

Town of Harpswell
Mitchell Field Committee Meeting
March 1, 2021

Attendees: Spike Haible, Don Miskill, Sharon Oehmig, David Znamierowski, Philip Conner, Bob Yanders, Mose Price, Lee Cheever, and Katherine Goodrich.

Also present: Mark Eyerman, David Chipman, Gary Vincent, and Barney Baker (Marine Engineer - Baker Design Consultants).

Meeting conducted remotely on Zoom.

A quorum was present. The meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM.

Meeting Minutes: The February 1, 2021 minutes were approved with corrections [9-0-0].

NOTE: All photos and screen share documents mentioned below are attached at the end of the minutes.

New Business:

• **Admin Building Update:**

- The town's application for a CDBG [Community Development Block Grant] was not approved.
- Unknown as to where we go from here to move forward. Up to the town administration.

• **Sub-division Plan**

- Town is preparing a survey plan of MF depicting the leased parcels (RT & cell Tower).
- Under state sub-division law, leasing parcels triggers a review by the Planning Board.

• **Running Tide Lease Revision**

- RT is executing their option for additional 3+ acres in the MFMBD (lower meadow).
- Town working on an amended lease.

• **Running Tide Well**

- RT approached the town two weeks ago to drill a well for water.
- Lease requires town approval for those types of infrastructure improvements. They were asked for a complete plan.
- (DC) We should think about a single well that would provide water for all the facilities at the waterfront. (ME) We would become a public utility and have to sort out who pays for what.

• **Combined Boat Launch – Town Dock Project:**

- At our last meeting, we spoke about a consolidated Town Dock / Boat Launch Project.
- Barney developed three options for a MF Integrated Town Landing. The cost estimate for each option considers Boat Launch components to be **Core Elements** of the project with additional improvements to the Causeway and upland parking as **Optional Elements**. Each option provides the boat launch and deep-water docking facilities, and all but PLAN C include improvements to the Truck Turnaround for off causeway parking and Causeway Head improvements to complement the Town Landing:

▪ **Plan A - ORIGINAL CONFIGURATION**

This plan combines the 2020 Town Dock design and the 2011 preliminary Boat Launch design. Projected costs are significantly over the project's target budget of \$620,000.

▪ **Plan B - REDUCED (SKEWED) LANDING**

This plan is a modified version of the Town Dock design together with the 2011 preliminary Boat Launch design. This achieves a cost reduction of approximately \$120,000 but remains significantly higher than the \$620,000 target. No attempt has been

made to reduce or eliminate **Optional Elements** to achieve cost reduction.

▪ **Plan C - EXTENDED LAUNCH RAMP FLOATS**

This plan does not have a gangway float system that is separate from the Boat Launch. Instead deep-water floats are connected by an extension from the Boat Launch floats. To close in on the target budget of \$620,000, no **Optional Elements** are provided with the exception of ADA parking on the Causeway Head.

▪ **Cost Estimates** – LOW is based on our lowest town dock bid from last August.

AVERAGE is based on analysis of recent Maine DOT project bids.

- (ME) If the June town meeting approves to \$50,000 we will have a total of \$310,000 for matching funds which means a project total of \$620,000. No money for other things.
- Committee agreed to hold a separate workshop on Monday, March 15 @ 5:00 PM. The sole purpose will be to review all the data and select the option we should move forward with. Barney will attend the workshop.
- (BB) I will add an option D. Option A is most expensive. Plan D is the least. Challenge is keeping costs reasonable in the climate of current high bids.
- (ME) The town will have to withdraw the two current SHIP applications and submit a new one. We won't have to go to the end of the queue, however, they have already programmed their 2021 money so realistically we are looking at 2022.
- Public Comment from Gary Vincent email, date 2/21/2021 at 1:46 PM

"I appreciate the Town making all committee meeting available to the public, it provides great insight into projects and activities. I am very impressed with the organization, leadership and contribution of members of your committee. Below are some personal comments on items raised in the meeting:

1. Reference the discussion on the boat ramp. I concur with the direction to not reduce the ramp size. If some scope needs to be reduced it should not be on areas that are 1) critical to function and 2) would require significant cost to modify in the future to meet long term objectives

2. 6' wide float extension on the boat ramp to create an alternate waterfront access/fishing option I would be concerned:

- When the 6' floats are there for launch and retrieval only I think there is one level of risk/"attractive nuisance". Were you to expand the use to public/ADA access to a float system, I'd be concerned about the traffic, risk and safety implications.

