

MINUTES
MAYOR'S BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE
ON THE
PRESCOTT PARK MASTER PLAN
7:30 A.M. – MONDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2016
EILEEN DONDERO FOLEY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

1. Call to Order – Chair, Councilor Chris Dwyer

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

Members in Attendance: Councilor Chris Dwyer, Chair; Mayor Jack Blalock; Councilor Nancy Pearson; Phyllis Eldridge, Trustee of Trust Funds; Thomas Watson, Trustee of Trust Funds; Dana Levenson, Trustee of Trust Funds; Stefany Shaheen, Citizen Representative

Staff Present: David Moore, Assistant City Manager

2. Consideration of Minutes – (November 17, 2016)

Ms. Shaheen moved to approve the minutes of November 17, 2016. Seconded by Councilor Pearson and voted.

Chair Dwyer reviewed the upcoming meeting schedule stating there will be a meeting on December 12, 2016 and the Work Session with the City Council on December 19, 2016.

3. Weston & Sampson Presentation on Preferred Master Plan

Mr. Bolinger and Ms. Ruane gave a brief presentation on the Preferred Master Plan.
http://www.cityofportsmouth.com/ppmp/12.5.16_BRC%20Preferred%20Plan.pdf

Following the presentation, Chair Dwyer asked for questions and comments.

Discussion ensued regarding various aspects of the proposed master plan.

Ms. Shaheen discussed her concerns with the stage including the sight-line being compromised by the trees; overhead coverage of the stage; availability of lawn use when no events taking place, etc.

Discussion ensued regarding the relocation of the Liberty Pole which currently requires people to step into the street to read the plaque. Mr. Moore stated that this is actually the second Liberty Pole which is over 100 years old so it will need to be replaced in the near future. Ms. Shaheen suggested it could be tied-in with the upcoming 400th Anniversary of the City of Portsmouth.

Chair Dwyer discussed the Public Forum area near the waterfront area. Ms. Ruane explained that there would be a water fountain in the plaza as well with water jets being flush with the ground. She stated that this area actually can fit 500 people.

Discussion ensued regarding the costs of the various improvements and the phasing of the project. It was discussed that a good amount of money will be spent on below grade improvements but there should be something done in the first phase that the public can see and get excited about the project.

Ms. Shaheen stated that she has 2 main areas of concern including the stage relocation and moving the formal gardens. She stated she still has concerns with the sight-line issues, back of stage, entrances in and out of the formal garden.

Chair Dwyer stated she would also like to see the coastal resilience aspect of the project highlighted as well and that the boardwalk is more than just an aesthetic addition. Ms. Shaheen stated that this could also be a funding source.

Mr. Watson suggested implementing phase 1 and 2 together so that there will be no period of time without a formal garden.

Mr. Bolinger concluded by thanking his team at Weston and Sampson who work behind the scenes on the project.

4. Public Comments:

Mark Brighton– stated he is impressed with the work of the team at Sampson and Weston. He continued that he does not want to see stakeholders be a part of the governance body as he feels it would be a conflict of interest and they will be represented by Art Speak.

Beth Margeson – stated that she feels that the design is beautiful but feels that it will be important to educate the people who haven't been following the process all along as to why certain decisions have been made.

Ben Anderson, Prescott Parks Arts Festival – discussed his concerns with the proposed temporary stage and the various safety issues that could arise. He also addressed the lack of isles for walkways in the design.

Barbara Benn – stated she works at Prescott Park and is concerned as to what will become of them. She stated she is also concerned with the idea of using the Shaw Building as a back stage area because they do use that area for their equipment, etc.

Zelita Morgan – stated she is concerned that the plan is being presented before the governance portion has been worked out. She also asked that if the formal garden is relocated that it still maintain the “secret garden” atmosphere. She continued that there are plenty of examples of other places that use temporary stages and suggested that the research be continued. Finally she asked that whatever the makeup of the governance body will be that they include language in the document that they must abide by the city's ethics policy.

Chair Dwyer stated that the concerns of Mr. Anderson with the safety of the temporary stage need to be addressed, but clarified that there can be a canopy over the stage. Ms. Shaheen suggested that the word temporary be replaced with “moveable” stage.

5. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 a.m.