

The Hood Park Steering Committee met on Thursday, August 20, 2020, beginning at 11:00 a.m., in the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor meeting room of the Derry Municipal Center. Several members of the Committee joined via Zoom.

Physically present: Rick Metts; Richard Tripp; Beverly Donovan; Elizabeth Robidoux; Mike Fowler; George Sioras; Charlie Foote; Doug Rathburn; Edith McGillen; Kim Walsh; Jay Tombari; Melanie Davis; Owen Provencher

Virtually present via Zoom: Michael Bailey; Paul Lindemann; Richard Scheib; Dave Caron; Brian Murray; Casey Porter (UNH Cooperative Ext); Stephen Meno (UNH Cooperative Ext.); Mark Connors

A quick overview was provided of the project. The town had applied for a grant to master plan the park and rail trail area. There were several different groups in town that had different ideas as to what should be done with Hood Park, which included revitalizing it with artwork, a splash pad, a green house, trail networks, and an arboretum. It was thought that it would be a good idea to pull all these ideas together and start looking at the big picture. The town was not awarded the grant, but funds were secured to keep moving forward. UNH Cooperative Extension will partner with this group to assist with outreach and engagement and to provide some training to the subcommittee.

A timeline has been developed as a jumping off point and it shows where UNH Cooperative can provide help (see attached – note: this is the unrevised timeline). The Steering Committee will decide what needs to be done and when, and it is possible that subcommittees can be formed to assist with the effort outside of the regular meetings of the Steering Committee. After the group has received input and data, Casey and Stephen will work to review and analyze the data and provide a written report to the Committee by December 3. They can help facilitate discussions and assist in the preparation of a presentation to Town Council. The plan is to complete that in December for a December or January presentation to Council. Other meetings can happen during the timeline.

Richard Scheib noted this is a high-level timeline. He expects with the bids for the work on the rail trail that it might affect this timeline. He asked that the bid dates and construction schedule be incorporated into the timeline. Elizabeth Robidoux said she would take care of that. Mike Fowler advised the Town Council approved last evening a supplemental appropriation of \$225,000 for the extension of the rail trail. The bid closed on July 30 and a contractor has been selected. The work will begin early to mid-September for a period of about 8 weeks. It is anticipated the work will be completed by mid-November.

Nominations were accepted from the floor for Chair and Co-Chair of the Steering Committee. Jay Tombari accepted the position of Co-Chair. Mark Brassard was nominated as Chair. He was not in attendance, but it was hoped he would accept the position.

Casey and Stephen outlined the community engagement options and how people could be reached to provide information and to gain input on the revitalization of Hood Park.

Stephen explained it was important to know the difference between “outreach” and “engagement”. Outreach is when information is being provided; engagement is when input is received. For this effort, it would be important to know who, what, when, where and why. WHAT is being discussed is the revitalization of Hood Park. The Steering Committee needs to determine WHO the audience is that they will be reaching out to for information and input. HOW will the Steering Committee reach out to the public – what platform will they use? It is important to know WHEN to reach out to each specific audience as timing can be important. It is also important to know WHERE to reach the specific audiences. If the Committee is trying to reach school age children, would that be during the school day or after school? For retirees, would that be at assisted living facilities, or civic groups they belong to? There needs to be a clear message as to WHY this group is looking for input and WHY it wants to talk to the various groups. It is very important to let the various groups know their input is crucial and valuable to this effort. The audiences need to know at what level they are being involved. That can range from informing them of what has happened to asking them to be co-creators in the effort. For this project, the Town Council will be making the final decision and that should be made clear to the public. However, the audiences will be informing the process and their input and decisions will help Town Council reach their final determination.

It will be important to match the HOW with WHO and WHY. People need to be met where they are and in most cases that may have to be done virtually. No one strategy will match each audience with the goals, so the Committee should plan to combine strategies.

Some strategies might include Key Informant interviews where stakeholders are identified such as the Rail Trail Alliance, Recreation Department, PTA, younger people, etc. Many of those groups are represented on the Steering Committee. These interviews could be done via phone or via an online platform. Specific individuals should be targeted to obtain good, rich information. For smaller segments, there could be online focus groups, or story telling circles. It would be good to get information from the elders in town to obtain aspects of the past that the town might want to bring back. This could be done online or in person.

With regard to surveys, there are many options available. There is also the ability to do online polling. These options can be integrated into social media. For example, it could be said these are our ideas, please rank them; or what amenity or project would you choose if you could only choose one? It is also a good way to inform people of the process and to have them join in.

Michael Bailey suggested asking people at the election what they think of Hood Park. Stephen stressed the need to make it clear to residents this is a separate issue from the election. Specific survey types could be visual preference surveys where people can choose from different visual concepts.