- I think about dual use, 2 way traffic, ADA, no rails, launch/retrieve ramp activity/traffic, we all know the "stability" of 6" floats, even with pilings can be scary at times for those without sea legs. My recommendation would be to think hard about that portion of the project to be launch/retrieval only. An unintended consequence could also be the undermining of the State's view on additional funding for separate ramp/float addition later. I'd worry an "end state" with 6' float dual use ADA is an accident waiting to happen.

3. On linkage of phase 1 to the long term vision of the area for funding support. In the conversation it appeared the piling installation costs (like the 24' ramp) were items that, in order to be cost effective, needed to be done in one installation/visit/contract. I'd recommend looking at the pilings installation (all required per final configuration) as your tie into the future float/public access system. The logic can be made clear to the States via cost justification and it also demonstrates the Town's commitment/investment to the dual use down the road. In addition, up to your spending ceiling level, add the shoreland prep for the ramp attachment (as much as affordable). I would then suggest **everything** else not related to pilings and ramp foundation be delayed to Phase two."

- **Redraw of the MF Business Zone Update:**

- With the sub-division plan being drawn, we will know the exact dimensions of the RT lease (~3.1 acres) option area, and can move forward with redrawing the MFMBD boundaries.
- (PC) Can we redraw their leased area? Not unilaterally.
- (SH) The service road falls within their leased area. Amended lease gives them two choices: (1) Road remains in place, the town maintains the road and can use it to access waterfront, or (2) if they want to use all their land then they would relocate road to the edge of their leased area.
- (Screen share) Running Tide Leased areas map
- (PC) Would they be amenable to changing their area dimensions to stay north of the service road. (ME) To date, they are interested in having a wider area, not longer and narrower. (DC) Any changes to their leased area would have to go to town meeting.
- (KG) Walking Path status? (ME) The perimeter road is not included in their leased area, and is available for continued public use.

- **Comprehensive Waterfront Plan** - Tabled. Want to stay focused on the other two big projects (TD-BL, MFMBD redraw) then come back to this one.

- **Snow Plowing Proposal:**

- (Screen Share) Proposed Change to the MF Snow Plowing Plan
- Multiple requests to plow the north perimeter road for walkers this year. Reviewed the current roads plowed and the requested additional road to be included.
- Would want a single pass with pickup size truck and front plow only. Push the snow to the outside fence line.
- (DZ) What would it cost? Would be added to the town plow project. Unsure what the cost differential is? Is the roadway in good enough shape to get a good result? Yes, it is all paved.
- (DM) Spoke with Mr. Dresser who made the proposal. He volunteered to donate money. I directed him to Terri Sawyer.
- **Motion to recommend** that the north perimeter road at Mitchell Field be added to the town's snow plow contract. The motion was approved (9-0-0).

- **Walking Path:**

- (Screen share) Walking Path Concept diagram
- This is a concept drawing so the path location is not firm.
- (DC) we've discussed haying the upper meadow. We pay to mow it. Lower meadow has other uses. (DM) Lower meadow use is grass parking so it would not preclude other uses.
- (SH) Start with upper meadow for now. (DM) Path would go along the edge of the upper tier. Leave the lower meadow alone for now. Possible connectors to allow people to the woods trail. Grass path for now. Depending on use we could make changes in the future.
- Minimal expenditures to put the path in. Scott has volunteered to mow it.
- Concerns about birds and plants. Worried that we might endanger bird nesting. We can close the path during birding season if needed. While we support planting at the field, those initiatives need to be coordinated with the committee. Some plants are invasive and we have other projects in the mill to consider.
- Concern that too many projects for the meadows will destroy important bird habitat. (ME) Review the Stantec Natural Resources Assessment (Town web site/MF Web Page).
- Need a subcommittee. Dave Z., Lee Cheever and Don will start to work this project and come back to us in April with an assessment/plan.

- **Bike Pump Park Proposal:**

- (Screen Share) Upper Meadow Proposed Projects diagram
- (DM) Two possible options on upper tier or lower tier south of the community garden.
- (MP) Concern about active activity in area where the birds are. What about the copse just inside

the entrance on the north side?

