

MINUTES
MAYOR'S BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE
ON THE
PRESCOTT PARK MASTER
PLAN
7:30 A.M. – Thursday, February 18, 2016
City Hall – Conference Room A

1. Call to order – Chair, Councilor Chris Dwyer

Chairwoman Dwyer called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

Members in attendance: Council Chris Dwyer, Chair; Mayor Jack Blalock; Phyllis Eldridge, Trustee of Trust Funds; Dana Levenson, Trustee of Trust Funds.

Members absent: Councilor Nancy Pearson; Thomas Watson, Trustee of Trust Funds, and Stefany Shaheen.

Staff present: John Bohenko, City Manager, David Allen, Deputy City Manager, David Moore, Assistant City Manager, and Suzanne Woodland, Deputy City Attorney.

2. Review of Charge – Chair

Chair Dwyer explained that this Blue Ribbon Committee is meant to manage the study of the Prescott Park Master Plan and to make a final recommendation to the Mayor and City Council by the end of the year. She indicated there will be many opportunities for public input as the process goes along.

3. Discussion of Firm Selection

- a. Review of RFQ/RFP Process

Chair Dwyer recognized Assistant City Manager David Moore to provide an overview of the RFP process to date. He reviewed in detail the RFP #24---A instrument used to solicit proposals from firms for the Master Plan engagement focusing special attention to the scope of work. He emphasized the staff and Committee will refine the scope as the process moves along. He stated that the basic scope elements include:

- Reviewing existing and historical documents;
- Creating a park---wide existing conditions and uses study for the 10 acre area;
- Creating a facilities assessment report;
- Provide meaningful and robust opportunities for public input;
- Create an illustrative Master Plan of the park with all parks assets and all necessary changes and improvements needed to meet the recommendations.

Councilor Dwyer indicated the next step was for the staff to interview selected firms and for the Committee to make a recommendation to the City Manager to begin final negotiations for a contract. The Chair indicated she hoped representatives from the

Committee would join the staff in the interviews and their input used to form a Committee recommendation. Chair Dwyer explained that the Committee's role during this meeting would be to weigh---in on which firms are to be interviewed.

Rick Becksted from the audience asked why there isn't a representative from the Peirce Island Committee of Recreation Board. Chair Dwyer reiterated that there are so many stakeholders it would difficult to involve everyone on the committee but there will be many opportunities for them to provide input as the process goes along.

Mayor Blalock stated that this Blue Ribbon Committee is charged with selecting the firm to help with the overall plan and stated that the Trustees of the Trust Fund have been overseeing the Park for years, but because there are now so many uses and users, we need an overall Master Plan.

Mr. Becksted expressed concern with the timing of the meeting at 7:30 a.m. and asked that these meeting be video recorded in the future because not everyone can be here at 7:30 a.m. Chair Dwyer stated that the meetings will be held at different times to accommodate public input including evening meetings.

Chair Dwyer then moderated a discussion between Committee members and staff on the proposals distributed to the members prior to the meeting. As the City is engaged in a competitive procurement process, the firms were referred to by letter designations and each member provided their observations on each proposal as well as questions to be asked during interviews. It was determined that Firm A and C best met the criteria for selection in the RFP and should be interviewed.

Mayor Blalock moved to interview Firms A and C as presented, seconded by Trustee Eldridge. Motion passed unanimously.

Following the vote Councilor Dwyer indicated she would follow---up individually with committee members to determine who would be interested in sitting in on the interviews.

4. Selection of Next Meeting Date

She stated the next full committee meeting will be held on March 14, 2016.

5. Selection of Next Meeting Date

Beth Margeson – stated it would be useful to look at the chain of command in the government structure. She stated she understands there are limitations, but feels that there are a lot of people involved and it is hard to know who is in charge. She also feels that there should be a Parks and Recreation Department and not just a Recreation Board. She also is concerned that there should be separation of current users from the firms that are being considered for the Master Plan process. She concluded stating that the Prescott Park Arts Festival strategic planning process was one---on---one which was fine, but does not feel it is practical for this process, which needs a strong public facilitator.

Mary Krempels – stated she is excited for this process as Prescott Park is a beautiful jewel in the City of Portsmouth.

Rick Becksted – stated he has lived here most of his life and spent a lot of time on the waterfront. He stated he would like to see the Prescott Parks Arts Festival hold a “Resident Day” once a year and go back to only having blankets allowed. He stated he would still like to have seen a member of the Recreation Board and Peirce Island Committee on the Blue Ribbon Committee as they are involved in other issues regarding Peirce Island.

Kathy Baker – stated she has a fear of there being a free---for---all but hopes that whoever is chosen for the Master Plan will be charged to keep the original intent of passive recreation and not let businesses have a piece of the pie.

Bill Elwell – stated he grew up on the Prescott Park area and stated that Portsmouth was lucky that Charles Prescott left his money to Josie Prescott to be used here in Portsmouth. He continued to discuss various issues including the hard work of Trustees over the years to maintain the Park and recounted many types of Arts Festival activities carried out in the park over the years which began as a civic organization and feels that the problem has become a difference between noise and sound. He stated the issue has become the speakers over the years and they should be told to keep the volume down or they don’t play. He stated that Prescott Park is for the people and that is where it should be kept and feels that Prescott Parks Arts Festival should be appreciative of this environment, but if it gets too big, it can no longer be accommodated in this area.

Chair Dwyer thanked everyone and stated that many points have been brought up that will be addressed going forward. She stated the funds are what started the process but they are not enough to maintain what is currently going on.

City Manager Bohenko stated over last year’s budget included a new section on Prescott Park and the funds associated with trust revenues as well as City General funds used for park maintenance.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 a.m.