

Middletown Open Space & Fields Committee

Minutes of Meeting

January 16, 2013

A meeting of the Open Space & Fields Committee took place on Wednesday, January 16, 2013 at 5:30 p.m. in the Community Room of the Middletown Police Station, 123 Valley Road, Middletown, Rhode Island.

Member Present: Cheryl Boergesson, Nicholas Coogan, Austin Prendergast, Michael Richards, and Ralph Thomas

Members Absent: John Pinto and Ed Sisk

Ex-officio Members:

Present: Dick Adams, Town Council Liaison

Absent: Robert Johnson, Conservation Commission

Town Officials: Tim Shaw, Recreation Director

Others Present: Barbara Gifford, Park Steward, Linden Park; Anne Baptista, Former OS&F Member

Agenda

Approval of Minutes of December Meeting: Approved as amended.

Old Business:

- Park Procedures and Protocols. Anne Baptista advised she had**

received several helpful suggestions to improve the Survey to Assess Park Conditions document and would work to have it placed on the Town website. The Survey is to be completed once every three months; the first should be done in March in order to establish conditions that may need to be addressed in advance of the growing season. When completed, copies are to be provided to the Department of Public Works and this Committee.

- **Standards for Parks: Benches, Signage, Bicycle Racks, Etc.** Standard bicycle racks and a signage standard have been agreed upon. Agreement still needs to be reached on a standard bench, however, it was noted that the bench type may vary from park to park.
- o **Selection and Location of Benches in Middletown Parks.** No action taken.

- o **Memorial Bench Policy.** The committee continues to find desirable the establishment of a Memorial Bench Program, as exists in other Rhode Island communities. The document establishing the program would identify such matters as the location of parks where benches could be placed, the type of bench for each park, the cost and vendor, and the size and wording requirements of the commemorative plaque.

The committee had determined that it should study a broader Town Memorial Policy that would promote gifts and memorials to benefit Middletown parks and open spaces and agreed that it would review the Town's current memorial policy. Mason provided information on the current policy and background. He then provided a draft revision

and asked for committee members to review it and provide input to him prior to the February meeting. When completed, the Town Memorial Policy will be linked to the Memorial Bench Policy.

Development of a Town Memorial Policy will be a separate agenda item at future meetings.

- **Revision of Open Space and Recreation Acquisition Policy Scoring Sheet. Ralph Thomas provided draft language for two additional criteria, Public Access and Fee Simple Ownership, that could be added to the current scoring system. That language was as follows:**

Public Access, which was defined as "Parcel areas suitable for active and/or passive recreation," Minimal or None, 0 Points; Limited, 1 Point; Some Restrictions, 2 Points; Unlimited, 3 Points.

For Fee Simple Ownership, which was defined as "Parcel ownership is such so as to provide the Town of Middletown the flexibility to determine future use of the property," None, 0 Points; Owned, but subject to restrictive conservation easement, 1 Point; Owned, subject to less restrictive conservation easement, 2 Points; Owned with no encumbering easement, 3 Points.

After discussion, Ralph was asked to revise the Fee Simple Ownership language and provide that at the February meeting.

- **Purgatory Chasm Walkway/Scenic Vista Update.** Mason advised any action was deferred pending review of the project and property ownership issue by the Town Solicitor.

- **Properties Updates.**

- o **Demery Park.** No update available.

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

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

- o **Other Parks.** No update available

- **Dennis Turano Capstone Bridge Update.** Mason indicated he had forwarded information on the project to State Senator Lou DiPalma and Town Council President Chris Semonelli, both of whom expressed an interest in the project. He also contacted Dennis Turano and encouraged him to contact DiPalma and Semonelli

- **Beach Facility Advisory Committee Report.** It was reported that the committee had reviewed and discussed the building studies, visited the Second Beach facility, and had received the beach financial records and reviewed those with the Town Finance Director, Recreation Director and Public Works Director. The committee will visit state beach facilities in the coming months (probably March) and will host a public meeting prior to submitting its recommendations to the Town Council.

• **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 Town Council has now acted on that recommendation and removed the term limitation from the bylaws.

New Business:

- **Proposed Agenda Items for February 2013 Meeting.**
- **Purgatory Chasm Walkway/Scenic Vista Update**
- **Park Procedures and Protocols**
- **Perpetual Conservation of Middletown Land**
- **Standards for Parks Benches, Location and Memorial Program**
- **Town Memorial Policy**
- **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 March Meeting**

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m. The next meeting will be on Wednesday, February 20, 2013 at 5:30 PM. in the Community Room of the Middletown Police Station, 123 Valley Road, Middletown.

Ralph Thomas

Recording Secretary