



TOWN OF HUDSON

Benson Park Committee

Harry Schibanoff, Chairman

Shawn Jasper, Selectmen Liaison



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Town of Hudson
Benson Park Committee
Meeting Minutes
June 2, 2011

1. Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Benson Committee was called to order by Chair Harry Schibanoff at 7:02 p.m. on June 2, 2011 in the Community Development Room at Town Hall with the Pledge of Allegiance lead by J. Leone.

2. Attendance:

A. Desrosiers, R. Empey, C. Gagnon, Selectman Liaison S. Jasper, J. Leone, P. Nichols, Chair H. Schibanoff, N. Undercofler, Alternates: R. Alio and D. Briand
Alternates D. Briand will be seated in place of absentee Member.
Excused: Vice Chair J. Barnes, Alternate Liaison Selectman B. Nadeau

3. Public Input

None

4. Presentations

Ken Matthews, President of The Friends of Benson Park spoke of benches and a museum at Benson Park. He thanked the Committee for finding a bench that would be acceptable to Benson Park. If the Friends are to solicit donations for benches, we need to know approximately how many benches are needed for the park. The Friends are looking for a target number to work on. Also, if benches are to be engraved, this will take time. The wording for engraving should be clearly written and the text should be short. K. Matthews wants to know how the Committee would like to proceed with this. J. Leone spoke about the Rock Island Benches that the Committee agreed on. J. Leone said the 'The Friends' are ready to go ahead with a purchase when 10 (ten) benches are ordered and paid for. He also said he had checks in hand for at least 5 benches and he will give them to K. Matthews at the end of the meeting. He also said that The Friends of Benson Park wants to donate a bench or two dedicated to the volunteers at the park. This brings the amount of benches close to the ten that have to be ordered. J. Leone also said he thought that 20 benches would be a reasonable amount of benches to start with at this time. He also spoke of two different models of benches: one that sat on three and one that sat on 3 posts that would be down into the ground and cemented. J. Leone would like the bench on legs because they could be put in the park right away and then the cement pads could be added later. J. Leone passed around a picture of the bench and P. Nichols said that the bench with the legs was sturdy and heavy and would not tip easily. She also asked if the wording on the benches could be uniform and asked the Committee of their thoughts on this. Selectman Liaison S. Jasper said he did not think it mattered what

people wanted on their benches. Their dedicated benches should be whatever they would like. If they wanted more than the average wording and were willing to pay for it, so be it. K. Matthews stated that money for the benches was not a fund raiser. Whatever monies collected were for the benches only. J. Leone said that this would cover the cement pad and K. Matthews agreed. K. Matthews also asked about the amount of benches the park would need in the future. C. Gagnon said she agreed with J. Leone at this time, with a total amount of 20 benches. She stated that this amount could be raised at a later date. K. Matthews was told that about 80 benches would be needed including trails. Selectman Liaison S. Jasper said that he felt the Committee should have a discussion about benches on the trails. He is opposed to benches on trails and thinks this should be revisited at a future meeting and be brought before the BOS. R. Alio said that a few wild life blinds (protected areas to watch and photograph wildlife) were discussed for the trails but he is not in favor of benches. D. Empey also agrees with Selectman Liaison S. Jasper. It was decided early on to keep the trails as natural as possible with the exception of a few bridges and wild life blinds. The consensus of the Committee was that benches were not to be put on the trails. Chair H. Schibanoff said he spoke with the Road Agent and he would leave the decision on placing benches in the park up to the Committee. C. Gagnon asked if the Committee would make a decision tonight on the kind of benches to order. R. Alio and J. Leone said that the free style bench would be in order and this could be set in a cement pad at a later date. Chair H. Schibanoff asked for a vote on this.

C. Gagnon made a motion to accept the free style bench

D. Briand seconded the motion

8 Ayes...1 Nay-Motion Carries

P. Nichols in opposition

Ken Matthews' second request was to ask for assistance in securing a museum for Benson Park. In June, 2010, a verbal proposal was brought to the Friends Board Meeting (by Elaine Brody). The Board members were informed of the following:

- The Town of Hudson, NH does not want the responsibility of owning the Benson's Wild Animal Farm memorabilia.
- The Friends of Benson Park were asked if they would be interested in operating a museum on Benson Park.
- Would the Friends be interested in the Elephant Barn at the museum.
- If the Town of Hudson took care of the outside and ran all necessary utilities, would the Friends be willing to do all the work needed inside the Elephant Barn to make it into a museum?
- Rent would be set at \$1.00 per year.

