

Minutes of the Playground Design Committee Meeting – 3/4/2024 at 6:30pm at NL Town Hall

Present:

Tistrya Houghtling, Town Supervisor

Paul McCreary, Town Engineer

Casey Lambert

Chris Ward

Stacey Breads

Beth LaGrange

Hannah DeLisle-Stall

Courtney Potter

Alia Muadin (attending online)

Absent:

Craig Skerkis, Town Board Member

The meeting was called to order at 6:34pm by Supervisor Houghtling. Each committee member introduced themselves and stated why they wanted to serve on the Playground Design Committee.

A motion was made by Tistrya Houghtling to appoint Tistrya Houghtling as minutes taker and Paul McCreary as chair for the Playground Design Committee. The motion was seconded by Beth LaGrange and approved unanimously (Craig Skerkis absent).

The project budget overview was presented as follows (ballpark numbers, not exact):

\$873,000 – total project budget including walking trail project and playground

Around \$700,000 – playground budget after walking trail project subtracted if all grants are obtained

\$173,000 – grants not yet obtained – being applied for by a non-profit in Town (LVCC – Lebanon Valley Community Corporation)

Around \$527,000 – playground budget after walking trail project subtracted and if \$173,000 in grants not yet obtained are not granted

Paul discussed the grant requirement to use MWBE companies for at least part of the expenditures. The best place he can see to meet this requirement is through the purchase of the actual playground equipment itself. NYS has changed the rules so that now it is not a requirement to utilize a MWBE company but rather a requirement to make a best faith effort to utilize a MWBE company. We are hopeful that we will be able to find one to use for some facet of the project.

A discussion was had regarding truly accessible bathrooms. ADA bathrooms at pavilion are not truly accessible for children and adults who are in wheelchairs. There are universal changing stations that can be installed that would create a truly accessible experience for all and ensure that families did not have to leave the park when needing to utilize the bathroom or be changed. Casey Lambert wrote a paper on it that she can share with the committee and there is funding available. The committee discussed the possibility of creating truly accessible bathrooms when renovating the tennis court bathrooms and creating accessibility from the new playground via the walking trails. The bathrooms could be designated family bathrooms (instead of male and female) and at least one of the two could be adapted with a larger doorway, accessible ramp and inside have a universal changing station. Supervisor

Houghtling offered to bring this idea to the Town Board for discussion. Casey Lambert offered to help identify funding sources available for this project.

A discussion was had regarding playground equipment and what makes it truly accessible for all with universal access. The following points were made: ADA accessible is different from universal accessibility – our focus is to design a playground with universal accessibility; wheelchair access on to the actual equipment is necessary for truly universal access (not equipment where the person has to come out of their wheelchair to go on to the equipment); there are merry go rounds and swings and boats and other playground equipment where a wheelchair can be wheeled onto the equipment itself and locked in and other children can join on the equipment to all have fun together – this is our focus for at least 2-3 pieces of equipment on the playground; accessibility to the playground and equipment itself is key; and we want to implement sensory stations and other inclusive equipment for all so that all children can enjoy the playground.

A discussion was had regarding possibly fencing in the playground so that parents can rest easy knowing their children and others can only come and go from one entry point. A suggestion was made to use shrubbery and benches to create this instead of fencing as it was felt to be more in line with the rural and agricultural vibe in the Town and park. Shading of the playground and benches is important and it was suggested we use big triangle flags of cloth to provide shading. Lights were discussed. Could we make the playground usable after dark by implementing lighting on the poles that hold up the shade flags? If we use lighting, we would want to ensure it was dark sky compliant so the lights aren't seen from any of the neighboring houses.

Next steps to do before the next meeting were discussed as follows:

- 1) Alia Muadin offered to research sensory stations and toddler equipment
- 2) Casey Lambert offered to research sensory stations and playground equipment with full wheelchair access
- 3) Paul already has the information on the base material needed to ensure full access for all and universal accessibility to the playground equipment
- 4) Paul offered to send a list to the committee of all MWBE companies that sell playground equipment
- 5) Tistrya offered to contact make a wish and see if there is any money available for playground equipment that is truly fully accessible for all
- 6) Tistrya would email the committee the playground Congressman Molinaro helped create in Dutchess County that is fully accessible for all
- 7) All committee members would research types of playground equipment they might want to see at the new playground and come to the next meeting with any information they found

The committee decided to set a standing meeting date/time as the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 6:30pm at the town hall. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 19th at 6:30pm at the NL town hall.

A motion was made by Tistrya Houghtling to adjourn at 7:35pm. The motion was seconded by Hannah DeLisle-Stall and approved unanimously (Craig Skerkis absent).