- (DC) Who pays for it? Initiator could raise public funds.
- (DZ) Who's going to use it, seems like a small subset? Maintenance requirements? Liability concerns? How well does it hold up, or just become a mud pit? (ME) Consult NE Mountain Bike Assoc., Gorham Recreation Dept., and Bath Recreation Department who have parks. Attracts adults and children to use the facility.
- (BY) Concerned about kids riding on their bikes to get to the field. Route 123 is a dangerous road. Also, not much parking inside the gate. This would make that problem bigger.
- (DC) Needs more study to answer the DZ questions. Don will reach out and do the research then report back. This is not a need to do right away project.

• **Solar Field Proposal:**

- We have the two original option proposals from Gary Vincent, and his new input (pdf).
- (MP) We had approved a solar array site in the Master Plan Update. Is this proposal in addition to that, or instead of that? (DC) The E&T committee is looking at alternatives to building our own field – buying green power cheaper and letting someone else build the field. The planned array in the MF MP Update was very small. What Gary is proposing is a large scale array that would produce income for the town.
- (GV) – Request for Due Diligence review to look at a 5 megawatt array on about 15 -20 acres to generate significant income to allow MF to become self-funding. Potential lease income of \$65 - \$80,000 plus \$20,000 with negotiated additional energy to offset Harpswell use.
- (MP) How many households would 5mw serve? (GV) Big range 700 – 1300 households.
- (GV) Do we change or move the MF business district to accommodate this idea instead of the MFMBD to generate this income. The current setup doesn't generate that much income.
- (LC) Is this photovoltaic or crystalline? There are people that would get you all the answers on income, space required, and best technology to use.
- (SO) Is this your own proposal, separate from E&T? (GV) Yes, I submitted it to the BoS/Town Administration. They forwarded it to you for consideration.
- (PC) Did you consider wind power? (GV) I did not. Changes to the law mean you don't have to be an energy producer. You can lease the land to another company to build it and sell the power.
- (MP) Two questions: (1) How big was the array originally proposed for MF? (GV) less than an acre. (2) What is the estimated acreage for the portion of the MFMBD behind the admin building that we want to realign? (ME) Approximately 3+ acres.
- (Screen share) Lower Meadow Planned Uses
- (SH) MF MP has been pretty consistent with surveys about how people view the field and want to use it. Tend towards conservation and open space. It is a prime recreational and public use space. 15 acres is very large. That's most of the lower meadow, and probably wouldn't be favorably received. Even smaller sizes will have to "fit in" with what people want the field to do for them. We will carefully review the proposal and how it dovetails with other priorities and the elements in the Master Plan.
- (GV) This is above the MF MP. The original MP said it would self-generate funds. We've spent close to \$4 million and have generated about \$28,000 income. MFMBD is tied to marine business. That has failed. Back away and expand the business district 15 -20 acres for income.
- (GV) To date, we've always submitted master plans for approval to the legislative body, but never alternatives. The question I'm asking, is this a viable plan to make MF self-sufficient?
- (PC) The TD/BL cost estimates are very large and beg the question, how do we pay for it? We are a small town so an income like this would be a good thing, and we should consider it.
- Multiple comments about making sure we evaluate aspects of the proposal and how it integrates with the other elements of the MF MP. The town should consider other sites for a solar array. It's a great asset

- (GV) Just due diligence so we understand the positive and negative aspects of a solar array against the MP initial mandate to make it self-funding. The town just needs to contact the right outside entity for answers to all your questions.
- (Screen share – MF overview with the landfill, electrical splice boxes, and the Farr Airfield).
- (KG) The old landfill, can it be used for the other projects to save the open meadows? (DC) It is far away from utilities for connecting a solar array. Would be very expensive.
- (LC) Is Farr Airfield active? Yes, it is an uncontrolled airfield, no tower on private property.
- **Picnic Tables:**
 - (DM) We need to replace the tables that we have had to remove from service. Looked at prefab prices but they aren't the same design. I've taken all the measurements of the current design which everyone likes and priced them out at less than \$200. There is \$1,000 in the 2021 budget, and Running Tide has offered to make a donation for new tables. We will make some changes to extend their lifespan, PT legs and protecting the topside braces to prevent water from rotting the wood. Prime and paint all the pieces. We will build tables with the ADA extension.
 - Cmte wants a more natural landscape color. Will send a new pallet to choose from.
 - Maybe we can store them in the winter. Can leave some out and store some.
- **Dog Policy:**
 - (DC) Several complaints about dogs and non-compliance with leash requirement. Also, not picking up the waste. Can we have the animal control officer have a presence at the filed for a while to educate and help with compliance.
 - Need the MF Rules sign on the kiosk updated with the new rules.
 - Thanked KG and others for picking up dog waste on their walks.
- **Planner's Update** – See first five items above.
- **Chair's Update** – Nothing beyond items discussed tonight.
- **Steward's Update** – Next report in the Spring.
- **Work Plan** – Nothing until the Spring.
- **Action Items Update** – No changes.

