

MINUTES
MAYOR'S BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE ON
THE SAGAMORE CREEK LAND
6:30 P.M. – Wednesday, November 18, 2015
City Hall – Conference Room A

NOTE: this record of the proceedings follows the posting of a summary of actions posted immediately following the November 18th meeting. In addition, as this meeting is the final meeting of the Committee, this record will not be “adopted” by the Committee as previous records have.

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Spear called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Members Present:

Councilor Eric Spear, Chair

Councilor Chris Dwyer (7:30 p.m.)

John Mikolajcyk, Resident

Lennie Mullaney, School Board Representative

Alison Pyott, Resident

Kory Sirmaian, Recreation Board Representative

Allison Tanner, Conservation Commission Representative

David Moore, Community Development Director, City Manager Designee

2. Consideration of Minutes – October 23, 2015

Ms. Mullaney moved to accept the October 23, 2015 minutes. Seconded by Ms. Tanner and passed.

3. Presentation on Draft Report Back to City Council

Mr. Moore gave a power point presentation of the draft final report prepared for the Committee and the public.

4. Public Comment

Chairman Spear stated he would like to hear from everyone that wants to comment and ask questions first and then go back and answer the questions. *[For clarity of presentations, answers to questions that were provided in response to these questions are included immediately following the question]*
Roger Pittroff, Jones Avenue resident, thanked the Committee members, Mr. Moore and the Recording Secretary for their work throughout the process. He then asked the following questions:

- Who on the committee has spoken with the Dept. of Environmental Services as he is concerned that the EPA and DES regulations were created after this site and it is not similar to other sites
Mr. Moore explained no one from the Committee has spoken with the DES, but there is a City staff person who deals with them directly regarding the groundwater permit as well as other issues as they arise.

- Where are there parks similar to this one being proposed on a landfill cap
Mr. Moore stated there are reused caps in both Goffstown and Nashua as local examples.

- Who on the committee is from the neighborhood
Ms. Pyott stated she is a resident of the City and goes to the area often and also Mr. Mikolajcyk works directly in the neighborhood. Councilor Dwyer advised that she lives in the neighborhood

Beverly Lavoie, Broad Street resident, asked the following questions:

- Will the widths of the cross-country trails be changed

Mr. Moore stated the trails are not proposed to be widened as part of this report.

- Who will enforce the leash law

Mr. Moore stated it will be up to the owners and other people to adhere to the law. He indicated the Police Department has the role of enforcing the City's ordinances.

Why is the turn around for parking located at the intersection of the trail. She also suggested that 30 parking spaces is too many as not that many people are likely to be there at the same time.

Mr. Moore explained that this is not an engineered design at this point and this will be taken into consideration when it goes forward and the amount of parking spaces will also be determined. Mr. Moore also indicated he met with the Recreation Director and representatives from the Cross Country program who indicated that there was no conflict with the proposed use of the existing road and opening up of the fence at Jones Avenue.

Steve Miller, Conservation Commission Chairman – stated he feels the committee did a great job of balancing the use and appreciates the care taken to preserve the ecology and environment. He stated he was pleasantly surprised that night time hours were going to remain and likes formalizing the parking and using the existing roadway. He also suggested a phone at the site for emergencies.

Nancy Johnson, Clinton Street resident – stated she hopes that the report is accepted by the Council as presented and feels that the committee listened to the concerns and comments of the public. She indicated that, where the committee disagreed with input they received, they stated their reasons why either in the meetings or the report itself. She suggested that “No smoking/Fire danger” signs be added as well as no glass containers, alcohol etc.

Mary Jane Beckwith, Jones Avenue resident – stated the following questions/concerns:

- Why are there going to be picnic areas with grills, as this will promote fire and searching for firewood – and asked if the fire department has given any input on this activity.

Mr. Moore indicated this activity is not recommended in the final report.

- Regarding the parallel parking on one-side of the road, there will not be enough room for 2 cars to pass each other on the road.

Mr. Moore stated that 28' is required for a roadway of this sort with parking on one side and there will not be any striping or additional impervious paving, but reiterated that nothing has been engineered as of yet. Chairman Spear stated that having it be a little narrower will also help keep the speed down on the road.

