

Minutes of the Playground Design Committee Meeting – 3/19/2024 at 6:30pm at NL Town Hall

Present:

Tistrya Houghtling, Town Supervisor

Paul McCreary, Town Engineer

Chris Ward

Stacey Breads

Beth LaGrange

Hannah DeLisle-Stall

Courtney Potter

Alia Muadin (attending online)

Absent:

Craig Skerkis, Town Board Member

Peter McCagg, Highway Superintendent

Casey Lambert

The meeting was called to order at 6:36pm by Supervisor Houghtling.

A motion was made by Beth LaGrange to approved the minutes from the 3/4/2024 meeting as typed. The motion was seconded by Courtney Potter and approved unanimously (Craig Skerkis, Peter McCagg and Casey Lambert absent).

A motion was made by Tistrya Houghtling to change the standing meeting date and time to the first Tuesday of every month at 6:30pm at the NL Town Hall with the next meeting to be held on 4/12/2024. The motion was seconded by Paul McCreary and approved unanimously (Craig Skerkis, Peter McCagg and Casey Lamber absent).

A discussion was had regarding the video Alia emailed to the committee regarding an organization called the Magical Bridge Foundation that focuses on bringing inclusive playgrounds to communities. Tistrya will email Alia some budget numbers, demographics and talking points and Alia will compose a first draft letter to send to the Magical Bridge Foundation asking how to apply for funding for our playground. Alia will email the first draft to the committee for any edits then Tistrya will put it on town letterhead and send it to them.

A discussion was had about fundraising opportunities and business sponsorship opportunities. Tistrya will ask LVCC if, in addition to applying for grants, they would be willing to do a call for donations as well as host a fundraiser if the committee is willing to do the legwork. The committee would like to work on a sponsorship program where local businesses are given the opportunity to sponsor a piece of equipment on the playground. We could have different tiers for different equipment and the business sponsor would be displayed on that piece of equipment. Since there are no inclusive playgrounds in Columbia County, it could draw people from all over who would then see the local sponsors and go there to eat after playing on the playground. Some ideas for equipment were: sensory boards, merry go round, etc. There could be 3-6 different types of equipment at different price points depending on the cost of each type of equipment. For sensory boards and some other equipment, there could be multiples from

different business sponsors. Committee members will all come to the next meeting with specific ideas of equipment that could be sponsored as well as costs for these pieces of equipment. The committee agreed that it would be best to include some renderings of pieces of equipment with sponsorship information as examples in a letter to local businesses. Courtney offered to draft a sponsorship letter and bring it to the next meeting for committee review. Tistrya will ask Sharon Powers if she might be able to create some renderings if we got her graphics of the equipment and some sponsorship examples. An idea was discussed to use sensory boards as part of the barrier around the playground instead of fencing or shrubbery.

A discussion was had regarding parking. The master park plan has parking designated where the current playground is. The new playground is going where cars currently park for large events such as music in the park. In an ideal world we would be able to remove the old playground and install a parking area there at the same time we build the new playground however that funding is not yet in the budget. The committee was in agreement that when we go out to bid, we should have an add on to remove the old playground and install the parking area so that we can see the cost and possible the TB would find funding to do that at the same time. It was also discussed that some of the existing playground equipment such as the swings and purple dinosaur could be re-utilized at the new playground to save some money (as long as we added in a wheelchair accessible swing and possible ADA swing which are usually stand alone items anyway).

A discussion was had regarding the budget and the set costs such as installation, surface cover, shrubbery as a boundary, etc. Paul will create a ballpark budget and bring it to the next meeting laying out the required costs so the committee can see what we have to work with regarding actual equipment purchases.

A discussion was had regarding a sand area and possibly diggers that are wheelchair accessible. The issue of animals defecating in the sand was brought up and the committee members are going to look into creative ways to cut off access to animals such as lifting the sand up on a sand table instead of having it in the ground. The idea of a water play and sand table combined was discussed and many benefits were brought up such as an area to cool off when it is hot and the ability for the sand to get wet and easier to form shapes or build castles with. Low to the ground balance beams were another idea brought up that the committee liked.

A discussion was had regarding a sensory area that could be a calmer and quieter area. Sensory tiles where colored water can be moved around on the ground were discussed as a good sensory area base. The idea of a speaker with a button to turn on water and/or rainforest/nature sounds for a set amount of minutes was brought up. It was a priority of the committee to ensure a nice sensory area was part of the layout.

Two playgrounds were discussed that might be good to do a field trip to with our kids: Julie's Jungle in Ulster County and Jonathan's Dream in West Hartford, CT.

A motion was made by Tistrya Houghtling to adjourn at 7:28pm. The motion was seconded by Beth LaGrange and approved unanimously (Craig Skerkis, Peter McCagg and Casey Lambert absent).