Mark Connors suggested reviewing recent studies and perhaps coordinating efforts. UNH just completed a Recreation Assessment for the town and one of their grad students will be

conducting surveys of people utilizing the rail trail. That might be information this group can use.

Jay Tombari felt in this situation it would be important to keep in mind the historical aspects. Demographics might be helpful - knowing who to target will be very useful. Who uses the park, what businesses are nearby, what do the long time residents have to say or remember about the park, what are the questions this group wants to ask, what decisions are to be made and what input needs to be gathered? Those are all questions this group needs to answer.

Stephen noted the suggestions he is making are tools for brainstorming. It is important to work on this to gather input because Hood Park is so special. This is all progress moving forward; what does the Committee want?

Mr. Murphy suggested reaching out to the Derry News to get them involved and perhaps write a story about what this group is doing. Members of the group will reach out to Julie Huss at the paper.

Casey noted posters are a good way to gain input while practicing social distancing. Posters could provide an opportunity to ask questions about what people would like to see in Hood Park or to rank items. They could be put in areas where people gather such as at the Post Office, etc. Another idea is a Post It Flash Mob. For this example, post its with the phrase "I Wish This Was" can be made available for people to write down what they would like. This could be placed at a weatherproof installation at Hood Park. This also gives people an opportunity to see what other people have said.

Other ideas include interactive message boards such as chalk boards where people can provide input quickly. Post cards that can be downloaded or mailed to all residents could provide an area for people to sketch out what they want. The post cards can be collected and uploaded to a website to give a visual of what people are thinking about. Not all types of engagement are going to work for each type of audience. Student artwork is a good way to reach kids. They can be asked to draw what they want to see or what they like about the park. They can be posted around town in storefronts or on a website. Maps are a valuable tool. Paper maps are useful when people have the opportunity to draw what they want to see. Interactive maps are useful as they are online. Crowdsourcing maps are another alternative where people can add their favorite place or drop a pin on what they want added. The committee will need to decide what it wants to ask to help decide what the group wants each audience to do. It is important to remember that people need to be informed, to obtain information, and have a place to add the information. The town is currently exploring ArcGIS HUB, which is a tool that allows public comment and provides a one stop shop to get people informed and engaged. It can act as a website for this effort.

For the next steps, the committee should decide who they want to engage, what information do they want to collect, and what information is the committee seeking? What engagement tools does the group like best? What stood out? What other ideas does the group have for engaging the community? For the next meeting, the committee can work on developing the engagement plan.

Richard Tripp said he liked the outreach ideas and felt the best way to get this done quickly was to form a subcommittee. The goal of the subcommittee would be to determine who and how. He has some ideas about how to contact people, such as through surveys and the newspaper but this effort should be extended outside of Derry to the Union Leader and perhaps with a segment on WMUR. Segments could be posted on social media. He likes the post card idea; they could be made available at local businesses. Mark Connors said he would be happy to share information through his established contact group which is over 3000 people. Casey said people should be made aware of this effort while they have the opportunity to give input. It should not be after final decisions have been made.

Richard and Jay offered to work on the subcommittee to determine the target audience, and to come up with a list of engagement tools that can be utilized (key informant interviews, post cards, etc.). Kim Walsh and Beverly Donovan will also take part in the subcommittee.

Paul Lindemann said it was important to get the word out to the townspeople that there is an effort to revitalize Hood Park so that more people can join in the effort; this will pave the way for the engagement to follow.

Rick Metts noted the importance of people knowing their input is valuable and will be part of the effort, and that there is not a predetermined decision.

Town staff will work on the ArcGIS HUB to create a website and engagement tool for this effort.

The subcommittee will report back at the next meeting.

The next meeting will be September 03.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Robidoux

## Proposed Project Timeline

**August 20:** UNH Extension provides training on community engagement tools

**September 3:** UNH Extension provides guidance on developing outreach & engagement plan

**September 17:** Steering Committee meets to plan/implement engagement activities

**Late September – Early November:** Steering Committee implements community engagement activities

**October 1:** UNH Extension provides feedback and guidance during community engagement activities

**November 12:** UNH Extension meets with Steering Committee to debrief community engagement activities

**November:** Community engagement activities adjourn in November. During the month of November, UNH Extension analyzes input gathered to provide a written report and presentation to Steering Committee in early December.

**December 3:** UNH Extension provides written report and presentation to Steering Committee providing synthesis of input gathered. Extension facilitates discussion with committee to discuss findings and prioritize actions, which the Steering Committee will then present to Derry Town Council.

**December:** UNH Extension provides assistance to Steering Committee to prepare for presenting recommendations to Derry Town Council.

**December or January:** Steering Committee presents recommendations to Derry Town Council