- Have the police given their input on leaving the gate open during the night

Mr. Moore stated that having this be an accepted use of this area will make more people aware of the area and that tends to keep people away who are looking for more private areas. Also, monitoring the area is a part of the cost of taking responsibility of the site. He indicated the Police have been advised and consulted of this Committee's work and advise that the addition of any new public property accessible to the public will require Police monitoring.

- How many signs are going to be put up and where

Mr. Moore stated that the signage is not going to be at Elwyn Road or Lafayette Road but at the entrances at Jones Avenue and other pedestrian entrances like Winchester Place Apts. Chairman Spear stated we need to do a better job of promoting all of the city assets.

- Carry in/Carry out should not be the policy as the garbage trucks go there every Friday anyway *Mr. Moore stated that the Committee discussed this at length and wished to start with a Carry-in carry-out policy and have it evaluated. Trash receptacles can always be added. He pointed out that, having DPW garbage trucks stop at the access road entrance at Jones Avenue would be a minimal impact on operations, however the trash wouldn't necessarily be gathered just at the gate. It is likely that trash receptacles throughout the site would require the truck drive into the site, have staff access multiple trash bins in several locations, and turn around. Paving for additional parking and adding boardwalks will impose on vegetation and wildlife*

Mr. Moore stated there will not be any additional paving required and the boardwalks will only be installed where they are needed to protect the wetlands and vegetation. Defining appropriate locations for accessing the waterfront will prevent damage to multiple access points the public might create without a defined area.

- Who will maintain and stock the supplies for the toilet facility

Chairman Spear stated that the Public Works Director indicated they would be willing to maintain the facility.

The "cap" is still covering a dump. Sagamore Creek is a beautiful area but it is polluted and it is irresponsible of the committee to not post it as such for people who do not know

Harold Clemens, Taft Road resident – stated he applauds the package and feels it maintains the essence of the area and is similar to Wagon Hill in Durham.

Roger Pittroff, second time – read the recent letter to the Editor published the Portsmouth Herald outlining his concerns including the potential problems with future EPA and DES permitting on the property.

Margot Doering, Jones Avenue resident – stated she supports the Committee recommendations and feels that this will make people more comfortable to use the property as it will be more open and less of a secret. She clarified that the report is not encouraging any dangerous activities i.e., swimming, shell fishing, or digging on the cap and that only 10 acres of the 66 acres is the cap. She concluded stating the report is balanced and that the traffic concerns on Jones Avenue are minimal compared to other areas in the City.

Councilor Dwyer agreed that traffic is a concern in many parts of the city but feels that sidewalks should be put into the Capital Improvements Plan for the Jones Avenue neighborhood, especially as we are trying to connect these areas.

Bob Fredette – asked if mountain biking is going to be advertised as a use on the land because it will erode the trails. *Ms. Mullaney stated that the Middle School has a club and use the trails, but it is not widely used for that purpose otherwise. Ms. Pyott stated this mixed use occurs at other similar areas i.e., Mt. Agamenticus, without any issues.*

Chairman Spear stated that long-term, as this committee will no longer exist, they looking to the Conservation Commission to oversee the plan and address any issues that may occur. He stated that the next Council may also decide to create some type of Parks Committee in the future.

Mr. Pittroff reiterated his concerns regarding specific permitting issues and ADA requirements etc. and it was clarified that the report is a conceptual recommendation and any future implementation will be subject to all rules and regulations.

Seeing no other speakers seek to be recognized Chairman Spear closed the public comment.

The committee members thanked everyone involved for the great experience and working together towards a common goal.

Mr. Mikolajcyk moved to accept the report and forward to the City Council, seconded by Ms. Pyott.

Councilor Dwyer stated there were some minor changes/corrections that she would like to make sure are made. Mr. Moore stated that he welcomed and encouraged suggestions/corrections in grammar/sentence structure/clarity etc. (as opposed to content approved by the Committee) and requested that those wishing to submit comments do so by the end of the day on Monday November 23rd so the report can be submitted to the City Manager's office in time for the December 7th City Council meeting.

Motion passed unanimously.

5. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.