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 PM.

Handouts:

- M. Eyerman memo, *Planner's Update*, February 25, 2021
- MF Steward memo, *Request to Plow the North perimeter Road*, February 17, 2021
- MF Steward memo, *Evaluating the Solar Array Proposals at Mitchell Field*, February 18, 2021
- MF Steward memo, *Bike Pump Park Proposal for Mitchell Field*, February 19, 2021
- MF Steward memo, *Meadows Walking Path Proposal for Mitchell Field*, February 20, 2021
- *Mitchell Field Action Items List*, February 7, 2020
- *Project 18-58 Mitchell Field Integrated Town Landing Plan Costs*, February 27, 2021
- *Project 18-58 Mitchell Field Integrated Town Landing Plan Options*, February 27, 2021
- Gary Vincent email, February 27, 2021 with pdf attachment for March 1, 2021 meeting, *Mitchell Field Solar Array Lease Option Discussion*

Next MF Committee Meeting:

- MFC meeting on Monday, April 5th, 2021 at 5:00 PM via Zoom
- MFC meeting on Monday, May 3rd, 2021 at 5:00 PM via Zoom
- MFC meeting on Monday, June 7th, 2021 at 5:00 PM via Zoom

Respectfully submitted,
Don Miskill, Secretary

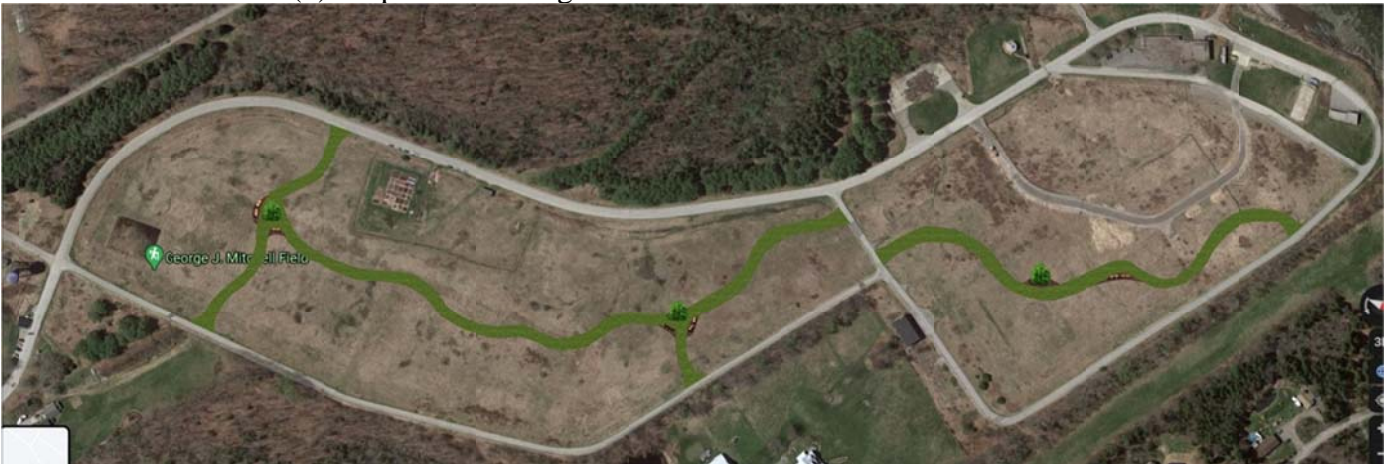
Attachments:

- (1) Running Tide Lease Areas in the lower meadow
- (2) Proposed Snow Plowing Plan for the North Perimeter Road
- (3) Proposed Walking Path Plan for Meadows at Mitchel Field
- (4) Mitchell Field Lower Meadow – Planned Projects Overlay
- (5) Mitchell Field Upper Meadow – Planned Projects Overlay
- (6) Mitchell Field Overview showing landfill, Electrical splice boxes, and Farr Airfield

