



**TOWN OF DARIEN  
WEED BEACH MEADOW & TRAIL WORKING GROUP  
SPECIAL MEETING  
APRIL 19, 2022  
4:00 P.M. Virtual GoToMeeting**

**ATTENDANCE:** Adele Conniff, Patti Bumgardner, Mary Louise Morgan, Lori Bora, Susan Daly, Jennifer Montanaro, Dan Biggs  
**ABSENT:** Sandy Rich, Parks Maintenance Supervisor  
**STAFF:** Pam Gery, Director of Parks and Recreation

Ms. Daly called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

**WORKING GROUP INTRODUCTIONS**

Members of the working group introduced themselves. Members include Adele Conniff, Chairman of RTM Parks and Recreation Committee; Patti Bumgardner, Vice Chairman of the RTM Parks and Recreation Committee; Pamela Gery Director of Parks and Recreation; Mary Louise Morgan, member of Parks and Recreation Commission; Lori Bora, Chair of Parks and Recreation Commission; and Susan Daly, member of Parks and Recreation Commission and Chair of the Weed Beach Meadow and Trail Working Group. Jennifer Montanaro of the Darien Athletic Foundation and Dan Biggs of Weston and Sampson also in attendance.

**REVIEW AND DISCUSS CURRENT QUOTE FROM WESTON & SAMPSON  
ON THE PROJECT**

Mr. Biggs presented a slide show, explaining that the Town seeks to strategically develop the property at 4 Short Lane to create a useable space for the residents of Darien, while integrating the site into the abutting Weed Beach Park and Long Island Sound.

Mr. Biggs provided a summary of progress to date, beginning with the preliminary design in Spring 2019 and leading up to 2020 when the pandemic halted the project.

Mr. Biggs highlighted aspects of the project including a one-mile loop pathway around the perimeter of the park area, a small fitness circuit area, a boardwalk along the topside

of the beach, a lawn area at the meadow with the water on the backside; with the general idea to have all of the components function as an integrated network. He explained that part of the EPC approvals were to consolidate some wetland areas and restore as an environmental feature on the Short Lane parcel. The idea of the boardwalk is to create various scenic overlook points for guests to overlook the beach. He noted that the beach area would be widened to provide more area that is sand. He explained the tree buffer along Nearwater Lane would be preserved. He noted that to bring costs down, the pathways would generally consist of mulch and stone dust. An asphalt path would run parallel to the parking areas and bathhouse, which would tie into a ten-foot wide boardwalk extending along the beach. Mr. Biggs noted that the mulch and crushed stone pathways will be more susceptible to washout. Ms. Bora requested an estimate on maintenance costs for the stone dust and mulch pathways, suggesting that moving away from asphalt may not actually provide a cost savings overtime. Ms. Daly noted that the stone dust and mulch create a more natural look. Ms. Montanaro suggested using a larger stone similar to something New Canaan uses.

There was brief discussion regarding the benefits and disadvantages of the boardwalk.

Mr. Biggs displayed the preliminary opinion of probable cost for the project, noting that as of 2022, the estimate is approximately \$2,582,095. He emphasized the tendency for costs to fluctuate.

Mr. Biggs answered various questions from the group.

### **DISCUSS SHORT AND LONG-TERM PLAN OF WORK FOR COMMITTEE**

The group discussed next steps moving forward, including costs issues, design components, and funding and donations with respect to the Athletic Foundation and the Darien Foundation. Ms. Gery noted that the Darien Athletic Foundation prefers to use their own contractor and gift the project to the town. Ms. Gery stated that she would speak with the town attorney to determine what policies are in place with regard to sharing costs and accepting in-kind donations.

Ms. Montanaro stated that she did not expect the estimate to come in as high as it did, and added this would certainly require a fundraising effort. She stated she would need to meet with her group to discuss options. She stated she would go back to FGB Construction to request an updated estimate.

There was lengthy discussion regarding potential funding options.

### **SET REGULAR MEETING SCHEDULE**

The group discussed a regular meeting schedule and settled on meeting Tuesdays every three weeks at 3PM beginning May 10, 2022.

**MEETING ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 5:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Tamara Eberhardt, Office Administrator  
**Parks and Recreation**

DRAFT