

Town of Harpswell
Mitchell Field Committee Meeting
June 7, 2021

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

Also present: Mark Eyerman, David Chipman, and Nat Wheelwright.

Meeting conducted remotely on Zoom.

A quorum was present. The meeting was called to order at 5:03 PM.

Meeting Minutes: The May 3, 2021 minutes were approved with two corrections [7-0-0].

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

New Business:

• **Running Tide Lease:**

- See Planner's Update. Town met with Steve Levesque who is assisting the town with their Running Tide lease revision negotiations for the additional 3.8 acres they have optioned to take for expanding their operations. Should go to the BoS in the near future for approval.
- Negotiations also address use of the service road in its current location through their parcel. The town would be able to use the road. Also, provide for moving the road should RT want to use all their land. It would be rebuilt to its current standard if moved.
- Once the lease is approved, we can move forward with MF Marine Business District Redraw.
- What is the lease amount for the new parcel? Available once the terms are approved.

• **Blue Sky Tower:**

- See Planner's Update. Have their building permits and began ground clearing today. Will do the ground prep now and are awaiting the foundation anchors. Hope to begin in earnest on June 14.
- The Planning board and BoS will have to approve recommended changes to their development plan and the MF Subdivision Plan because of a change to the location of the utility lines routing from the street to the site. It will now come along the edge of Pammy's Ice Cream lot and through the old water tower area directly to the tower site.
- **Important Note:** Construction will include some large tower pieces which will necessitate field and perimeter road closures at various times during construction. Mark will try to get the schedule. Don has signs made for closure of the north perimeter road when needed. May need notice on the town web site and Harpswell TV. BST will also have responsibilities on this issue.

• **Integrated Town Landing:**

- See Planner's Update. On hold for the Integrated Town Landing SHIP application pending approval of the warrant articles at the June Town Meeting. If the additional funds are approved, we will immediately submit the new application.
- We cannot spend money for shared funds until we have the new application approved. MeDOT has said they will expedite the approval process.
- MeDOT considers this a new application instead of an amendment so we must go through a competitive RFP process to select a marine engineer for the final design. Mark reviewed the actual selection protocol to select a marine engineer.

- **Housing Meeting:**

- May 11 meeting with John Hodge of Brunswick Housing Authority for an open discussion of possibilities for Affordable housing in Harpswell. He has worked with Harpswell before.
- Need land. At least 20-24 rental units required to cover costs. Current construction costs are making these projects difficult to complete. There are some grants available to help cover development costs. Little funding available for rental housing. Rural communities have a harder time qualifying for the state funding assistance. See Planner's memo for notes.
- What are the Town's next steps? Should the BoS decide to move forward, (1) Current Land Use Zoning Regs call for 2 acres per unit in a subdivision. That may have to change based on units required to build a viable project. (2) Town would conduct an assessment to gauge need and income requirements for a targeted project.
- Next Steps? The BoS will decide what they want to do. Mark's observation - Town needs to be creative, do an assessment and target a specific need if they want to do this. Need to make sure you have enough people interested in your targeted population before going forward. Can use a waiting list. Spike – Town also needs to update the Comprehensive Plan. Mark – This can be done simultaneously with Land Use Regs review.
- Action required by the MF Committee at this point? Mark – MFC needs to keep in mind that housing is mentioned in the Master Plan. If this is considered important, then approval of other land uses at the field may impact whether or not housing can be an option.

- **Walking Path:**

- Nat Wheelwright spoke about his observations and possibilities for use of the upper meadows.
- (NW) My background is environmental & biological education and conservation. There are lots of competing uses for the meadows – recreation space, protects animal & plant populations. Creating a heterogeneous, diverse habitat. Invite the public to use and learn from it at the same time. Tremendous potential. Loss of bird and insect habitat is a real problem. Plot segregation with each plot subject to different maintenance schedules as an education tool. Adding shrubs to help birds and animals use the plots. The vernal pool had egg sacs which means they are there. Happy to be a resource for its development. Take what is now a boring habitat and make it a lot more diverse and interesting.
- (NW) Deer Exclosure Area – Isolates land from deer. Shows what impact deer can have on a land area. Can do this in the meadow and in the forest.
- (SH) This has great potential. We will definitely need your help as we execute this idea.
- (DC) Need to mow or burn or it will go to forest. (NW) Yes, not advocating hands off. Just need to mow early or late in the season.
- (SH) Need to begin working on a comprehensive Natural Resources Management Plan. Need to convene a subcommittee on what would be doable here at the field.
- (ME) Refer committee members to review the Stantec Natural Resources Study (DM) and the Bowdoin College Natural Resource Assessment. See handouts list at end of minutes.

- **Bike Pump Park:**

- See Don's memo in handout list. It answers questions asked by MFC members at the last meeting. He went back to all three entities for the answers.
- Need to talk with Rec Committee about possible sites and what we can do for kids at the field.

- **MT Ararat Project Graduation:**

- Gina Perow is the POC for the town. Plan to close the field at 4:00 PM to the public.
- Only requirement we have is to mow part of the lower meadow and fill some holes.
- We will be onsite for gate closing at start and at end of the event.
- Post event trash cleanup.

- **Dinghy Rack** – Spike and Don will look at Freeport's rack then develop a design and move forward.

- **Swimmer's Area Markers** – Budget approved and they are being purchased.
- **Bird Houses** - Conferred with Gordon Smith of Merrymeeting Audubon on proper placement and design. Worked with Brunswick School group to install the first two. They will come back to install two more. Sent everyone photos.
- **User Survey:**
 - (SH) Something we have to do. Need public input to make sure we are aware of current sentiment. Should reach out to Recreation and Town Lands Committee.
 - (ME) There is a survey already out there. On the MF page of the town web page. There was also the survey of fishermen. (DC) Concern about scientific approach for accuracy.
 - Sub-committee to develop the survey. Spike, Philip, Don and Mark.
- **Picnic Tables** – (DM) Should be able to begin assembly shortly.
- **Work Plan** – Nothing until summer.
- **Steward Update** – Available online.
- **Goals and Action Items Update** – See changes.

The meeting adjourned at 6:11 PM.

Handouts: (All handouts are available electronically)

- MFC Chair, *Chairperson Update*, June 4, 2021
- M. Eyerman memo, *Planner's Update*, June 4, 2021
- MF Steward memo, *Steward's Update*, June 4, 2021
- *Mitchell Field Goals and Action Items List*, May 30, 2021
- M. Eyerman memo, *Affordable Housing Meeting Notes*, June 7, 2021
- MF Steward memo, *Mitchell Field Bike Park Follow-Up Information*, June 6, 2021
- (2) Photos of the new birdhouses installed at Mitchell Field

Referenced Mitchell Field Natural Resources Documents:

- Stantec Report, *Mitchell Field Natural Resources Assessment*, August 3, 2017
- Bowdoin College Department of Biology, *Mitchell Field Management Plan*, December 18, 2016

Next MF Committee Meeting:

- MFC meeting on Monday, July 12th, 2021 at 5:00 PM via Zoom
- MFC meeting on Monday, August 2nd, 2021 at 5:00 PM
- MFC meeting on Monday, September 6th, 2021 at 5:00 PM (May change due to Labor Day)

Respectfully submitted,
Don Miskill, Secretary