

Minutes
Watertown Conservation Commission
Lower Hearing Room
Wednesday, December 2, 2015
7:30 p.m.

Conservation Commission Members Present: Marylouise Pallotta McDermott, Patrick Fairbairn, Leo G. Martin, Charles C. Bering, Maria Rose, Louis Taverna

Commission Members Absent: N/A

Staff Present: Christopher J. Hayward, Susan C. Jenness

1) Review of edited support letter for the Filippello Park conceptual plan.

Pallotta McDermott opened the December meeting and reviewed aspects of the previous meeting agenda around the Conceptual Plan for Filippello Park.

John Wacker, who was present at the November Conservation Commission meeting, was the Lead Landscape Architect who began work on Filippello Park. He had supervised completion of all except the eastern end, but the incinerator was there, along with a dispute over whether this town property was in the care and custody of the Conservation Commission. During this dispute, the incinerator was replaced on the same site by the recycling center. The CC lost custody of Filippello Park but Arsenal Park was in their custody and care.

Filippello Park is now in the care and custody of the Recreation and Parks Department. For the last several years a committee formed by Peter Centola, Director of Recreation and Parks, including Pallotta McDermott and Agent Hayward as representatives of CC, have been meeting in the morning to discuss the development and future of the parcel occupied by the recycling center.

Pallotta McDermott then turned the meeting over to the Conservation Agent, Chris Hayward.

He stated that Diane Proctor, then Chairman of the CC, was the Project Manager while John Wacker worked on the outside. He mentioned how difficult it became for the CC to

finish up this park after having relinquished its care and custody to the Recreation Department.

The CC was now being asked, he said, to endorse this concept plan, which he estimated to be 25% design. He said that the draft concept plan presented a realistic view of the project area's spatial capacity, and was deserving of serious consideration for the CC's support

Now that the landfill was closed, and the limited project area well designed, Hayward observed that the opportunity to consider relocation of the parking function was negligible.

Peter Centola rose to speak. He said that the Agent had put things in good perspective. He echoed the Agent's sentiments and Pallotta McDermott about the history of the original design. He recognized the autonomy of the CC but respectfully sought their support because he felt that this design and the planning behind it were in the best possible interest of all residents.

McDermott reminded the panel that they were now to discuss the letter which had been written by the Agent.

Martin liked the plan and the letter.

Bering stated that since we had this one plan, it was better to go forward and do something. He said he would support the plan and would object to any modifications which would slow down the process.

Fairbairn questioned why so rapid a decision seemed to be necessary. He said he felt that of course improvements should be made, but only after due discussion of feasible alternatives. For instance, he thought that the draft concept plan had too easily accepted the location of the snow-dumping area as a fixed constraint in the planning process, rather than recognize that it was the result of habitual practice dictated by the necessity of storing snow on the only paved surface available in Filippello Park.

The Agent stated that the basketball courts are paved and that a thorough search around town for other surfaces suitable for snow dumping had proven fruitless.

Fairbairn asked if the town could combine parking and snow dumping at Grove Street, thus getting the same area of paving to serve both functions.

The Agent stated that it was not a consideration during the process to increase impervious space.

Fairbairn stated that this was not his consideration either.

Centola stated that the Town had limited resources to work with.

Pallotta McDermott stated that during the planning meetings in which she participated, as much information as possible had been gathered from concerned parties in order to try and meet all possible needs.

Taverna explained that the more he thought about the comments being made by Fairbairn and Rose, the more he agreed that if the CC did not make substantive comments now, its recommendations would come too late to be useful.

Martin suggested taking one basketball court to create more parking without increasing the impervious space.

Fairbairn introduced his own version of the concept plan and passed out copies and explained the lay out of the plan.

Fairbairn was asked by Centola how these changes were going to improve the project overall.

Pallotta McDermott agreed to take Fairbairn's concept plan to the committee meeting that she, Centola and Hayward have been attending over the course of the public process and planning stages of the concept plan to see if it is feasible for consideration.

2) Minutes from September 2, 2015 Meeting.

Motion: Rose made a motion to adopt minutes as modified. Fairbairn seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached to adopt the minutes of September 2, 2015 as modified.

3) Minutes from October 7, 2015 Meeting.

Motion: Fairbairn made a motion to adopt the minutes as modified. Taverna seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached to adopt the minutes of October 7, 2015.

4) Minutes from November 4, 2015 Meeting

The Conservation Clerk asked for permission to rewrite the minutes from the November 4, 2015 meeting. Permission to rewrite the minutes from the November 4th meeting was granted by Pallotta McDermott.

5) Conservation Commission Meeting dates review by the Conservation Commission Members.

Motion: A motion was made by Martin to adopt the meeting schedule for 2016. Taverna seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote is reached to adopt the meeting schedule of 2016.

Meeting adjourned.