

Freetown Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee Meeting
June 30th, 2021 @ 6:30
Freetown Senior center

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FREETOWN TOWN CLERK

2021 AUG 10 AM 8:35

Chief A. A. Estelle

In Attendance

Amanda Barlow- Vice-chairperson
Brian Almeida
Brian Miller
Carlos Lopes
Ellen Lima
Jeffery Amaral- Chairperson
Lynn Furtado
Robin Roche

Time Meeting was called to order-

Chairperson Jeff Amaral called the meeting to order at 6:35

Items from last meeting-

1. Accepts the meeting minutes from June 16th- Accepted by unanimous vote
- Action Items Identified from last meeting- Jeff reached out to the Selectman and Town Administration office to ask questions that came out of the last OSRAC meeting this is the answers from the executive assistant to the board of selectmen & Town Administrator
- a. Obtain clarification of quorum and laws around an "advisory committee" - how do open meeting rules apply?
 - i. The committee is a total of 9 members so a quorum is 4 members.
 - ii. Pursuant to the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, sec.18, "Quorum" is defined as "a simple majority of the members of the public body, unless otherwise provided in a general or special law, executive order or other authorizing provision." Therefore, in my opinion, a quorum of a nine member body is five members.
 - b. Can we share and use technology as a tool? What are the restrictions around sharing documents and spreadsheets internally with the committee?
 - i. yes, this is totally fine, just remember to remind everyone not to reply all as that would violate open meeting laws as it would be a quorum.
 - ii. Please be aware the Attorney General has determined that sharing of documents by a committee outside a public meeting is not permissible. Documents may be provided to the committee for review prior to a meeting but the committee members should not share documents for the purpose of review and editing as such a process would be deemed a deliberation outside a posted meeting.
 - c. How does the Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee let the community what is going on and what we are doing?
 - i. Your meeting minutes would be posted to the Town's website and your meetings are always open to the public.
 - ii. The committee, as created by the Board of Selectmen, is subject to the Open Meeting Law and therefore meeting agendas are to be posted and minutes are to be kept and released to the public.
 - d. Can we post on Freetown social media or webpage?
 - i. The only official social media for the Town is the Town's Facebook page, which I manage, and the Town's website. Your committee has a page on the website and appropriate items can be shared there.
 - ii. Please be mindful that communications by committee members through social media may result in concerns regarding the Open Meeting Law. Discussions and deliberations should be under take at properly posted public meetings

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New Business-

At the last meeting Jeff assigned subcommittees and tasked them to rank and prepare a present to the committee of the top 6 things that we as a committee can advise the board of selectman.

Team A- Brian A. and Carlos:

Hathaway Park and Communicating events

1. Communicating events

- Current- no centralization organization approach
 - Facebook is limited to people who use social media, Freetown flash only updates when there is trash pickup changes.
- Improvements-
 - Streamline town websites with calendar events
 - Freetown flash equivalent email for OSRAC
 - Weekly/monthly?
 - Link to submit events
 - Digitized town board signage- currently 5 town boards that are in use. Someone has to change the letters. Digitized would be more efficient.

Discussion: Brian asked Freetown is the only town in the area that only doesn't have a local newspaper. Carlos brought up that he has communicated with Apponequet about local newspaper before.

2. Hathaway park

- Current:
 - Little use
 - limited parking- only parking spots on top and next to the basketball court, but no lines/clear parking spots.
 - limited sitting- only benches and tables near playground, older people/ people without kids don't want to sit next to them.
 - old equipment- tires play area and unsafe swings
 - wasted potential- marshland is unused and overgrown
 - Safety hazard- the parking lot in the park is right through the kids play zone.
- Improvements
 - Painted efficient parking spots- painted spots currently only one or two spots.
 - Large play area with accessibility
 - Tire park remove
 - New swing sets and playground

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- Need to be accessibility for everyone
 - picnic area with tables and benches
 - Larger parking area
 - Host monthly/weekly events
 - Remove road and construct new entrance
 - safety hazard road is current right in between the play zone
 - Utilize additional space- Marshland to the left of the park if looking from the water. Potential fishing area, or boardwalk, etc.
- Team A communicated that their idea is a massive improvement and this is a 3-5-year plan. But this will ultimately make it safer for the kids and make it a useful space.

Discussion: Ellen shared that she used to live by the park and a lot of the wetlands have been filled in and there is a lot of invasive species and wildlife.

Brian M. mentioned if we can do these changes to KRR and create walking trails. Someone mentioned that its underlease. He also mentioned we need to communicate with the conservation committee.

2. Boat Ramp/Beach (smaller ideas)

- Current:
 - Pay for Parking
 - Decal for use
 - Antiquate payment/pick up method
- Improvement:
 - Pay per boat launch
 - Local/out of town rates
 - Modern payment/mail out decal (tabled for discussion later by Chairperson)
 - Proper signage-bylaws for enforcement

Discussion- everyone agreed that communication needs to be an improvement for our town.

Team B- Robin and Amanda

Before starting the presentation, Robin and Amanda passed out their hand out.

Town beach/ Pocasset Park is the park of town that needs to be a priority.

