

Town of Whitingham **Parks Committee**

Meeting minutes May 6, 2023 12:00PM – Town Hill

Members of the Parks committee met for the first meeting of 2023 on Town Hill

Seth provided a brief overview of budget status. It appears there is only approx. \$300 left in the Parks budget until July 1, 2023. Upon review, approx. \$5,700 for the memorial monument construction last year was paid for from the Parks budget. Original discussions included a suggestion by Almira that the monument could be paid for from the Eames Fund. Seth will check with the Selectboard to see if that expense can be moved to the Eames fund. This also impacts if there is money for the plaque purchase for the new monument as this time.

IF the \$5,700 can be reallocated, it means there is approx. \$6,000 in the Parks budget available until July 1. The committee suggested the following expenses: Another layer of woodchips is needed for the playground and the new merry go round. Seth checked prices and it appears about 30 yards delivered would cost around \$1,800. It was suggested that a volunteer work day may be beneficial to weed around the play structures and spread the wood chips. There are a few grills that need replacing since the old ones are rusted out. The committee had planned to have the brush on the perimeter cut back on the ball field side of the road this year. The cost last year was approx. \$1,600 for similar work done on the perimeter of the playground. Also, there are some boards on the picnic tables that need replacing. Pete Bernard has helped with that in the past. The wooden swing also needs repair. The horses on the playground need replacing or repair as well. The committee would like to remove the horseshoe pits below the slide since they need repair and they do not get used.

The committee discussed the process for the pavilion expansion. Seth will check with the Selectboard to assure the proper bidding process is followed. \$46,000 was approved at Town Meeting for the project, which includes an approx. 30'x22' expansion on the front of the pavilion creating a floating slab, open sides, and a roof. An ADA path to the new paved parking and a large grill installed nearby with new picnic tables inside. Work cannot begin until the new fiscal year – July 1, 2023

Seth reported that TVMHS may be looking to remove/relocate their existing playground. The committee discussed looking into the possibility of relocating it to Town Hill. The school board and Selectboard would need to review. Seth suggested asking Brad Lackey to help determine if relocation of the structure is even possible before presenting a proposal, or not. Seth will contact Brad.

Last fall Stanley arranged for removal of two trees on the edge of the playground. The wood is still piled on site, Seth will ask Stanley if the Town can help with the removal or if we need to ask the grounds contractor.

There was some discussion on grant opportunities since the Town allocated ARPA money at Town Meeting for grant matching. Carol and Lindsey said they could look into potential grant programs that may be appropriate for playground expansion or other local recreational uses.

There was discussion on potential programming on Town Hill that may include providing outdoor classroom or learning opportunities for local home-school families at Liz's suggestion. Sensory play structures, reading areas, chalkboards in the building, and an outdoor movie screen were some ideas. The Library may be a good partnership for some of these ideas.

Seth will follow up with Stanley about the plan for placing stones along the perimeter/edge of the road on the ballfield side to deter vandalism by vehicles driving on the grass. The drive closest to the Poverty Row/Town Hill intersection would also be eliminated creating new greenspace for picnic tables and recreation. The committee hopes the "rough" area near the ball field can be graded smooth at the same time.

Seth reported the Twin Valley Youth little league had asked about field use for practice and games.

Town Flowers:

Seth reported there is approx. \$1,100 available for the town flowers this year and asked for help with planting and summer care. Committee members discussed the locations and potential volunteers to help water and care for the flowers all summer. Typical locations include: Municipal Center – several barrels and bridge boxes, Eames Park, Jacksonville Bridge, Gates Pond Bridge, Jacksonville Church and parking area, Welcome signs, Sadawga Bridge, Whitingham Historical Society and Church, and Town Hill. Town Hill flowers will be planted for Memorial Day and new barrels are needed there. The other flowers will be planted shortly after and weather dependent. It was discussed that the Eames Park flower beds need cleaning out again this year.

Meeting was adjourned at 1:10

Minutes provided by Seth Boyd