

Recreation Advisory Board
Tuesday, November 30, 2021
Town Offices, Nowak Room
6:00 PM
Final Minutes

1. Call to Order

Members Present: Dick Matthews, Mike Wissler, Dan Provost, Stephanie Papakonstantis, Jenn Harrington; Julie Gilman, Select Board Rep; Melissa Roy, Assistant Town Manager; and David Tovey, Tara Barker, and Greg Bisson of Parks and Rec.

Members Absent: Brinn Sullivan

Ms. Papakonstantis called the meeting to order at 6 PM.

2. Minute Approval

a. November 9, 2021

MOTION: Mr. Matthews moved to table the minutes. Mr. Provost seconded. All were in favor.

3. Park Street

Mr. Bisson said in July 2021 we did a Community Survey with 367 responses, and had a meeting that pared it down to 2 designs. The playground demographics are 2 - 12 years old. Some considerations were creating shaded areas, safety fencing, blending in with the neighborhood, ADA compliance, and more swings. Mr. Bisson presented the two options. #1 from Landscape Structure, which is a nature theme with companion swings, and #2 from Play and Park, which has monkey bars, two slides, two regular swings, one ADA, one tot, and one mommy and me swing. Either design will last for up to 30 years.

Ms. Papakonstantis said we're looking at ways to add color to the playground based on public feedback.

Eileen Flockhart of 7 Jacks Court said that slides get very hot in the summer. Will these surfaces heat up? Mr. Bisson said they will heat up, but not enough to hurt. A lot of slides are now coated with a UV inhibitor. We will eventually supplement the shade here with trees.

Mr. Bisson said the current park street playground is not safety compliant. The fall radius from each structure should be six feet out with wood chips up to 6 inches deep to prevent dramatic injury. It's not ADA compliant because the surfaces aren't good enough to run a wheelchair on. Ms. Papakonstantis mentioned that Mr. Bisson is a certified playground inspector.

Mr. Bisson said we can save the rocker and the digger, but we don't know the state of the rust on the rest of the structures. Ms. Flockhart said she'd like to save the "green snake". This structure presents more of a challenge to interest slightly older kids. Mr. Bisson said we will try to save it, but it will have to be moved.

Doug Flockhart of 7 Jacks Court said the design intent is for ages 2 - 12, but this looks like 2 - 7. Kids need a challenge. His grandchildren were climbing the existing monkey bars at 5, and now they're too easy for them. We don't need the phony rocks, because there are rocks in the Oaklands and other natural areas nearby. Mr. Bisson said we can add more structures, but there are budgetary constraints. At Kids Park, the rocks are very popular. Mr. Provost said older kids up until 10 use the rocks at Kids Park for imaginative play. Mr. Bisson said there's a climbing structure planned between the two rocks, like a twisted monkey bars. There are liability concerns with putting in monkey bars that are too challenging. The older kids like linked elements rather than height.

Mr. Bisson said we would be looking at a 6 month delivery, in late April/early May. We're reviewing putting a matting system over the wood chips, which is cheaper.

Ms. Papakonstantis asked Ms. Flockhart about whether we should have more swings, ie three bays rather than two. Ms. Flockhart said she doesn't see a lot of kids using the swings, although they may if it weren't just tot swings. Ms. Gilman said at Planet Playground, the swings are always used. The tire swing is especially popular. Mr. Bisson said we looked at a tire swing but they're \$11,000 and take up a whole bay.

Ms. Flockhart said she doesn't want a fence, and Mr. Bisson said 40% of survey respondents wanted a fence. It would be black aluminum so you wouldn't see it as much. Ms. Flockhart asked if the fencing could be combined with shrubs. Mr. Bisson said it could be supplemented with evergreens, but they may take a while to grow up. You can't use flowering shrubs because they attract bees.

Mr. Flockhart asked about the tree budget. Mr. Bisson said the trees will cost only \$300-400. There's a memorial tree that will shade the area, and we will add some more. Mr. Flockhart said we may be able to get more donations for trees and bushes.

Ms. Papakonstantis asked about picnic tables, and Mr. Bisson said there will be picnic tables and bottle filling stations.

Mr. Bisson asked which of the two designs people preferred. Ms. Flockhart asked how they compare dollar wise, and Mr. Bisson said they're the same, and both within budget. Ms. Flockhart said she likes #2 but we'd have to decide about the swings. Mr. Wissler said swings get used if they're there. Both designs have two slides, but playground 1 has two swings. Mr. Flockhart said he likes playground #2 as well.

MOTION: Mr. Matthews moved to approve playground #2 for installation at Park Street. Ms. Harrington seconded. Ms. Gilman and Mr. Wissler voted nay. The motion passed 4 - 2.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to adjourn. Mr. Wissler seconded. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 6:49 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Bartell
Recording Secretary