

Burlington Johnnycake Mountain Park Advisory Commission

Minutes

February 22, 2021

- **Call to order:**

Meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm.

Commissioners present: Tricia Twomey, Jerry Burns, Joan Mack, Mark Moriarty, Craig Battisto, Robert Dunn, Elizabeth Delano, Christie Dockman, and Karen Geitz

- **Introductions:**

Tricia Twomey led the meeting and had the Commissioners introduce themselves. Points they discussed were: occupation, experience with projects like this, interests/hobbies and other interesting facts.

- **Goals and Mission of Commission are to:**

Elect a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Secretary.

Make dates for future meetings at initial meeting.

Meet at least twice a month.

Recommend a Master Plan which should incorporate the usage of new and/or existing buildings, access to the site, and placement of a multi-use field or fields as per the referendum. This recommended Master Plan should be submitted to the Board of Selectmen no later than May 1, 2021 with a schedule to present to the Town within 30 days.

Report to the BOS at each of their scheduled regular meetings to advise of its progress and to recommend to the BOS any issues it may need to address.

The Commission asked questions about the survey that was done in 2017 and the possibility of conducting a new survey and the timeline for the project.

- **Elections of Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Secretary:**

For Chairperson, Liz nominated Mark. Karen seconded it. Robert made a motion to elect Mark as Chairperson, seconded by Christie. All voted in favor.

For Vice-Chairperson. Liz nominated Tricia. Mark nominated Robert. Gerry seconded the nomination for Tricia and Christie for Robert. Tricia had 4 votes and Robert, five. Joan made the motion for Robert, Karen seconded, to be Vice-Chairperson and all voted in favor.

For Secretary, Joan made a motion for Karen. Mark seconded it. All voted in favor.

- Mark Moriarty, the new Chairperson, took over the meeting.

- **Schedule of Future Meetings:**

The Commission wanted to clarify what the BOS defined as a Master Plan. With this information, the Commission would be able to plan better for future meetings. Also, the Commission members (CM) felt they needed to review all available data such as, the 2017 survey, citizens' comments in letters and from the recorded BOS meetings. It was decided that the CM would review all this material for the next meeting, see what information may be missing and decide how to proceed at the upcoming meeting. Tricia will send the CM the data. The CM planned for the four Mondays in March in order to make good progress on the process.

Craig made a motion to set a meeting schedule for the four Mondays in March and for the second and fourth Mondays in April and May. Christine seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

- **Progress Update:**

Referendum on March 24, 2015

Town residents approved an appropriation of \$2.18 m for:

- A) Acquisition of one or more parcels of land in Burlington for active recreational purposes and related municipal purposes.
- B) Improvements to such parcels of land as related to their use for active recreation or related municipal purposes.

Referendum on May 24, 2016—"Shall the Town of Burlington purchase 57.995 acres of land located at 130 Johnnycake Mountain Rd. in Burlington for \$1,675, 000 for active recreational uses or related municipal purposes?" Town approved it.

Studies done:

Environmental Site Assessment

Asbestos Testing

Well-testing

Land Survey

Preliminary Site Analysis (BSC Group)

Survey to Residents (BSC Group and Design Committee created the survey)

Traffic Study

CM wanted to know what sports had field shortage. There's a priority for Lacrosse. Currently there are no Lacrosse fields in town. The Town also needs a 90' baseball field and football field.

CM shared their ideas for the Park. They expressed a need to maintain rural character of the park and to be mindful of what the citizens want. How much money is available for the park plan? \$850,000. The costs of the site work can be high. CM have to develop the park with the taxpayers' money in mind and the Town wants to control maintenance costs. The Town needs

to consider future enrollment in sports. CM want to develop the park in a visionary way and leave a beautiful park legacy to future generations.

The Town has \$738,911.64 to develop the park. The money stays in reserve until it's used on development in the Park.

- **Draft Designs, Master Plans, Maps**

CM looked at the following maps and plans:

Possible plan for the property presented during the referendum

BSC Group map to show buildable land

Land survey

New Master Plan (2017)

Map of the corner of Johnnycake Mountain Rd. and Mt. Top Pass

Map of the field behind Barn B

New Master Plan (not by BSC) Walking trails, removed JM Rd. entrance. Use Barn B as a meeting place. (End of 2020)

Map of Park looking East (End of 2020)

What is the first phase of Park development? CM will decide what goes first in the design.

- **Citizens' Comments:**

Karen Roberts, Charolais Way. She and her family like to go to JMP to play pickup games versus organized sports, snowshoe and walk the trails. She doesn't want to see a straight road across the park. CM should keep aesthetics and safety in mind. Karen suggested sharing fields with Harwinton, if possible. She is concerned about the entrance to the park across from Charolais and potential traffic. She loves the beauty and nature of JMP.

Dwight Harris, Charolais Way. He looks forward to seeing what the CM will design. What can the Commission get for the residents today? Dwight said that to put a field behind Barn B would bring it too close to the structure. Construction costs will be so high to build fields on this property. It's better to put fields on another piece of property. Dwight said to keep the fields natural. He created plans for the Farm and would be willing to share them with the Commission.

Richard Miller, Chairman of Planning and Zoning. He suggested that the town should send out large paper maps to each member of the Commission, give the CM dimensions of the fields and place them in the maps to scale to see what fits. The Conservation Commission created a list of 18 uses for JMP. Richard mentioned that Dwight knows the property well and where the ledge is. He was against a straight road and preferred a curvy road in the design. Also each CM should get a topography map of the land.

Abigail, Johnnycake Mountain Rd. Her property overlooks the park and she requests that the CM be mindful of what the park neighbors are looking at. She recommended hiding the parking lot with trees. Abigail understands that the CM have to do what's best for the town. She knew there was a Music Fest, but to look at sports all summer is another thing.

Alison Powell. She offered her thanks to the CM for their time. It's important to keep the identity of the farm. The CM should reconsider naming the park to Johnnycake Mountain Farm Park. She said there has to be a way to meet the needs of everyone through a multipurpose field. Alison wants to see a New England style structure and maintain the topography.

Joe, Rock Rd. He said it's important to maintain the farm feel. He is concerned about lighting for the fields. Joe asked if we can utilize one of the existing barns for equipment. Joe's property is downhill from the Farm and is worried about pesticides coming down from fields towards his place and well. He liked the idea of doing another survey.

Dwight Harris, Charolais Way. He said the public would appreciate having an agenda ahead of time and knowing when the next meeting will be.

- **Agenda for next meeting:**

Tricia will send CM information to go over: survey, demographic info, etc.

CM should review it and concentrate on what people's wants and needs are.

CM will plan the next steps.

Mark will send out an agenda and the rest of the Commission can send him additional bullet points.

Town Hall will create a public folder to put all the info in.

CM will find out what the public wants in a democratic and accurate way.

- **Meeting adjourned.**

Motion made by Craig and Joan seconded it. All agreed. 9:00 PM, approximately.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Geitz

February 26, 2021