

**Recreation Commission Meeting**

5/1/2023

Zoom

DATE: June 16, 2023

TIME: 8:47 AM

Commission Attendees: Paul Cowing (chair), Dave Lind (Vice Chair), Cortney Eldridge (Secretary), Steve Colello, Ken Krilla, Josh Gould, Anthony Ferrante

Town Attendees: Brandon Fitts, Patrice Garvin

Guests: Mike Mahoney from Belmont Youth Baseball; Donna Ruvolo from Friends of Grove Street

Call to order 12:02pm

**Grove Street Amendment for Community Preservation Committee (CPC) Project: Brandon Fitts**

Summary: Catherine Bowen, Town Meeting Member, Precinct 4, put forward an amendment to a Town Meeting article which proposed to alter/change the scope of Grove Street Baseball/Basketball project. The altered scope would defund the baseball portion of the project. Brandon read the motion as received.

We are unsure why the amendment was put forward – there was no explanation.

The goal today is a vote for the commission to support or not support the amendment.

Discussion:

Cortney: Can we split them out to baseball; basketball to two projects?

Dave: Not at this time. We could have done this before, but it's too late to do it now.

Cortney: Do we have money in the CPC Budget for both?

Dave: Yes. We would not have put them forward if the CPC could not fund the project(s).

Cortney: We lose a lot of economies of scale if we do them separately, correct?

Brandon: Correct.

Patrice: Town Counsel is currently reviewing whether this can even be allowed to be put forward.

Brandon: To clarify, the CPA allows you to fund only certain things. NOT roads, infrastructure, etc. CPA funds can only be used for four categories of spend: parks, open space, historical preservation, and conservation land.

Dave: Belmont Youth Baseball is in opposition to this amendment. Have we heard from Friends of Grove Street?

Donna Ruvolo: We went into this looking at the entire Grove Street project as a holistic project. With the overall benefit of doing things collaboratively. The original intention of doing it all at once was to limit inconvenience to the various user groups of the park (and to be fiscally responsible by leveraging worksites when possible). Friends of Grove Street are also in opposition to the amendment.

Brandon: We have had comments on Chenery, and moving the Grove Street project forward now (and its potential impact on Chenery). We are a few cycles away from our ability to put forward Chenery. Landscape of schools, modulars, and scope needs to happen first.

Steve: Where are we with the Grove Street project?

Brandon: We have approved Phase I funding for design/development and this is Phase II funding. We cannot go out to bid until/unless the funding is allocated by Town Meeting.

Cortney: Query on CPC funding and timing. We know what the budget is for next year, but if this project is not moving forward this year, it has an impact on future projects, right?

Brandon: Yes, and this amendment was submitted just before 4:00pm the day of the deadline without explanation. If we kick the can down the road, this will have a delay on other projects that are in need of attention.

Dave: clarification on funding and timing – we do not know what the state match is, but we do know our (town) CPC budget on July 1<sup>st</sup> for that fiscal year. Town Meeting approved Phase I of the Grove Street project on June 6<sup>th</sup> for baseball and basketball renovation; it passed 243:7.

Ken: Seeking clarity on what is possible by Town Meeting members.

Brandon: Town Meeting Members can submit amendments.

Donna: There are many opportunities and public meetings that public can participate in and make comments. We (Friends of Grove Street) are also taxpayers – we are not looking for bells and whistles. We want to do long-lasting, durable changes that are affordable and within budget.

Paul: According to Activitas, 2,599 hours of scheduled activity for baseball – more than all other fields (except for Harris Field). One of the largest parts of this project is about drainage and intertwined with basketball and baseball. By defunding the baseball project, it has a negative impact on the basketball project.

We discussed this at our August 10, 2021 meeting. One of the largest aspects and considerations was the safety of the current condition of the fields. The way the ball moves across the playing field is important, especially for baseball (for which the ball is hard). A handful of children each year are injured due to the uneven surface and this is a significant safety concern. Activitas graded each of the playing fields roughly the same grade.

Ken: Clarification requested: what do you mean by graded?

Paul: Two things: grades for infield and outfield – field angle/grade; grades for Activitas were the score of the field.

Brandon: Soccer fields were done 10-15 years ago; baseball fields done 20-25 or more years ago and a higher need for rehab.

#### Motion

The Recreation Commission rejects the amendment as presented and supports the original Grove St CPC proposal.

Unanimously approved: Dave Lind, Steve Colello, Cortney Eldridge, Ken Krilla, Josh Gould, Anthony Ferrante, Paul Cowing

Meeting adjourned: 12:27pm