

ROUTE 17 RECREATIONAL COMPLEX BUILDING COMMITTEE

Special Onsite Meeting
Monday, June 22, 2020
Portland CT 06480

Present: Jessica Labbadia, vice chair; Chris Donahue, Michael Susca, Joseph Aresco, Anne Fischer

Absent: Brian McCarthy, Chair; Carla MacKay, Jen Oliva (alternate)

Others Present: Ralph Zampano (BOS), Jim Tripp (BOS), Nate Foley, Portland Parks and Recreation Director;
James Bolstridge, Portland Little League President

1. Call Meeting to Order

Vice Chair Jessica Labbadia called the special onsite meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

2. Public Comment: None

3. Project Update & Discussion

Status Update: Ralph Zampano provided a document with the following updates.

- **Parking Lots** – Completed. Handicap and directional signs need to be mounted, planned for week of June 22.
- **Strickland** – Light at Route 17 and Entry must be installed. DeRita will put in light bases during week of June 22. Then Eversource can install lights. Lighting should be completed by end of month. Small pavement patch will be done on road where utility pole was during same week.
The wires (owned by Frontier) are a legal height, but are low and could potentially present a challenge if a large truck uses that road. Two street lights (to be installed by Eversource) must be in place before the park opening.
- **Playground** – Completed. NOTE: Portland’s additional rules signage will have to be added. Temporary COVID signs will have to be added for opening.
There is a short safety fence on the playground, which was installed to protect younger children from being knocked down accidentally by older children.
- **Fitness Circuit** – Completed. NOTE: Portland’s additional rules signage will have to be added. Temporary COVID signs will have to be added for opening.
- **Walking Track/Trails** – Completed.
- **Baseball/Soccer Fields** – Discussion underway between Town and DeRita/StoneHedge to work out details for transferring fields to Town. Little League and Soccer Club will not use the fields until the fall. Portland Parks & Recreation may use the fields for light program activity.
James Bolstredge asked about the possibility of playing games this summer. That is not a likely scenario given that the fields still need work to get the grass up to an acceptable level.
The transfer of the ownership of the fields to the town is under discussion.
- **Secondary Grassy Areas** – Some of the secondary grass areas such as the playground area are mature. Other areas such as around the fitness circuit, bocce court and old Strickland road (recently hydro seeded) must be fully established. As is the case with the fields, this is being discussed between Town and DeRita/StoneHedge. A drain must be lifted and area re-graded in the grassy area by the flagpole. It is a tripping hazard.

- **Other Landscaping** – There are a number of trees that died during the winter. They will need to be replaced, but it makes sense to do it in the fall. For the time being they should be removed. There is high brush along the fence on the south side. This should be cut down though it may not all be on town property.

- **Concessions/Bathrooms Building** – Rockfall must do some repair work on sections of the walls in the building. The FRP (fibre reinforced plastic) panels have bubbling going on in walls throughout the building as it appears that the epoxy used did not stick in those locations.

An inspection of the bathrooms at then June 22 meeting showed the work (bubbling) that must be repaired.

- **Pump Room/Storage Building** – Final plumbing work must be done to install the four-inch water meter once the Town receives the meter. Vortex has to re-program the splashpad controllers per final design changes.
- **Splashpad/Irrigation** – The re-programming of the controllers is necessary for this feature to work. Vortex is based in Canada and right now the US-Canadian border is closed until at least July 21 for non-essential travel. The hope will be to complete programming and test the splashpad and interoperability with the irrigation system by the end of July. **NOTE:** Portland’s additional rules signage will have to be added. Temporary COVID signs will have to be added for opening.

Anne Fischer asked if there will be a “safe zone” where passersby can sit/stand without getting wet.

Ralph Zampano and Jim Tripp stated that there will be a no splash zone around the perimeter of the splash pad, which includes the outer wall/seating.

- **Park Sign at Entry** – Nick DeRita and Jim Tripp spoke with Fox-Becker Granite and Memorial Company. They evaluated the brownstone that has been put in place for the sign and are concerned that about potential flaking, which would be troublesome for either engraving or direct mounting. They initially suggested mounting a new stone block on top, but are concerned about how it will look. There are no funds for an expensive solution. This is now a priority if we are to make it in time for a ribbon-cutting.

There was discussion at the June 22 meeting about alternatives for the entrance sign, both using the brownstone and alternatives. Chris Donahue provided a photo of a sign, mounted on wooden posts that could be mounted so it rises over the brownstone, but is not attached to the stone.

Anne Fischer suggested that perhaps the brownstone block could be moved and placed—along with another similarly sized stone—in the grassy area adjacent to the entrance to deter people from driving into the park when the gates are closed.

- **Final Punch List** – The main items have been noted here but a final walkthrough still needs to be done with all required parties.
- **Outstanding Items for Portland** – With the remaining contingency (approximately \$7,000) we need to handle (1) garbage pails (10-11) (2) Initial set of picnic tables for concession area (4-6 depending on pricing) and (3) Park recognition plaque project (we need to see if any of the stones at Salt Shed can be used to mount the plaque). Ralph Zampano and Chris Donahue did an initial look, but we may want to look at upper pile. Stone location probably in the grassy area by flagpole. If needed we can see if Quarry View has a good stone and would assist).
- **Park Opening** – The Opening Committee met on 6/18 to discuss the plan for the park. At this time the Committee is suggesting a ribbon-cutting ceremony tentatively on July 20 for invited guests (list similar to ground-breaking). At the completion of that ceremony, we will send a press release to the Rivereast News and the Middletown Press to announce the opening to the public.

There was discussion at the June 22 meeting about the July 20 opening. This would not be a public launch and is dependent on the completion of the punch list items.

- We anticipate the park features being released in the following order:
 - **ASAP** – Strickland Road (dependent on light installation)
 - **July 20** – Walking Track/Trails, Playground, Fitness Circuit, Concessions Building/Bathrooms, Fields (Parks & Recreation program use only), Parking Lots
 - **Early August** – Splashpad (dependent on US-Canada border restrictions)

Given the COVID situation, this release schedule provides a soft opening to minimize the size of the crowd. Following the ceremony, the park will be considered open. The plan would then be to have a large celebration in the spring with field events, band, food trucks, Inflatables, larger media presence (TV, radio?).

- Preliminary Task List for Ribbon-Cutting:
 - Confirm park task completion dates with Nick DeRita (Ralph Zampano)
 - Verify with Nick DeRita that the entrance sign can be completed by July (Ralph Zampano)
 - Verify with Nick DeRita (and/or Nate S) that fields, dead trees, overgrowth can be prepared for event (Ralph Zampano)
 - Select a brownstone for park plaque (Opening Committee)
 - Check into lead time on park plaque (Nate Foley)
 - Determine text for park plaque and provide for plaque creation (Opening Committee)
 - Determine ribbon-cutting invite list (start with groundbreaking list) and send out invitations (method TBD) (Jessica Labbadia, Nate Foley)
 - Create park rules signs (Rules Committee)
 - Purchase garbage pails
 - Purchase picnic tables

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Michael Susca, seconded by Joe Aresco. The meeting was adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Jon D'Arpino, Board Clerk
June 24, 2020

CC: Brian McCarthy, Jessica Labbadia