

# ROUTE 17 RECREATIONAL COMPLEX BUILDING COMMITTEE

Special Meeting

Thursday, May 28, 2020

Google Meets

Portland CT 06480

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

**Absent:** Carla MacKay, Jen Oliva (alternate),

**Others Present:** Ralph Zampano (BOS), Jim Tripp (BOS), Nate Foley, Parks and Recreation Director

## 1. Call Meeting to Order

Chair Brian McCarthy called the virtual Google Meets meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

## 2. Public Comment: None

## 3. Project Update & Discussion

- **Status Update:** Ralph Zampano provided the following updates
  - Fields: Spring work is underway on them with fertilizing and overseeding.
  - Trees: Nearly all the trees did not survive the winter, which is a little concerning. Nick Derita suggested to avoid replanting trees on east hill as it may not hold enough water. I told Nick to make sure some of us are out there when they come to do replanting so we can move them around accordingly.
  - Splashpad: Nick DeRita is waiting for the vendor team to come later in May to do the startup and testing.
  - Playground: This has been completed and Nick DeRita taped off the area, but we still have an issue with people going on the equipment. The tape needs to be re-done.
  - Fitness Circuit: All equipment has been installed and underdrains and mulching work has also been completed. Caution taping must be placed around the equipment.
  - Bike Racks: Nick DeRita was in the process of ordering these.
  - Concession Buildings: The concession room hood is in place. The buildings now have electricity and all fixtures have been installed. There are some marks (bumps) on the sheet rock that need to be fixed. At this point the only work left is some final plumbing work.
  - Brownstone: We selected eight stones for installation as natural seating in the park. Five were placed in the playground area, three in the fitness area, and one by the beginning of the wall along the walking path. The one by the wall was an extra stone delivered so we used it. I think they look great. Nick DeRita has to grind down some rebar.
  - Entry Sign: We selected a different stone for the entryway, and it is in place now and permanently mounted. It is larger and has more lettering surface. Per Bob Shea's suggestion I have asked Nick to investigate letter engraving for the park name on it.
  - Strickland: Frontier has moved the final four wires and Eversource removed the pole. Nick DeRita has indicated that the wires should be moved to the new pole. Bob Shea will look at the site to determine when the road can be reopened. Nick has cleaned up and seeded the area. Eversource will install the two light poles.

- **Open Items & Budget:**

We have approximately \$7K remaining unless something unforeseen arises. With that, we will need to do the following:

- (1) Purchase garbage cans for the park and set of picnic tables for the concession area
- (2) Get park plaque created. Ralph Zampano suggests that we find an appropriate brownstone to place near the flagpole and attach the plaque. Nick DeRita will raise the drain.

Chris Donahue suggested purchasing the tables now when the funds are available. Ralph Zampano agreed.

Chris Donahue asked about the possibility of extending the baseball field netting. Ralph stated that there was some discussion although it is not certain who would bear the expense.

There was discussion about how many picnic tables would be needed (expense, space). Jim Tripp noted the tables are durable (heavy), fire resistant and hold up well.

Anne Fisher asked about the basketball court. Ralph Zampano stated that the remaining funds cannot support the basketball court. Anne Fisher and Joe Aresco both noted that the splash pad area is not secure and has seen children playing in the area. Vice chair Jessica Labbadia suggested temporarily using a padlock to deter entry.

- **Warranty:** Considering the pandemic, there is a good possibility we may not use some of the park features this summer, specifically the splashpad. We will have to see state guidelines are in place. Ralph has asked Nick DeRita what impact this would have on the warranty. This will be a topic of discussion with Weston & Sampson, DeRita, and the town. Ralph Zampano stated his concern about having enough time to run and test the splashpad equipment. Chairman McCarthy suggested negotiating an extended warranty given the fact that the splashpad will not likely be used this summer.

- **Rules/Signage Committee:** We have a committee for this. Nate Foley will schedule a meeting to review some of the draft documentation/signage he has put together. We need to get this done so we can work on getting the signs in place.

Nate Foley referred to the information (proposed rules) he sent via email. He noted that signs indicating dogs must be leashed will be needed. Ralph stated that it should be a Parks & Recreation decision.

Nate Foley discussed options for rules signage. Jessica Labbadia asked about rules enforcement. Nate Foley stated that there is no rules enforcement staff (supervisor) other than Parks & Recreation staff.

Jenn Olivia asked about pets and if dogs are allowed in all parks. Nate Foley stated that dogs are allowed in all parks but must be leashed. Chris Donahue stressed the need for strict enforcement (to ensure safety and dog owners pick up after their dogs) given the prevalence of children that will be using the park.

Chairman McCarthy asked what needs to be completed before the park can be opened, at least for walking. Ralph Zampano stated that the work on Strickland must be completed. Chris Donahue stated that they must proceed with caution to avoid large crowds at the park since opening it for walking would imply that the playground and fields are also open. Ralph Zampano stated that there will be additional discussion to determine the best course of action.

- **Ribbon-Cutting:** We have a committee, but the COVID-19 pandemic presents a challenge given the restrictions on groups of more than five people. We will need to discuss this and consider what the guidelines will allow. Vice chair Jessica Labbadia suggested having some type of media event (alert) to publicize the opening and indicating a grand opening will be held in the Spring (2021). Ralph Zampano stated that a small ceremony (involving specific people who have played a role, i.e. committee members, board of selectman) could be held. Chairman McCarthy stated that there was no point in having a ribbon cutting unless the playground equipment was open.
- **Future Meeting Date:** The next meeting will be held on Monday, June 22, 2020. Future meetings will be held on an as-needed basis.

### **Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn was made by Chris Donahue. The meeting was adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Jon D'Arpino, Board Clerk  
May 29, 2020

CC: Brian McCarthy, Jessica Labbadia