

**VETERAN'S MEMORIAL PARK RENOVATION COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JULY 10, 2013
TIME: 7:00 P.M.
AMERICAN LEGION HALL
MIDDLETOWN CONNECTICUT**

AMENDED

Members Present: Councilman Todd Berch, Chair
Councilman Robert P. Santangelo, Vice Chair
Councilman Philip J. Pessina
Councilman Joseph Bibisi
Councilman Thomas J. Serra
Robert Blanchard
Augie DeFrance
Phil Cacciola
Jane Harris
Betsy Morgan
Carl R. Chisem
Nancy Rousselle
Pete Sibley
Larry Riley

Staff Present: William Russo, Public Works Director
Tina Gomes, Finance Department
Debbie Stanley, Acting Parks & Recreation Director

Other Attendees: Mark Kehrhahn – Home Depot Representative
Diane DeLuzio – Connecticut Trees of Honor
Susan Martucci – Connecticut Trees of Honor
Ron Organek, Middletown Resident

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

Chairman Berch called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JUNE 5, 2013:

On motion of August DeFrance, seconded by Councilman Pessina, the minutes of the June 5, 2013 meeting were unanimously approved.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Chairman Berch opened the public hearing portion of the meeting.

Ron Organek suggested signage to the park to say, "World War II Memorial Park."

Acting Park & Recreation Director Deb Stanley asked if a survey of what people are hoping to see at the Park would be considered. Chairman Berch informed everyone that a Public Hearing has been scheduled for 7 p.m. on August 28, 2013, in the Hubbard Room at the Russell Library. At that time, members of the public can provide their input regarding their ideas for the park design.

Director Russo stated that the Public Hearing will be noticed on Channel 19 and also on the City's website.

PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED:

Chairman Berch closed the public hearing portion of the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

OLD BUSINESS:

Phil Cacciola offered the use of the American Legion Building on 58 Bernie O'Rourke Drive as another meeting place when rooms at the Municipal Building are all occupied.

Councilman Serra requested an update on the Committee's progress to date.

Chairman Berch said there was consensus among committee members that the Military Museum and Trees of Honor should be closer together in the park layout.

Councilman Santangelo suggested a walkthrough of the Park so that committee members get a better idea of the topography of the Park. It was agreed that the next meeting would be held at the Park.

Councilman Santangelo confirmed the ideas that came up at the last meeting which included a large pavilion, multi-purpose skating rink with possible farmer's market.

Councilman Serra asked if the monetary scope had been identified to date. Councilman Santangelo and Councilman Pessina like the idea of phasing in the project over several years. Councilman Serra stated that it may be a better idea to do the project all at once.

Director Russo stated that a 5-foot test pit has been dug to monitor ground water at the site to help identify any problem areas for future construction.

Director Russo also stated that the professional services agreement with Weston & Sampson contains two additional meetings with the Committee. Any more than that, the company will charge more money.

Diane DeLuzio from Connecticut Trees of Honor gave an update on her plans for the Trees of Honor. She stated that volunteers are going to dig the pond and make everything level the way that it needs to be based on the plans. This has already gone through the Mayor's Office, and licensed contractors have already been hired. 64 trees will need to be planted and the stone pathway will need to be set. A ground breaking ceremony has been planned for early September. Sue Martucci put together a ground breaking ceremony proposal. There are 5-6 different types of trees being planted: Dogwood, Thunder Club, Plum, Cherry, and Crab Apple. The Trees of Honor Committee has a historian and an educator so that school kids can be brought into the park and the military museum. Teachers can then use a curriculum that is based on actual history. The contractors can begin their work after Phase I is complete when walkways will be added, along with benches and flower beds.

Mark Kehshahn, the Home Depot Representative, stated that Home Depot has a labor force of volunteers that do projects around the state all the time. The Trees of Honor is a project that they are very excited about participating in this endeavor. Grants may be available for this project.

It was suggested that the dog park may be better off down by the water except for the fact that there will be more mosquitos nearby. Jane Harris stated that the running water can be a feature rather than a nuisance. If the blockage downstream can be cleared up, the flow of the water will be much better. We might not have to worry about where to walk the dogs or where to put the play scape because moving water is much less of a problem with mosquitoes.

Chairman Berch advised the committee that he has done extensive research on dog parks. He suggested signs with small trash bags for dog waste will be posted every 15-20 feet around the dog park so that dog owners will clean up after their dogs. If there are any issues regarding cleaning up waste, security cameras will be posted.

The Military Museum already has a spot at the top of the hill that everyone on the commission came to agreement on. The Military Museum will be 5,000 square feet – this can be added on to in the future if needed. Director Russo after first checking with Tina Gomes stated that there is \$300,000.00 set aside for the Military Museum.

Director Russo stated that \$1.2 million has been set aside in road bond funds to build a road through the park from Old Mill Road to Fisher Road.

Replacing the pool and constructing a splash pad was discussed. The current Veteran's pool is over 55 years old.

Discussion on Park Pavement Area – it was mentioned that school kids will be coming to look at the tree memorial and then have access to the military museum from the memorial. Buses will also be coming in through the same area. The goal is to limit the amount of paving that will need to be done.

It is intended that Weston & Sampson have preliminary schematics available at the next meeting on August 7, 2013. The committee will meet up with Weston & Sampson at the pavilion for a walk-through.

Elizabeth Morgan suggested that a plan not be presented at the Public Hearing and that the meeting be used as a brainstorming session to gather information and ideas from the public

MEETING ADJOURNED:

Meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:10 p.m.