

The Hood Park Steering Committee met on Thursday, September 03, 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: Mark Brassard (Chair); Rick Metts (Derry Village Rotary); Richard Tripp (Town Council); Beverly Donovan (Economic Development Director); Elizabeth Robidoux (Economic Development/Planning); Mike Fowler (DPW Director); George Sioras (Planning Director); Charlie Foote (Town Council); Doug Rathburn (Information Technology Director); Jay Tombari (Co-Chair); Owen Provencher (DerryCAM)

Virtually present via Zoom: Michael Bailey (Waterview Estates); Paul Lindemann (Heritage Commission); Richard Scheib (Waterview Estates); Dave Caron (Town Administrator); Casey Porter (UNH Cooperative Ext); Stephen Meno (UNH Cooperative Ext.); Mark Connors (Derry Rail Trail Alliance); Karen Mundy Lincoln (Public Arts); Eric Stern (Derry Public Library Director)

Mark Brassard called the meeting to order at 11:07 a.m.

#### *Introductions*

Members present introduced themselves and their affiliations.

Motion by Rick Metts, seconded by George Sioras to approve the minutes of the August 20, 2020, meeting as written. Motion passed.

Casey Porter and Stephen Meno provided a brief overview of the norms for a hybrid meeting of this type outlining how people can be heard, which for those attending via Zoom would be by utilizing the “raise your hand” or “chat” feature. It was noted all decisions are consensus based and any disagreement between members will be put to a vote. Because this meeting is held under a hybrid structure with some members attending virtually and others physical present, there needs to be structure.

#### *Description of project*

The purpose of this Steering Committee is to develop and implement an outreach and engagement strategy to collect public input to inform the revitalization of Hood Park. The Committee will need to decide on what tools or techniques will be used to reach out to the community to see what the community wants. The Committee will need to decide what audience they are trying to reach and how they will accomplish that. There are many ideas about how to revitalize Hood Park, but some ideas have challenges associated with them. The Committee may discuss what ideas it feels would be beneficial for the town to pursue, and what other ideas are out there.

With regard to the timeline and overview – at the first meeting, the Steering Committee met and was provided an overview of some of the tools available. Today, it is hoped the Committee can focus on developing an outreach and engagement plan. Casey and Stephen are here to help with feedback and to provide advice on the process. In November, UNH Cooperative will assist in

analyzing the data that has been collected and compile a report for the Steering Committee. In December, UNH Cooperative will help prepare a presentation for the Steering Committee to present to the Town Council outlining the information collected and the Steering Committee's recommendations. The role of the Co-Chairmen is to move the process and keep the Committee on track. UNH will guide the engagement process. The Steering Committee implements the engagement tools and UNH Cooperative will help analyze the data.

Beverly Donovan noted the original timeline presented to the Steering Committee was aligned with a grant the town had hoped to receive, but the timeline also dovetails with the town budget schedule. She would like to adhere to that timeline so that Parks and Recreation and DPW will have the information available to move forward with planning their budgets for the next fiscal year.

Mark Brassard reiterated the Steering Committee gathers the information about the wants and needs of the community as it relates to the future of Hood Park and Hood Pond. UNH will help the Steering Committee prepare a report to present to Town Council in December. The Steering Committee can add ideas to the public input and perhaps add visuals to assist in the presentation. For example, it might be helpful for the public to see what a splash pad might look like at Hood Park, or what an arboretum might look like, or a discovery center. Casey noted that sketches of that type are beyond the scope of work outlined for UNH, but the Steering Committee can do that. Richard Tripp felt it was an overreach for the Steering Committee to present that type of detail. He felt the focus should be on gathering input from the stakeholders and presenting that data. A sketch might hint at implementation and there is enough work to gather the data and get it to UNH. He felt the Committee needed to be proactive and make sure that people in the community are aware of the project and how they can provide input. Once the Committee knows how to engage people, then they need to execute that, for example by attending other community meetings and sharing information. It was suggested that pictures or sketches might be good for references, but the Committee may not want to come up with specific layouts for the Park. Richard Tripp thought it might be interesting to see historically what used to be at the Park, what is there now and what could be there.

Dick Scheib did not think there was a lot to be done with the Pond itself without some sort of environmental study. It would be helpful to know what the costs would be associated with cleaning up the pond or what other types of environmental impacts there might be. Richard Tripp thought that beyond the scope of this Committee, which is in place to collect data and come up with engagement strategies.

#### *Mission Statement*

Mark Brassard read the proposed mission statement. "To celebrate, enhance, and protect the natural resource represented by Hood Park, recognizing its cultural and economic contribution to our Community as a place of recreation, education and solitude."

Motion by George, seconded by Richard to vote on the adoption of the mission statement. The motion passed and discussion ensued.

Casey noted that for a Committee of this type, typically there might not be a formal mission statement. It might be helpful to clarify if this is what the Committee is going to do. Karen Mundy Lincoln thought it might be early in the process to state this level of detail before engaging the community. She thought the purpose of the Committee was to get information to see what the community wanted. Coming out with a mission statement might be front loading and give the impression of a foregone conclusion.

George withdrew his motion and Richard seconded the withdrawal. Motion passes.

Motion by George to table the adoption of a mission statement until community input data is available, seconded by Richard. Motion passes.

#### *Review of Suggestions to Date*

Elizabeth Robidoux provided a review of the suggestions made to date as to what could be done at Hood Park. (please see the attached list).