1. Beach clean-up- and family fun day. (kick off)
 - a. Project Deliverables
 - i. Expand the beach by adding sand
 - ii. Add picnic tables and benches
 - iii. Landscape and ensure accessibility & shade
 - iv. Create a separate launching area for non-motorized boats.

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- v. Add a recirculating spray stacker and water fountain.
- vi. Hire staff or volunteers to supervise the area.
- b. Town buy in
 - i. Invite community volunteers to help with clean up
 - ii. Identify and communicate the benefits of a kick-off event to vendors/small businesses in town and invite them to participate.
 - iii. Plan "family fun day" market it effectively
- c. Future /Long term goals
 - i. Give community members opportunities to provide feedback and suggestions
 - ii. Based on turn out/community reaction, commit to doing this annually or on some other on-going basis.

Team B's main points are that:

- This can put OSRAC on the map. Get our name out there.
- Event can be at the end of august early September.
 - o Vendors, volunteers, activities.
- Doesn't have to cost us a lot of money, but it will be a lot of time and effort.
- Event will highlight what we can do and how great we did.
- Realistically we can't make huge change by the end of summer.
- Time line for next fall and winter.

Discussion-

Carlos thought it was a great idea, a lot of people hate the beach and complain about it. He said that we need to get the town on board and this would be a great way.

Ellen brought up that the beach used to be ran by the town and there were swimming lessons, planned events.

Someone suggested the idea of getting rid of the beach- if it's going to be a big headache, is it really worth the pain?

Team C- Ellen and Brian Miller

Before starting the presentation, Ellen passed out baseballs that she found at the parks and a hand out.

Their ranking and recommendation are as followed

1. Long pond Boat Ramp
 - a. Needs more supervision- increased hours for attendants
 - b. Inappropriate line painting, access to area is confusing
 - i. Needs to improve the surface
 - ii. No clear pathway
 - c. Police presence or patrol is needed
 - d. Dog poop bags, signs regarding leashed animals needs updating and refilling

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- e. Suggestion of a Kayak club.
- 2. Town beach/ Pocasset Park
 - a. Needs more supervision/ increased attendant hours
 - b. Beach area gate to be locked at night and when area is off season
 - c. Police presence or patrols
 - d. Dog poop bags, sign regarding leashed animals needs to be updated.
 - e. Picnic tables at beach. Benches in Pocasset Park needed
 - f. Improved fields and fencing for Pocasset could be
 - i. Dog park, Soccer & Lacrosse field, Frisbee golf, skate and Roller blade park, car club events or shows, farmers & flea markets
- 3. Central park, including COA, Freetown Elementary School Playground, Memorial & Police and Fire station.
 - a. Minimal maintenance needed (Fence & Benches repaired, replaced or repainted)
 - b. Basketball courts need painting, secure trash barrels near courts
 - c. Walking path signage, clipping of foliage (overhead), paths trimmed- trail signs & Post the distance walked, areas for open space with wild flowers- 3 benches needs upgrades.
 - d. Extend walking path into memorial park & across street to Police Station
 - e. Dog poop bags, sign regarding leashed animals
 - f. At COA, outdoor music and intercom system
 - g. Cosa needs more raised beds gardens, shuffleboard court is a mess, improved 4 horseshoe pits build a bocce court.
- 4. KRR Ball Fields
 - a. Would need extensive upgrades for ball fields, fence and dugouts
 - b. Could be a great location for Open space activities.

Next two parks have some funding from the historical society.

- 5. Hathaway Park
 - a. Benches needs to be repaired, repainted
 - b. All swings need updates
 - c. Chainlike fence along river needs upgrades.
- 6. Bandstand
 - a. Two trees in front need an arborist ASAP
 - b. Needs extensive renovation & restoration
 - c. Needs picnic tables, trash cans.

Discussion: Committee brought up that COA, School playground, and police and fire station are not a part of OSRAC. Softball fields were also brought up. Carlos stated that Freetown no-longer has any softball teams due to the baseball organization they are a part of. Jeff brought up that the since the Ball fields are under lease they should not be a part of our conversation.

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After the everyone presented their presentations, Jeff suggested we pick two things to focus on from what was discussed tonight and create two new subcommittees. Jeff then suggested that the conversation regarding parking fee/parking decal for beach/parking/ dump be tabled for discussion another time. It was agreed upon that communication is an issue that needs to be addressed. Brian M figured out that Hathaway park was the most discussed item tonight. Brian A suggested we talk to the Town Selectman tonight to lock the gate at night at the town beach. Jeff reiterated that we are an advisory board and that we need to be on the selectman's agenda to even talk to the selectman. Lynn suggested that we should focus on the Family Fun day/Clean-up day that Robin and Amanda suggested as our next subcommittee.

Action Items for next meeting:

- Communication sub-committee
 - o Brian A. Carlos and Brian M.
- Family Fun day
 - o Ellen, Robin and Amanda

Motion to adjourn:

Chairperson- Jeff Amaral made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:44pm. The motion was seconded by Carlos and approved in a unanimous vote.

Minutes recorded by: Lynn Furtado- Committee Clerk.

List of documents/ Exhibits used by the OSRAC during this meeting.

- Agenda
- Powerpoint presentation by Team A
- Town Beach- Pocasset Park Proposal by Team B
- Clean up and Kick-off event handout by Team B
- Ranking and Recommendations by Team C