

Town of Farmington

1000 County Road 8
Farmington, New York 14425

PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN UPDATE COMMITTEE

Monday, December 9, 2024 • 6:30 p.m.

MINUTES

The following minutes are written as a summary of the main points that were made and are the official and permanent record of the actions taken by the Town of Farmington Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update Committee. Remarks delivered during discussions are summarized and are not intended to be verbatim transcriptions. Video and audio recordings of the meetings are available from the Town.

The meeting was conducted at the Farmington Town Hall and via remote video conference.

R = Attended via remote video conference.

Board Members Present:

Susan Charland, *Committee Chairperson*
Julie LaRue
Adrian Bellis
Leah Thomas
Larry Potter

Board Members Excused:

Sara Weidenborner
Julie Maslyn

Advisory Staff Members Excused: Steve Holtz, Town Board Liaison
Mark Cain, Recreation Director

Advisory Staff Present:

Eric Cooper, MRB Group, D.P.C.
Ronald L. Brand, Town of Farmington Director of Planning and Development
Tim Ford, Town of Farmington Highway and Parks Superintendent
Paula Ruthven, Town of Farmington Zoning Officer

Attending Public:

Emily Wojcik, Cobblestone Arts Center
Shane Fackelman, Cobblestone Arts Center
Lorene Benson, Cobblestone Arts Center

1. OPEN MEETING

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chairperson Susan Charland.

2. APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 4, 2024, MEETING MINUTES

Mr. Cooper asked members if they had any changes or alterations to the November Meeting Minutes as provided. No changes were requested, and the Committee approved the minutes.

3. PRESENTATION BY COBBLESTONE ARTS CENTER

Ms. Benson provided an overview of their proposed Cobblestone Arts Center. She provided a brief history of the program and their mission to provide equitable and inclusionary services. They have 75 employees currently. They are looking to create a space that includes numerous services for the community including day care, acupuncture, swimming, indoor track and others.

The Center has received a \$2 Million donation from Tom Golisano for the project. They are also working on applying for additional grants to support the development. They have had conversations with numerous state level agencies and others to support the development. They believe the first phase of development to cost around \$12 Million.

Mr. Brand asked how this development would relate to the work of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Committee. Ms. Benson responded that she didn't feel it would detract from Town facilities and would fill a space for indoor recreation and athletic space in demand for the Town.

Ms. Charland asked what the goal of the \$2 Million grant funding was. Ms. Benson responded that it was to enrich and continue the good work in the community; it was not specifically for anything.

Mr. Cooper asked about their schedule. Ms. Benson responded that they want to get started as soon as possible.

Mr. Brand asked what conversations she has had with the Town of Victor. Ms. Benson said she had not and whether they were still pursuing the site on Brace Road. Ms. LaRue said in her last meeting with Victor last year they were still pursuing it, but that this year they are trying to create a highway facility. Ms. Benson asked if she should be talking to Victor. Mr. Brand said that the Committee has recently received requests from Victor little leagues and softball leagues for needed park facilities be created in Farmington where there is more land. Ms. Benson said she had previously met with the Town of Victor Supervisor, but he was nonresponsive. She had also been in contact with the library which was voted down in Victor to be included in the Cobblestone facility.

Mr. Brand said that the Committee is being led by responses from the Community Survey on Parks and Recreation earlier in the update process and that there is support for a community center. He raised the question of how the Town of Farmington can best work together with others to find a solution to the question of the community center.

Ms. Benson asked what the survey revealed about the facilities demanded by residents. Mr. Cooper

shared the results of the survey showing support for spray parks, swimming pools, dog parks, trails, inclusive playgrounds, and more.

Ms. LaRue asked what Ms. Benson is asking from the Town. Ms. Benson responded that she is seeking support and approval of the development. Items such as traffic lights and access to the property.

Ms. Charland asked if there was a feasibility study done. Ms. Benson responded that RIT students have done architectural studies of the project. Mr. Cooper asked if there has been a market study. Ms. Benson responded that she believes there is an opportunity for all communities to benefit and there is a growing support in the community to support their development.

Mr. Cooper asked if there was anything else before the Committee proceeded with their work. Ms. Benson said she would make inquiries to the Town of Victor. Mr. Brand added that having some intermunicipal agreement would not be unique as the Town of Farmington has for years provided services, such as water and sewer services to neighboring jurisdictions. Ms. Charland said she really liked the Cobblestone Arts Center location of the project. Mr. Brand said a trip to the Cobblestone Center might be beneficial to the Committee to enable a better understanding of what services they now provide.

4. PROJECT STATUS UPDATE

Mr. Cooper provided members a status report. The goal for the night's meeting was to get comments back from the committee and make agreed upon revisions. Mr. Brand said the committee should meet one final time in January to formally recommend this document to the Town Board.

5. REVIEW DRAFT PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

Ms. Charland asked if anyone had any major comments. Members of the Committee did not have major comments or had not completed a detailed review.

Mr. Bellis asked if comments from the public meeting were included. Mr. Cooper responded that they are included in the appendix.

Mr. Potter wanted to revise the plan to move the location of the parking at a revised Town Hall Park to the other side. Mr. Brand said this type of change would be part of creating a park master plan.

