



**TOWN OF LEICESTER
BURNCOAT PARK SPORTS PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Town Hall, 3 Washburn Square
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**MINUTES OF MEETING
March 10, 2022**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dawn Marttila, Chair, Dianna Provencher, Steve Parretti, Russ Anderson, John True, Greg Conlan, and remote access for Paul Fontaine, Kevin Desaulnier, and Kristen Forsberg

GUESTS: none

Meeting called to order at 6:08 pm by Chair, Dawn Marttila. Meeting held at Town Hall and virtual

MINUTES:

MOTION: Greg moved to accept minutes from October 2021

SECOND: Dianna

VOTE: All in favor with one abstention

Dawn provided an update regarding work on the trails grant since the committee last met. A printout of the grant with details and drawings for the work to be done was handed out. Dawn informed the committee that work would need to be done as to protect the federally threatened Northern Long Eared Bat, *Myotis septentrionalis* since it could be found in this area. A handout explained details of this. She explained that the work could be broken down into three areas:

1. Trail Work
2. ADA compliant parking and trail to beach including a viewing platform
3. Trail Kiosk

Dennis said the Highway Department can do the parking area, pathway to the beach, kiosk and removable bollards to prevent cars from driving down to the beach area. This will be overseen by Mike Silva, building inspector with regards to ADA compliance. Cost of this will count towards some of our matching contribution and the grant money will cover the costs of some of the materials.

Viewing platform can go out for cost estimates but will not have to go out for bids being under \$50,000. It was noted that building material costs have jumped since Covid and the allotted amount may not be sufficient. This deficit will have to come from other parts of the grant.

Kevin thought he might be able to do some of the graphic design work and Dawn suggested that boy/girl scouts might be able to produce thing so put in the kiosk.

Trail work: The Highway Superintendent who is also the tree warden will deal with hazardous trees along the trail. Encroaching brush and invasives, stones and wet areas might be worked on with help from the public. There is also a need for trail signage

Permitting: DEP will require permits. An NOI will be filed with Conservation Commission (ConCom). Art Allen of EcoTech will be hired to help fill in the paperwork and to flag wetlands along parking and trail to beach. Steve thought ConCom can cover some of these costs using NOI funds.

Snowmobile Club: submitted a letter requesting permission to put a storage container at the park.

MOTION: Russ moved to accept the letter pending some minor changes and additions so the letter can be forwarded to the Select Board for their approval.

SECOND: Greg

VOTE: All in favor

A mutually agreeable location for the storage container will be determined.

Master Plan: The Open Space Plan has been completed and Dawn will forward it to the committee. We can now proceed with the Master Plan. Alice Webb of Earth Design Landscape Architecture has been hired to write the plan. In November 2021 she suggested we consider some of the following:

- Additional trails
- Improvements to the beach
- A picnic shelter and other picnic areas
- Small Amphitheater
- Nature based playground
- Softball/Soccer field
- Beach Volleyball court
- Parking area(s)
- Restrooms

During discussion we considered the fate of the existing bathhouse. It is currently an eyesore and a hazard. Perhaps it should be razed and replaced with a more appropriate restroom facility when the time comes, and funding is available. For the time being Portable toilets could be considered. Although vandalism is a concern, perhaps the porta-potties would be a temporary measure and only needed should there be a function or gathering at the park. It was pointed out that many other natural areas do not offer restroom facilities. Do we need a “bath house” if swimming is not offered?

Beach area: Although funding is not available to open the beach at this time it is something that residents expressed an interest in. Greg said that the Burncoat Pond Watershed District would be opposed to our using the water resources of the park because they alone pay to deal with the weeds and repair the dam. Board members sympathized with this, nevertheless we have 2,000 feet of frontage on the pond and the town beach is a preexisting use. We will ask for a ruling on this from Town Counsel. Should the beach be opened, the town should consider contributing to the costs incurred to maintain the pond.

Softball Field: Last year a consultant was hired to mark the wetlands around the field prior to our considering doing any work on the field. In fact, not only is the field surrounded by wetlands, but they are encroaching onto the center of the field. With that in mind and the fact that the costs involved in improving and maintaining the softball field would be excessive not to mention the fact that the need for this additional field is less since the addition of the Becker playing fields. We should probably forget about reviving the softball field. The area may best be used as an open field and for picnicking, frisbee, etc. In spite of the wetlands the field can still be mowed and maintained as an open area. That said, the basketball court and fence around the field should be removed. However, due to concerns of people driving on the field with cars or ATVs, the fence should remain for the time being until an alternative can be installed that prevents people from driving on the field but allows access for mowing and by the snowmobile club.

In conclusion: the committee feels that the best use of the park in the near future is as a natural conservation area for passive recreation. We still reserve the right, fought for by Dianna and an act of state congress, to develop playing fields in appropriate areas in the future if the need arises.

Miscellaneous: - All members should review and submit their ethics/conflict of interest training to the Town Clerk.

Becker Groups: Groups are meeting to discuss the future of the Becker Campus. Dianna reviewed some of the group's work. Of interest to us is the fact that there will be a position responsible for scheduling use of the parks and playing fields. The Becker Bark Park dog park will take some of the pressure off of us to offer that to Burncoat.

MOTION: Greg moved to adjourn meeting

SECOND: Dianna

VOTE: All in favor

Meeting adjourned 9:00pm.

Next meeting will be held Thursday April 14, 2022, at 6:00pm

Agenda items:

- Opening the park in 2022
- Signage
- Spring Clean up

