

TOWN OF DARIEN
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
WEED BEACH COMMITTEE
October 6, 2015

ATTENDANCE: Members: Lorene Bora (Chair), Marc Ioli, Mary Flynn, Werner Domittner, Dennis Conetta, Amy Doering, Diane Conologue, Goody Gray

 Other: Pam Gery (Director, Parks & Recreation), Daniel Biggs (Weston & Sampson), Adele Conniff (RTM, Parks & Recreations Committee Chair), Cheryl Russell (RTM, Parks & Recreations Committee Vice Chair)

The meeting was called to order at 7:32 p.m.

The July 7, 2015 minutes were reviewed. Minor typographical corrections were made. Mr. Ioli moved that the minutes be approved; Mr. Domittner seconded. The corrected minutes were approved (5-0-2).

The September 8, 2015 minutes were reviewed. There were no changes. Ms. Conologue moved that the minutes be approved; Ms. Gray seconded. The minutes were approved (7-0-0)

Ms. Doering joined the meeting (7:36 p.m.)

Mr. Biggs of Weston & Sampson was introduced. By training he is a landscape architect. Mr. Biggs provided an overview of Weston & Sampson and its capabilities. He mentioned that this was his ninth meeting of the day with stakeholders regarding the Weed Beach project. Mr. Biggs stated that a key objective of the project will be to blend the “new” section of the park with what is there today to make it a whole unit. He noted that park uses are different from 10 and 20 years ago. Active versus passive recreation will need to be considered. He noted that as the process progresses, we may hear community desires that are better suited for a different town park or location. Mr. Biggs emphasized that public involvement is key to a successful project. Survey Monkey will be used. Mr. Biggs discussed other methods to receive public input that will be employed.

Mr. Biggs showed pictures of other Weston & Sampson projects. They included Byram Park (Greenwich, CT) which includes a pool and splash pad, Sandy Beach (Hopkinton, MA), a beach redevelopment, and LoPresti Park on the Boston Harbor.

Project tasks were reviewed:

1. Existing Conditions Analysis
2. Public Outreach
3. Schematic Design
4. Final Report

A potential project schedule was offered. The next meeting is October 20, 2015. It was noted that we will probably need to adjust the tentative March – May dates based on Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance and RTM meetings.

Mr. Biggs and Ms. Gery reported that stakeholder meetings had started today and that all participants left happy and with an understanding of the process. All seemed satisfied with the opportunity to give input.

Ms. Doering asked how the surveys will be distributed. Ms. Gery stated that the Parks & Recreation department mailing list will be used, as well as the YMCA mailing list, distribution at the high school and via a newspaper article directing residents to the survey online.

Mr. Biggs and Ms. Gery reported that each meeting of the day was a little different but that the common thread was a desire for walking and bike paths. Ms. Gery distributed the proposed survey. This is in line with the informal Weed Beach Extension survey conducted on Labor Day weekend with 46 respondents.

There was a discussion regarding whether a neighbors meeting should be arranged. Ms. Gray agreed that this is important. Ms. Flynn concurred. It was suggested that the October 20th meeting be switched to October 19th due to the 20th being the candidates' debate night, and that a primary focus be Weed Beach neighbor input. Ms. Gray offered to contact her neighbors on Brush Island. The Noroton Bay Association will be contacted via the association president. A letter will be sent under Ms. Bora's signature to Nearwater Lane residents. Ms. Doering moved to change the meeting date and Ms. Flynn seconded. The motion was approved (8-0). Ms. Gery will secure a location.

Ms. Gery asked that everyone on the committee provide feedback on the survey content by Friday, October 9th. The goal is to issue the survey by Monday, October 19. It was agreed that articles should be placed in the Darien Times and Darien News Review. A new online newspaper "The Darienite" was also suggested.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Ioli, and seconded by Mr. Domittner. The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m. (8-0)

Respectfully submitted,

Lorene Bora, Chair

Weed Beach Committee