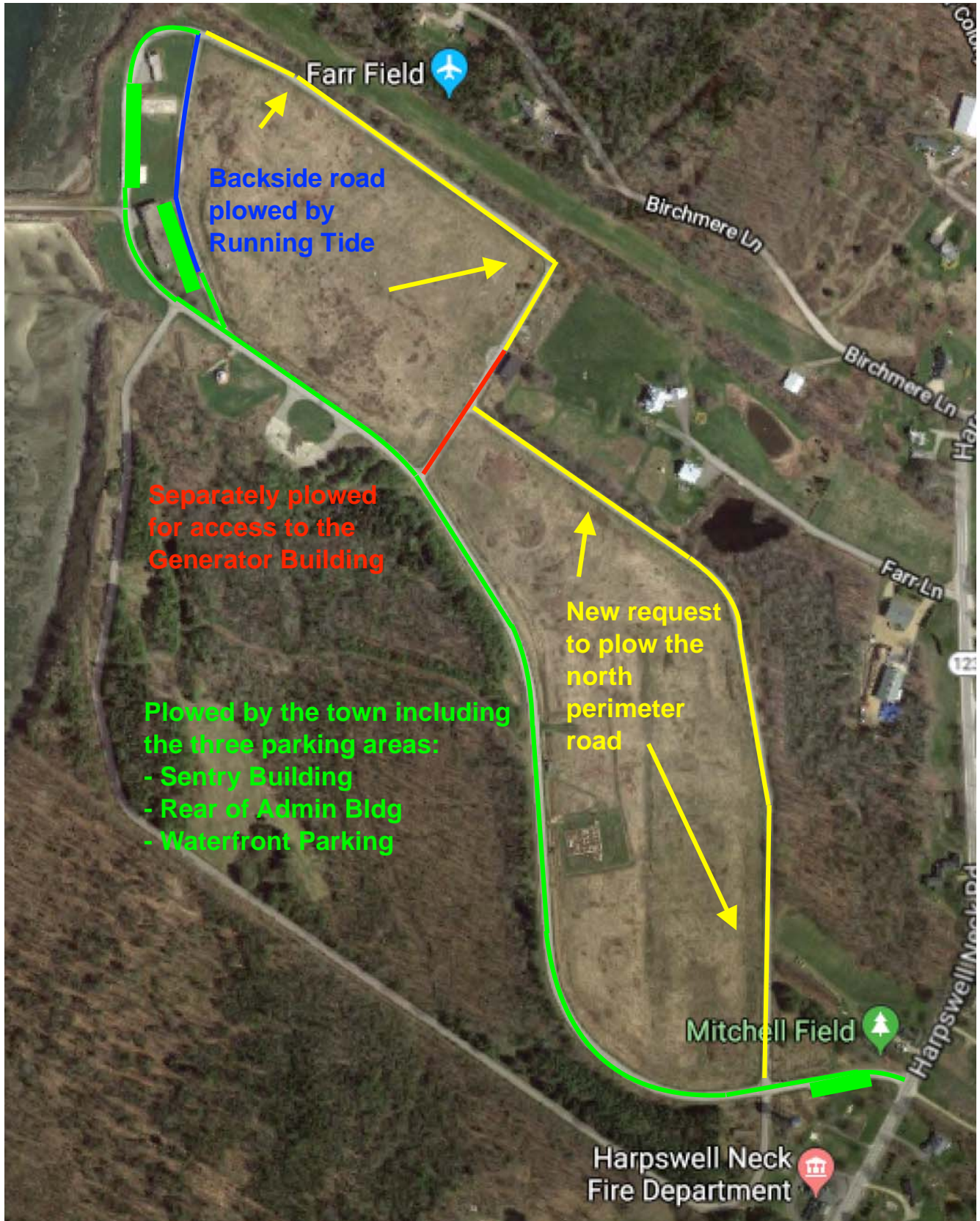
(1) Running Tide Lease Areas in the Lower Meadow



(3) Proposed Walking Path Plan for Meadows at Mitchel Field



(2) Proposed Change to the Mitchell Field Snow Plowing Plan



(4) Mitchell Field Lower Meadow – Planned Projects Overlay



(5) Mitchell Field Upper Meadow – Planned Projects Overlay



(6) Mitchell Field Overview
with
Old Landfill, Electrical Splice Boxes, and Farr Airfield

