

Burlington Johnnycake Mountain Park Advisory Commission

Meeting Minutes

September 21, 2021

- **Call to order:**

Meeting was called to order at 6:10 pm. Commissioners present: Tricia Twomey, Joan Mack, Robert Dunn, Christie Dockman, Karen Geitz, Liz Delano and Mark Moriarty. Absent: Craig Battisto. Brian Kent from Kent and Frost was present also.

- **Motion to approve the September 7th meeting minutes:**

Christie made the motion, Joan seconded it and all voted in favor.

- **Talk about your favorite aspect of fall:**

Committee Members (CM) shared information about their favorite aspect of fall. The goal with this activity is for the CM to get to know each other better.

- **Mission Statement:**

Kristie read the Mission Statement.

Mission Statement is to create a feasible and visionary short and long term master plan for the purchased property that provides the multi-generational community of Burlington with opportunities for active and passive recreation. Our recommendations will be based upon considerations and input from our entire community, will support documented community needs, will strive to retain the unique, farm-like character and natural landscape of the property and will be aware of the potential impact to the surrounding neighborhoods.

We endorse the following values:

- Open-mindedness
- Team unity
- Respect for one another
- Commitment to a positive outcome

- **Public Comment:**

No public comment.

- **Public Outreach:**

No public outreach since the September 7th meeting. No emails from the public.

- **Park Master Plan Concepts:**

Brian from Kent and Frost reviewed what has been done to develop the MP to this point. He and Karen walked the site today before the meeting and the walk provided Brian with a lot of insight about the property.

Brian reviewed the four groups of work from the design charrette in August. Group 1 shifted the location of the road. There were many similarities between groups 1, 2 and 3. Group 4 recommended a second field.

Brian went over the four concepts that his firm designed and reviewed the differences of each one. All the plans have the LAX field in the same place and the event lawn is preserved in the center. At the September 7th meeting, CM came up with feedback for Brian about his firm's four plans. Some of the ideas from CM were: make Barn A a parking area to serve the SW section of the park; construct a community building that is 40' by 80' feet with restrooms, an office, storage and a community room.

Brian presented a new plan based upon the aforementioned feedback.

The entrance will shift south so that there will not be a shared driveway with the neighbor to the north. The entrance will have fencing on both sides. The old driveway will be demolished and the neighbor will need to make a new driveway. Brian suggested putting in a cattle grid-like structure at the entrance of the park to make visitors feel as if they were entering a farm. Also, they would install a vertical type gate at the entrance.

The **Southwest Corner** will include a small, rustic **playground** constructed of natural materials that will fulfill ADA requirements and be safe. There will be a **picnic pavilion** with a view to the pond. There will be a path that wraps around the pond, which is ADA accessible. A pond terrace will be included in the path. Steps will take visitors down to the **fishing pier**, which is located under the trees for shade. The **manure bunker** is 40' by 100'. Brian suggested taking off the three sides and keeping the floor to use for sand volleyball, bocce or other games like corn hole. People can use that area for games while they picnic at the pavilion.

Brian suggested putting **trees** along the road to take the place of the fence. Passersby would look under the tree canopy from the road and see the park. It will add charm and demarcate the road from the park. Trees will buffer the view of the neighboring houses on Mountain Top Pass from inside the park. If the town redid the fence on lower JM Rd and Rock Rd, it would be a massive expense and continual maintenance. It's best to split the difference. Limit the fencing to certain areas to preserve views. It's also a good idea to add some trees around the pond to aid in keeping the water cooler. Trees will also serve as wind breaks so we need to consider strategic planting of pine trees.

If the Town has **livestock** in the SW corner, it will need to maintain fences there.

The **Community Building** will be 40' by 80'. There will be transitional spaces in the building. For example, there can be a porch on the side with the view and it can be part porch/community room. The community room can have big windows overlooking the view and the event lawn. Paved handicapped parking will be across from the building.

A **60 car parking area** will be in the old paddock area of Barn C. It will slope slightly to the east. There will be a rain garden in the center and this can be used for snow in the winter. The **community garden** will be located to the west of the parking area. A **small parking area** with ADA accessibility will be placed at the top of the ledges trail. The **easement** to the west of Barn B needs livestock grazing on it to maintain it as part of the park. The town can have small animal livestock on this property, but not year round, just long enough to meet the requirements for the easement. People will be able to go to the fence to see the animals. The whole area on the hill where the ledges are will be planted with **wildflowers**, like black-eyed susans and cone flowers.

The playground in the center is a conventional one. In some parks, contractors have set up the main structures for the playgrounds, then a group of volunteers come in and do a community build to finish putting it together. It will be a 100' by 100' play scape.

The plan includes a **wayfinding hub**, a 30' by 30' circle, with a quiosque for the trails and park info. Students can study ecology at the **little pond** near the oak grove. A **picnic pavilion** on the northwestern side of the park will be near the LAX field and playground and have a view to the east. The trees between the LAX field and the parking area will provide a buffer for the playground and picnic area.

The **multiuse field** (200' by 220') can be used for junior sports games, warm up games, more parking. This practice field will be flattened out, but not irrigated. This field will take the wear and tear off the irrigated LAX field.

There is a **good balance of active and passive recreation** in this MP. The community will buy into it. The plan is a **good compromise between the Town and the neighborhood also**. It is a park that the whole town will use.

Three groups from the design charrette located the **dog park** in the eastern part of the park. The only thing you can see from the dog park area is the sky. The area now has tall plants that can be mowed and maintained. The Town will have to plant a few trees for shade and the dog park will be fenced and have a specialized entrance with a vestibule. The long walk from the parking area near Rock Rd. to the dog park will allow visitors to get their dogs under control before they arrive to the dog park. A suggestion was made to move the trail from the 24 spaces parking lot down to the dog park.

Brian suggested placing another **trail** around the perimeter of the area with the dog park. This trail can go along the edge of the woodland and be a tree identification walk.

The CM decided not to put a small parking area at the entrance to the park from Mountain Top Pass.

Trails need to be accessible and dry year round. The budget will determine which kind of trails we have. Also, it's important to figure out which trails will get the most use. Trails with a full

base of stone dust were considered. Recreational trail grants were mentioned to help cover the cost of the trails.

The amphitheater was discussed: what type to use and where to locate it to not impede the view.

CM and Brian discussed the **algae** in the pond and how to improve the condition of the pond. It's surrounded on many sides with runoff from people's yards. Some suggestions were to install an aerator or floating islands of plants to clean the nitrogen out of the water.

- **Next Steps:**

For the next meeting the majority of the MP will be completed. Brian will give pricing on different phases of the park and the overall cost. He will also pick the view points for the renderings.

Brian recommended different ideas to keep the costs down. There are post and beam people who come from Pennsylvania and with the help of town volunteers, can put up picnic pavilions in a weekend.

Tricia will ask for the current amount of money available for the project.

With the barns, the Town can salvage the materials from them and possibly make \$75,000. Can we grind up the concrete from the barns and reuse it somewhere else in the park?

Next steps for the Board of Selectmen are to finalize the plan and the budget for the park. CM want to get the Selectmen's feedback and complete the MP by the end of October.

CM should get Scott Tharau's feedback on fencing and Brian will check into that.

- **Next meeting is Monday, October 4th at 6:00.**

The location will be determined.

- **Meeting Adjourned at 8:17:**

Robert made the motion, Christie seconded and all voted in favor.

Minutes respectfully submitted by,
Karen Geitz
September 30, 2021

