slid down to make room for the dog park and parking.
- Resident shares concerns over living next to the fields.
- After comments, Win brings up Plan T. Both he and Matt share that this plan was not viable as it cut into the wetlands.
- Johnna says that the plan needs to consider the needs of the town and not just the needs of the neighbors.
- Community member asks how this is going to affect the traffic in the area.

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- Johnna responds that all of the current fields are using the Packard St. parking. Even with the new layout, there can still only be two games going on at once as the fields are overlapping.
- Community member adds that an access road from Main St. would cut down on traffic.
 - o It is then discussed that the access road is there for emergency reasons.
- Jeanne shares that she is happy that the park has been designed so that it is not a large utility space next to Memorial School.
- Win concludes by adding that he hopes this addressed all concerns.
- Noreen shared that it is time to update the Open Space and Recreation Plan. There is a meeting on Wednesday, March 8th, at 7:00pm in the Lancaster Community Center about all recreation master planning and open space planning.
- Winterfest is Saturday, February 18, at 11:00.

Meeting Adjourned: Joe makes a motion to adjourn; Johnna seconds. Unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 8:46 pm.

Next meeting is to be held on March 7th.

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SIGN-IN

Kathy Pierce
Janet E. Brown

Frank Giampaglia
Marcia Giampaglia

Charles Zeff

Michael Lukaczyn
Tom Christopher

Sarah Spencer

CLIFF McMillan

Erin Smith

Kathy Zell

Janet Ford

Peter Hawford

Deb D'Ermo

Joe D'Ermo

Susan Tolstrup

Mary Pratt

Elizabeth Ostroff

Jennifer Heighfield

Ed Heighfield

Peter Murphy

Fred Ogden

Heidi Horton

Michelle Carrier

John Crivello

Russell W. Wier

Don S. Wier

Judy Kathleen Jurek
Jean Shackelford

Marie Sullivan

TED Munnings

Matthew Hourihan

Edna Brownkel

Alex Turner

Amanda Cannon

Mandy Kifer

Lynn Hudak

Jessica Ritter

Daniel Ryan

Jennifer Layer