

MINUTES
MAYOR'S BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE
ON THE
SAGAMORE CREEK LAND
7:30 A.M. – Wednesday, February 4, 2015
City Hall – Conference Room A

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Spear called the meeting to order at 7:35 a.m.

Members Present:

Councilor Eric Spear, Chair
Councilor Chris Dwyer
John Mikolajczyk, Resident
Lennie Mullanie, School Board Representative
Alison Pyott, Resident
Kory Sirmaian, Recreation Board Representative

Members Absent:

Allison Tanner, Conservation Commission Representative

Staff Advisors Present:

David Moore, Community Development Director, City Manager Designee

2. Introduction of Committee Members

Each of the Committee members introduced themselves and briefly described their interest in the Sagamore Creek property.

3. Review of charge from Mayor

Chairman Spear read the Charge from the Mayor as follows:

Committee Charge: The charge of the Blue Ribbon Committee on the Sagamore Creek Land is to develop a plan for public usage of the 66-acre city-owned parcel. A report back to the City Council shall be completed on or prior to September 21, 2015.

Chairman Spear stated he would like to see phase I be about gathering information and public input and include learning about the existing facts of the property. Some of the information would include the title of the property, the landfill, the natural resources, existing uses, etc. He suggested site walks be held once the weather is cooperative and also suggested holding meetings at other locations and times to be more inclusive. He stated he would like to see Phase II begin after a preliminary report is presented to the City Council in May if possible, so that the Committee will know that the Council is in agreement with the direction being taken. Once that is done, a consultant can be hired to begin the work towards the final product to be delivered to the Council September 21, 2015.

Councilor Dwyer suggested Peirce Island and Creek Farm have both already gone through this process so seeing what time lines, costs, obstacles etc. would be helpful.

School Board member Mullaney suggested looking at this land in relation to the Urban Forestry land and how it could compliment this parcel in regards to animal habitat, etc.

Recreation Board member Sirmaian suggested that a lot of time and money was spent on a comprehensive Recreation Survey several years ago and feels that report should be resurrected to incorporate some of the needs identified.

Councilor Dwyer suggested that more information regarding the landfill and in regards to this request, Mr. Mikolajcyk recalled that when the landfill was closed there were restrictions placed along with monitoring of the wells, so we should find out if these restrictions still exist.

Community Development Director Moore clarified that there are still restrictions in place and this will all be a part of the fact finding phase.

Mr. Mikolajcyk suggested that the recent purchase of the Sagamore Creek Island could be looked at in conjunction with this property. Community Development Director Moore clarified that this island is only accessible by water and stated that he will get an aerial photo of the entire area done.

Councilor Dwyer suggested that public hearings be held with different Boards/Commissions i.e., Recreation Board, Conservation Commission, School Board etc. so that all different aspects of interest in the property are included and so that all of the other Board/Commission members are aware of this process.

Ms. Pyott suggested including the Sustainability Committee in the process as well. She also suggested determining neighborhood impacts.

Chairman Spear reiterated the proposed subjects to be reviewed in Phase one as Landfill; History of title acquirement; Conservation i.e., wildlife habitat, vernal pools, etc.; outdoor athletic needs whether active/passive recreation, water recreation; connectivity to other Conservation areas.

Councilor Dwyer suggested including Native American archeology of the property.

4. Establishment of meeting schedule

Chairman Spear clarified that the next meeting will be held Wednesday, February 11, 2015 at 7:30 a.m. At the consensus of the Committee, the meetings will be approximately 2 hours.

5. Public comments

Chairman Spear opened the Public Comments stating that there are many reports and existing documentation that is available or will be made available and hopes the public and Committee members will review the information that is already available

Jane Reynolds, Tidewatch Condominiums – stated she would like to know when the property was obtained and how and what stipulations were imposed if any.

Jeffrey Kiesiel, 21 Wallis Road – stated there is a good report on the landfill on the City website and suggested that the City look into solar power as a potential use for the landfill as is being done in Vermont and Massachusetts.

Sue Mellin, representing the Tidewatch Board – stated the use the land all of the time for passive recreation and will be following this process.

Suzie Hamblett – Tidewatch – stated she has walked every portion of the property and has found no abuse of the land other than the firepit and occasional bottles and cans. She further stated that there are wood chips places on the trails every spring but has notices that there are plastic bags that are underneath this and wonders if they had been used as filler somewhere along the way. She also stated that the vernal pools are quite big.

Mary Fuller – Tidewatch – asked if there are any vacant spots on the Committee that could be filled by a resident of Tidewatch. Chairman Spear explained that the Committee appointments are full but there will be public comment included at all meetings so they can remain involved.

Margot Doering – owner of Jones Avenue property, stated there are a lot of properties in Portsmouth designated recreation and/or Conservation with varying degrees of usage. She feels that it would be good to know the spectrum of usage for these properties and the impacts to the neighborhoods if they are frequently used and where Jones Avenue would fall within that spectrum.

Councilor Dwyer agreed and stated there is a Resource Inventory on the City website which includes flora and fauna, population density, etc.

6. Meeting adjourned at 8:20 a.m.