

Middletown Open Space & Fields Committee

Minutes of Meeting

December 19, 2012

A meeting of the Open Space & Fields Committee took place on Wednesday, December 19, 2012 at 6 p.m. in the Community Room of the Middletown Police Station, 123 Valley Road, Middletown, Rhode Island.

Member Present: Anne Baptista, Cheryl Boergesson, Nicholas Coogan, Austin Pendergast, Michael Richards, Ed Sisk and Ralph Thomas

Members Absent: Christian Lambiase and John Pinto

Ex-officio Members:

Present: None

Absent: Robert Johnson, Conservation Commission

Town Officials: Tim Shaw, Recreation Director

Others Present: Barbara Gifford, Park Steward, Linden Park; Dick Adams, Observer

Before proceeding with the meeting, the committee listened to a presentation by Dennis Turano, a senior at Middletown High School who had designed and prepared a model of a proposed pedestrian bridge to cross the stream Atlantic Beach and First Beach. The project was undertaken as his Capstone Project, which is required for graduation. Warren Hall, Town Engineer, had served as his mentor

and was present for the presentation.

His proposed bridge was extremely well researched, thought out and designed, and his presentation very effective. Following a question and answer period, it was recommended to him that he formally present the proposed bridge to the Town for its consideration, and that he consider a fundraising campaign for its construction if approved by the Town.

At the conclusion of the presentation, the meeting was called to order by Mason Hawes, Chairman.

Agenda

Old Business:.

- Standards for Parks: Benches, Signage, Bicycle Racks, Etc. The committee continued its review of the materials gathered by Tim Shaw from other communities and the Department of Environmental Management's Division of Parks and Recreation. The committee broadened its review to include Middletown's memorial policy. The committee will continue its work at future meetings, to include the development of a redraft of the memorial policy for presentation to the Town Council.**

- Revision of Open Space and Recreation Acquisition Policy Scoring**

Sheet. The committee reviewed the current Scoring Sheet and concluded that consideration should be given to adding two additional criteria—Public Access and Fee Ownership—to the ranking system. Ralph Thomas agreed to draft language to be considered at the January meeting.

- **Purgatory Chasm Walkway/Scenic Vista Update. Mason advised that Saint George School had expressed an interest in the project and might be able to find funding to ensure that a pathway across from the entrance to the school would be aesthetically compatible and enhance safety for bikers, walkers and the Saint George's community.**

- **Properties Updates.**

- o **Planning for Tibbets/Boulevard Sustainable Use. No update available.**

- o **The Valley—Moving Forward. No update available.**

- o **Dunlap-Wheeler. No update available**

- o **Howland. Tim Shaw reported the BBQ grills had finally been received.**

- o **Demery. Mason reported that he had received an e-mail from the abutter residing at the corner of Green End and Riverview who complained about the absence of a 60' buffer zone between the adjacent property owners and the park, that a stone boundary marker adjacent to his property had been knocked down by a mower and not re-erected, and that a mower had struck his stone wall and knocked it down. The e-mail was forwarded to Shawn Brown, Tom O'Loughlin**

and Tim Shaw. Tom indicated he would respond.

Anne Baptista had inspected the park and indicated that it was in great shape. She expressed a concern that a 60' buffer in a public park created the danger of things lurking in the dark, such as coyotes. She also observed that it appeared, if the rock wall was the abutter's property line, that he was using park space for a compost pile and the deposit of lawn and garden debris. The high level of nitrogen, which will leach further into the park, encourages excessive growth of plant material.

- Park Procedures and Protocols. Anne will provide updated drafts at the January meeting. Anne was thanked for service to the committee, which ends at the end of the month. Her commitment to the work of the committee is evidenced by her volunteering to attend the January meeting to address this item.**

- Beach Facility Advisory Committee Report. Nick Coogan, OS&F's representative to the committee, reported that the committee would visit the beach facilities at Matunuck beach, but that because of a schedule conflict he would be unable to attend. Future meetings are planned.**

- Election of Officers. Mason Hawes was nominated and unanimously elected to serve a two-year term as Chairman. Nick Coogan was nominated and unanimously elected to serve a two-year term as Vice**

Chairman. Nominations were sought for the office of Recording Secretary, but there were none. Ralph Thomas is completing his second term and is ineligible to serve a third consecutive term under the current bylaws. In that regard, at its November meeting the committee voted to submit a recommendation to the Town Council that the term limitation of the bylaws be removed. The committee was advised that the Town Council had not acted on that recommendation. Ralph indicated he would serve as Acting Recording Secretary until the matter was resolved.

New Business:

- **Proposed Agenda Items for January 2013 Meeting.**
- **Purgatory Chasm Walkway/Scenic Vista Update**
- **Park Procedures and Protocols**
- **Standards for Parks: Benches, Signage, Bicycle Racks, Etc.**
- **Revision of Open Space and Recreation Acquisition Policy Scoring Sheet**
- **Properties Updates**
 - o **Planning for Tibbets/Boulevard Sustainable Use**
 - o **The Valley—Moving Forward**
 - o **Other Parks**
- **Beach Facility Advisory Committee Report**
- **Proposed Agenda Items for February Meeting**

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m. The next meeting

will be on Wednesday, January 16, 2013 at 6 p.m. in the Community Room of the Middletown Police Station, 123 Valley Road, Middletown.

Ralph Thomas

Recording Secretary