Mr. Bellis highlighted some of the comments received at the public meeting, including police supervision of parks.

Ms. Charland said she was working on a comment list and would provide them. She said the plan provided was consistent with past materials provided to the Committee. She asked Mr. Cooper if changes were made to the plan based upon comments received from the public. Mr. Cooper said that he did make changes based on those comments and based on the 5-year capital parks plan.

Mr. Cooper provided a few cover ideas. The Committee agreed on a cover design.

Ms. LaRue asked if the other members saw the public comment on Meeting House Park relating to ownership reverting to the Herendeen family.

Mr. Brand said the plan contains a lot of information that is going to be very helpful to the Town that is unique and not cut and pasted. He expressed thanks to Mr. Cooper and Mr. Sousa, and he said they've done a great job. Ms. Charland agreed and was impressed with background and demographic information. Mr. Cooper thanked them for their comments.

Mr. Cooper added that the public comments included a lot of suggestions for trails and fairy trails. He said their Regional Trails Initiative will be revised again soon and represents an opportunity for the Town to advocate for trails in the Town.

Mr. Brand said it would be valuable to find something comparable to what GTC does for transportation but for parks and recreation and that would allow applications for feasibility studies.

Mr. Cooper asked if anything in the plan needs to be highlighted further. Mr. Brand said the Town could not be sure at this point of the ultimate location of a joint community center. Mr. Bellis said Victor's current community center is closer to Mendon and that a facility near the border of Farmington would be more convenient.

Mr. Brand highlighted a suggestion in the document to acquire more land in Hozey Swamp. He added that creating a park here could be in line with Ontario County's Parks and Recreation Master Plan goals and something the County might be interested in pursuing and taking over. Mr. Cooper provided a background of the considerations for including that suggestion. Ms. LaRue said she is not opposed to it and questioned whether it was outside the focus of the Committee.

Mr. Brand asked the committee what they wanted to highlight in the Executive Summary. Ms. Charland felt they may have addressed this in the last meeting. Mr. Cooper said the conversation at the last meeting related more to just the 3 big ticket items.

Ms. LaRue asked what desire the land in Hozey Swamp fills where the other goals for the Committee have been about filling gaps in demand. Mr. Cooper said this possible park could be a substitute if the Town does not pursue Boughton Park. Ms. LaRue and Mr. Ford seems the location is difficult. Ms. Charland felt it was appropriate to put in the plan if the opportunity arises. Ms. LaRue asked if the committee should phrase the language to be more general about any opportunity that arises. Mr. Brand said that the Town would be open to find a park use for that 13 acres.

Ms. Charland said the priorities she has heard are active recreation and trails.

Ms. LaRue said that she was unsure if people would be willing to pay for their expressed desires. She said she was unsure if the Town has the base of residents to financially support a community center. She feels it is a priority to highlight accessible improvements like an accessible playground that is free for the community to access. Mr. Cooper added that the comments reflected a desire for free improvements such as splash pads or a dog park.

Ms. Charland asked how these priorities were going to be expressed to the community through the

plan.

The wording of the community center strategies was debated. Some comments related to the cost to residents. Some comments related to a question related to location and partnership opportunities. Ms. Charland said that it is worth including actions related to answering these questions and leaving the ultimate decision to a later date when that knowledge is available. She would like to see catchment area maps and cost analysis for users, residents, and the Town. Mr. Brand agreed and felt these things needed to be spelled out in black and white for the Town and residents. Mr. Cooper suggested that it is beneficial for the Town to address this issue now because the population will continue to grow, and sites will become more difficult to identify. Ms. Charland and Ms. LaRue expressed that they are both personally in opposition to a community center, but they are supportive of a feasibility study to understand it further. Mr. Cooper said that performing a feasibility study is in line with the proposed goal to provide fiscally responsible services.

Ms. LaRue said the big items are preserving and enhancing existing facilities; the 50-acre park; active transportation and trails; and the feasibility of the two big items. The committee generally agreed with that list. Ms. Charland asked if there should be orders of magnitude provided for cost. Mr. Ford reminded the committee that the Town Supervisor directed them not to worry about funding. Ms. Charland asked whether the actions are expected to be funded by grants. Mr. Brand said the Town has local funding from the parks and recreation fees.

Mr. Cooper asked the committee to provide him with any specific comments they have on the plan as soon as possible.

Ms. Charland asked about the goals for the January 6 meeting. Mr. Brand responded that the committee will recommend the draft plan document to the Town Board; establish a schedule for the adoption process; and establish the SEQR process.

Ms. LaRue identified numerous public comments expressing support for the Mertensia sledding hill. She asked whether there were other opportunities for sledding in the Town. Mr. Cooper showed a map of the 50-acre Town Land including slope areas to demonstrate there might be areas available there.

Mr. Cooper showed the committee photos from the “Anarchy Zone” kids’ playground in Ithaca.

6. OPEN DISCUSSION - COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND TOWN STAFF

None.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

The next Committee Meeting will be held on Monday, January 6th at 6:30 p.m., in the Main Meeting Room at the Town Hall. Notice will be provided to the Daily Messenger and posted on the Town's Bulletin Board and Website

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Cooper