Richard Tripp said he spoke with a lady on the rail trail and she suggested the addition of a porta potty closer to the rail trail. Karen Mundy Lincoln said youth in the 12 to 18-year-old age bracket are looking for places to go and have fun. A skatepark might be something that could be included adjacent to a splash pad. Mark Brassard said the Committee can discuss restoration of Hood Park. People might be captured by the idea of an arboretum if it benefits the community as a whole – arboretums are not typically found in more rural communities.

Casey advised she had asked Liz to provide the list of suggestions to date so that when the Committee is going through the engagement tools, they can say these are some of the ideas that have been heard to date so that everyone can become grounded. As the group considers the tools, they will ask for new ideas. The Committee will need to decide at what point they will have people rank or prioritize the accumulated suggestions. This list is just to show what exists to date.

Jay Tombari did not feel the group needed to narrow this list down – it exists to show an overview and can be used to note what people have already said. This Committee's mission is not to steer in any given direction, it is to collect input.

George Sioras noted the town has just completed the update of its Master Plan which touched on many aspects of the town. The update followed a similar process in that input was collected and then ranked to narrow down the top recommendations. Richard said he would not want to steer people to solutions. The Committee will be selecting tools to engage the public. The focus should be on how this group will collect the data. Mark Brassard felt the ideas are also a way to create excitement about the project. Owen Provencher thought that as people are performing the outreach, it might be a bit out of scope bring the pond back to a state where people could swim – that said, it might be that the group asks if that is something people would like to see.

Karen felt the Committee needs to start asking what age demographic will participate as each age group will participate differently. The Committee needs to make sure they are not excluding people. For example, the different groups might be youth and young families, 30-50 year olds,

50 plus, and 15-24 year olds. How does the Committee reach these various groups? Will social media be utilized, understanding that it is a quite specific platform and not all age demographics will be reached? DerryCAM can be utilized. Maybe during the painting of the new mural in the downtown, information about this project can be provided to the public. Casey said it is good to think about the target audience. That is part of the process. There are many tools available. Some available engagement techniques include discussion groups and brainstorming sessions. A faster way to gain input is through surveys and posters.

Paul Lindemann advised he has been approached as a member of the Heritage Commission by a resident who has one of the ice hauling sleds used by the Hood Company when it used to cut ice from Hood Pond. He would like to share that with the community. Jay felt that was a good idea and could be included in the data. Mark suggested adding an area to a website where people can add suggestions and comments.

#### *Presentation from Subcommittee*

Tabled

#### *Review of Hood Park HUB*

Liz provided an overview of the newly created Hood Park HUB. All Steering Committee materials such as agendas and meeting notes are being hosted on the Town of Derry Economic Development webpage. The HUB provides a web platform to initiate surveys, provide historical information about the Hood Pond and Hood Park and is a place to accumulate the data collected by the Steering Committee.

Rick Metts suggested adding a space to show what is there today. Beverly Donovan discussed the potential to add short video stories to the HUB that can add information about various aspects of revitalization. For example, Mike Fowler could discuss the pros and cons of the dam; Kim Walsh could discuss passive recreation and programming options; there could be a short video about the proximity of the Rail Trail or public arts. The videos could be 30 seconds to one minute and could be of benefit as people explore the site and think about options. It would provide information and give some perspective.

#### *Next Steps*

Casey suggested tabling the Outreach and Engagement planning chart to the next meeting. She will provide a digital copy that can be sent to the members in advance of the next meeting. She walked through the process. First, the Committee decides on which populations to engage. Who has a stake in the works? Second, the Committee comes up with the objectives – the gathering of new ideas; brainstorming; discussion and dialogue that takes place virtually, or in focus groups. How will the Committee prioritize these ideas and the results of the discussions to present to Town Council? Third, the Committee should think about the groups such as business owners – what groups are in place now the Committee can reach out to? For Seniors, are there facilities Committee members can visit in person or virtually? For youth groups, are there opportunities during school or after school hours? How will the Committee reach out to inform and educate people?

The HUB is one way, mailings and newsletters are another, there could be a dedicated Facebook page. For each group, the Committee will need to identify the appropriate engagement tools. The Committee needs to make sure no one is left out. What tools are best suited for each group?

Before the next meeting, the Committee members should give thought to this. Brainstorm the populations. Work on this and it can be discussed and decided at the next meeting. Multiple tools will be used for this project. It might be beneficial for the Committee to break into subcommittees for the various tools – i.e., youth group, survey group. Jay requested this be placed at the top of the agenda for the next meeting because this is the core of the Committee's work.

The next meeting will be September 17, 2020 at 11 a.m.

Motion by Rick, seconded by George to adjourn. Motion passes and meeting stood adjourned at 12:01.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Robidoux

## Ideas for revitalizing Hood Park

- Art walk
- Arboretum
- Greenhouse
- Re-opening of pond (water quality is an issue)
- Small splash pad
- Renovating the pavilion and creating a discovery center
- Highlight the existing flora and fauna
- Keep the dam or remove the dam – returning pond to natural stream state (former Aikens Brook)
- Dredge the pond – requires NH DES permitting and is a very costly project
- Update the trails in the woods – clear understory, light the path, enhance the trail
- Pinkerton Academy Forestry Program has indicated they can assist in efforts – would be undertaken as a field study for the students

Rail Trail extension is a separate project but there are mutual benefits to revitalizing the park.