

Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee
Police Station Community Room
August 25, 2021 @ 6:30pm

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FREETOWN TOWN CLERK

2021 SEP -9 PM 3:59

Cheryl A. deSilva

In Attendance:

Brian Miller
Brian Almeida
Carlos Lopes
Jeff Amaral- Committee Chair
Robin Roche
Ellen Lima
Amanda Barlow- Vice Chair
Lynn Furtado- Committee Clerk
Lu-Ann Souza- Executive Assistant Board of Selectman
Trevor Mathews- Selectman
Mary Brown- Chair of Freetown Historical Commission
Stephan "Chandler"- Freetown Historical Commission Member
Jeff Chandler- Freetown Building Commissioner

Call to Order

Jeff Amaral called the Open Space and Recreation Advisory committee meeting to order at 6:34 pm.

Review of Agenda

Jeff welcomed the committee meeting special guests, Lu-Ann Souza- Executive Assistant Board of Selectman, Trevor Mathews- Town Selectman, Mary Brown- Chair of Freetown Historical Commission, Stephan Chandler- Freetown Historical Commission Member and Jeff Chandler- Freetown Building Commissioner. The Historical Commission Members and Building commissioner is here to talk about the bandstand. The other topics we are going to go over are Coastal Sweep, the Open Space Plan Survey, and the Sub-team updates.

Approval of Minutes from August 11, 2021 Meeting

A motion was made to accept the August 11th meeting minutes was made by Brian Miller and seconded by Carlos Lopes, the vote was unanimous.

Coastal Sweep 21 Status

Coastal Sweep is an environmental initiative to clean up the coastline. Jeff informed that there is some interest to participate however no one has come forward to help organize the event. Jeff said base interest we will discuss this at our next meeting. Everyone agreed to this.

Proposed Revitalization plans for Assonet Bandstand/Grant Status

Mary Brown, Chair of the Freetown Historical Commission, and Stephan Chandler, an FHC member came to our meeting to discuss the bandstand. Mary shared that the Historical Commission is not a part of the Historical Society, but they are a part of the town. They follow

the rules of the Massachusetts Historical Commission. They were able to save the Elm St Bridge and Main St Bridge due to their Historical status. They also received several grants that enable the commission to nominate over 200 Freetown Structures for the National retire of Historical places. This made the town more eligible to apply for more grants. Freetown now has two National Register Historic Districts: East Freetown Historical District and Assonet Village Historic Districts.

Mary gave the committee more information about the Assonet Bandstand

- Located in the Assonet Historic district, it was the site of the 'Ye Old Tavern' circa 1800. The tavern was owned by 13 local residents and was demolished in 1934. The owners of the property agreed to donate the land to the town of Freetown for a green area, only to be used as a park or a children's playground. The bandstand was erected and a roof was made by WPA workers. The Bandstand has a wooden base with lattice and a wooden floor.
- The top Priority with the Grant and the town funds is to make the bandstand secure and structurally safe. They will do this by
 - Repairing and repoint the foundation of the bandstand, level the cement floor to prevent puddles, replace the stair and railings, once the fundamental structural elements are completed they want to replicate the base of the bandstand with a dark green lattice to reflect the original bandstand.
 - The Walkways need to be replaced
 - The 2 historical locust trees need pruning
 - All railings will be evaluated
 - The painting will be completed
- The ultimate goal is to provide the community with a safe and attractive replica of the Assonet bandstand that can be used and enjoyed by residents for years to come.
- Brian Miller suggested moving the Bandstand to Hathway park and making the bandstand park a parking lot.
 - Mary said that that can not happen due to the park being a historical site and the fact that the former owners donated the land to be a green space. They need to honor the deed to the land.
 - Chandler mentioned that we have already lost 5 or 6 Historical sites.
- Carlos Lopes mentioned that he would like to see the property be more family orientated.
 - Mary shared that the park can be used for fishing and kayaking once the railings get fixed.
- Ellen Lima and a few of the other OSRAC members went to the bandstand and made a list of their own that they think needs to be updated.
 - Remove the Christmas tree switch
 - Chandler said that he did see that and it should have been removed after Christmas.
 - The firepit needs to be removed
 - Chandler said that drives by the bandstand and agree that they need to take it down.
 - Parking line need to be painted
 - Trevor said that they can send a note to the Highway department and they

- will get it done.
 - Parking for the bandstand is only by the street, all the rest is for the businesses downtown.
 - They also have ideas for general updates like
 - Annual flowers, fix the railing by the water, and maybe a picnic table or two.
 - Mary thanked everyone for their ideas and stated that we all want a lot of the same thing on the list. But the main goal is the bandstand itself. Make it safe and functional for the community.
 - Jeff A. asked the subcommittee that consists of Ellen, Amanda, and Robin to formalize a one-pager to formally send to the Historical Commission.
 - Jeff Chandler shared that the grant from Carol Fiola was for 20,000 and that money was dedicated only for the bandstand itself, it seems like the updates for the structure might use all of the funds. The Town a few years ago (pre-covid) made 15,000 available to updated the whole bandstand park.
 - Amanda asked about making the bandstand and the whole park more assessable. She wanted to go on record to say that the town and Historical society should consider that the town of Freetown has grown and it should be more inclusive for being of different abilities, to be more welcoming.
 - Suggested a ramp, or temporary ramp for events.
 - Mary said that she will check to see if they have to accommodate the ADA due to their historical status.
 - Jeff A thanked everyone for coming and having a good conversation.
- Mary, Jeff Chandler, and Chander left the OSRAC meeting.

Review of 2020 Freetown Open Space Plan Survey

The original grant was from 2017 and SRPEDD sent out a survey. The results of the survey were sent out to the committee members and Jeff wanted to discuss some of the answers.

- **Question 5** “How important is it to you to preserve each of the following in Freetown?”
- **Answers:** 1. Open Space for wildlife habitat, 2. Open space for water supply protection 3. Open space to preserve waterways such as rivers, ponds and wetlands 4. Buildings of historical or architectural interest 5. Open space for conservation and passive recreation (e.g. trails) 6. Facilities for active recreation (e.g. basketball, baseball)
 - Brian A said that due to the sample size, only 73 people, this survey should not be used. It’s too small of a sample size.
 - Ellen said that many people had good ideas in this survey.
- **Question 7** “Does Freetown need more open space for public use (hiking, biking, organized sports, picnicking, enjoying the outdoors and wildlife)?”
 - 90% of people said Yes.

Ellen shared about how Lakeville has a question this year about open space, and Trevor said that he will follow up with the Lakeville administrator about what’s going on in Lakeville.

Bill Napolitano from SERPEDD will be at our next meeting, he will explain this survey and will help us make a plan.

Sub Team Updates

Communicaion team gave their presentation- powerpoint

- Their is no centralized organized approach when it come to sharing events that happen throughout the town.
- The Town facebook page have different information then the town website.
- All Relevant news are not on the same webpage.
- Suggestions :
 - Make a Freetown Flash Equivalent email for OSPRC
 - Weekly or monthly news letter
 - Link for people/organizaions to post a event
 - Have an email Address for OSRAC
 - Create disposable sings to promote events
 - Like Swansea and Fall River
 - Utilize our calendar better
 - Train staff to update digital presents
 - Or hire a town communications director to run all mediums of media

Freetown Family Fun day team

- Family fun day at Hathaway park-
- Food trucks and ice cream trucks
- Duck/ boat races
- Touch a Truck event
- Need to look into Liability insurance

Board of selectman Boat Ramp/Beach sub-committee update

No updates as they have not met yet, need to wait to see if the town selectman will approve the suggestions.

Review of open actions items

Review of new Mission statement

- Jeff Amaral developed a new mission statement
 - **Freetown Open Space & Recreation Advisory Committee Mission / Goal Statement (revised)**
 - The Freetown Open Space & Recreation Advisory Committee is comprised of nine members working under the direction of the Board of Selectman, serving in the best interest of Freetown by providing clean and safe recreational areas. Our focus is on generating short-term enhancements and developing long-range plans for our recreational areas in order to best serve our community.
 - The Freetown Open Space & Recreation Advisory Committee functions to enhance our quality of life by providing safe, well-maintained recreational areas while preserving open space and historic resources. We appreciate the natural beauty that is Freetown. Our efforts aim at preserving and enriching that beauty by working with groups within Freetown, supporting the ideal that we are a “community and not just neighbors” and we will act to strengthen the bonds of our community.
 - Our efforts will be in support of three major areas:
 1. Encouraging responsible protection and maintenance of publicly accessible lands
 2. Improving communication among town boards and departments

- concerning open space and recreational items
3. Identifying strategic enhancements where open space and recreational areas are involved
 4. Engaging community, civic groups and individuals to develop a comprehensive plan that will enhance our properties and thereby increase the participation of all of our citizens to take advantage of and enjoy our parks and open spaces.

Discussion on mission statement:

- Brian Miller suggested editing #4 due to it being repetitive about making a plan to make a plan.
- Brian Almeida suggested adding something about community events rather than a plan for a plan
- Ellen suggested some edits to #4 also to be more inclusive.

Action items for next meeting:

- Subcommittees need to create one pagers for their following action items
 - Suggestions for bandstand
 - Communication suggestions

Comments/Announcements

Going around the table to add comments regarding the meeting:

- Ellen- asked a question about the boat ramp
 - Carlos shared that there will be a meeting on 9/2 and he will report after that.
- Robin- nothing to add.
- Brian M- said it was a waste of money and time on the bandstand. Return on investment for the bandstand won't be as great as they think.
- Carlos- we need to use the money for the grant on the bandstand but the 15,000 that the town has can be used on different things to improve the area where we will see the return on investments.
- Brian A- we are using the free money to update things that have needed to be updated a while ago.
- Lu-Ann Souza- suggested to Brian A to set up a meeting to go over the town website
- Lynn- nothing to add

Next meeting

Jeff shared that the next meeting will be September 8th at 6:30 at the police station and Bill Napolitano will be an invited guest so that he can support our committee.

Adjournment

Brian Almeida made a motion to end the meeting at 8:41, Carlos Lopes seconded it and the vote was unanimous.

Minutes recorded by Lynn Furtado- Committee Clerk

List of documents/ exhibits used by OSRAC during this meeting

- Agenda
- Historical Commission Handout
- Family Fun Day subcommittee- Bandstand notes and pictures
- Communication powerpoint
- SRPEDD survey answers excel sheet