The Friends needed time to establish the corporation, and are going forward with events to help raise awareness, members and funds to assist in the restoration of Benson Park. We now have an organization which can run a museum, but at this time no building is available to display items collected or purchased. The Elephant Barn would be the best place for a museum. The inside needs to be designed for a museum by an architect. using the present design as the basis for restoration and remodeling. A museum would tell the story of Benson's Wild Animal Farm through memorabilia. Benson Park is becoming the place to go in Hudson and surrounding towns, for picnics, walking your dog, hiking, fishing, and many other outdoor activities. K. Matthews sincerely hopes that a museum will be added to the list of things to do at Benson Park. K. Matthews is here to see if the Town of Hudson is willing to put a proposal in writing so plans can go forward to create a museum. D. Empey addressed this and found many issues in this proposal, while the roof is new and in excellent condition, the Elephant Barn is in need of many thousands of dollars in repairs. He does not think it is stable enough to house a museum. There are many structural issues at present along with cosmetic repairs needed. D. Empey stated

that it was beyond the scope of this Committee to approve or disapprove this undertaking. Selectman Liaison S. Jasper said he is in favor of this but the only thing this Committee could do is to recommend or not recommend this to the BOS.

C. Gagnon made a motion to recommend the BOS negotiate with The Friends of Benson Park to place a museum in the Elephant Barn at Benson Park.

A. Desrosiers seconded the motion

Extended Discussion followed

All in favor...Motion Carries

Approval of Minutes

A. Minutes of May 19, 2011

A. Desrosiers made a motion to accept minutes

C. Gagnon seconded the motion

8 Ayes...1 Abstention-Motion Carries

Selectman Liaison S. Jasper abstained

5. Old Business

A. Street Name Status

N. Undercofler is still working on this and nothing has been decided on at this time.

B. Fire Extinguishers

J. Leone asked about the update on fire extinguishers. Selectman Liaison S. Jasper said that the last time this was discussed with Town Liaison D. Yates, it was supposed to go to the Fire Department for an update on the requirements of the different buildings at Benson Park. Chair H. Schibanoff will follow up on this.

6. New Business

A. Committee Reports

D. Empey said that Paths and Trails Committee cancelled their May meeting due to rainy and windy weather. The next meeting will be held the third Tuesday in June. They are anxiously awaiting the deck mower. It has been a chore trying to keep the trails clear with personal equipment. Selectman Liaison S. Jasper asked D. Empey if everything was in order to purchase this equipment in July. D. Empey stated he has the quote from the vendor and everything is in place. Selectman Liaison S. Jasper said that it was about a month away from July when the release of funds would be available and if the vendor agreed to deliver the equipment and accept payment on the first week in July, D. Empey could get together with D. Yates and see if this could happen.

B. Building Projects

J. Leone said there are finishing touches needed on the Gorilla House, a generous donation of paint to finish the Gorilla House and the cage was given to the building committee. Another project is the bridges behind the Shoe. He asked D. Empey if he could give a ball park figure on repairing them. D. Empey said he has not sat down to figure it out but it could be around \$250 per bridge for materials. The Elephant Barn needs outside work and this could be worked on a little at a time when lumber is available. Selectman Liaison S. Jasper said that the bridges (3) would be a great Eagle Scout Project and would be worth looking into. D.

Empey thought this might come under the parameters of the Trail Grant we have received. This could be a source of funding if it is an acceptable project.

Selectman Liaison S. Jasper said he thought we should just concentrate on finishing one project i.e. The Gorilla House, before moving on to any other building. He also said we need to get the donation of paint, etc. to the BOS for acceptance.

C. Clean up Plans

C. Gagnon said that the plans for the next clean up would be to finish the work on the rock wall below the fence that abuts the Shoe. Another area agreed on for clearing is to the right of the Elephant Barn between Benson Boulevard and Elephant Way to Butterfly road. (I think a couple of these road names will change). There is a lot of debris and invasive growth that needs to be removed. This would also help the brush mower in getting through this area to keep the bittersweet under control and help the highway department with some of their plans.

7. Other Business/Remarks by Committee Members

A. Remarks by Committee Members

Chair H. Schibanoff said the next Clean-up is June 11 2011, 9:00 AM -2:00 PM. Rain Date, June 12, 2011. The next Committee meeting will be June 16, 2011.

A. Desrosiers said that a lot of Committees have been working very hard. The Dog Park Committee has a few up and coming events and she has been working with Mal's Pals and the Flamingo Flocking. It has been an extremely busy week. The Friends of Benson Park are getting a lot of publicity with the Circus coming to Town.

D. Empey said that the donated water pumps from DR Landscaping are working and the barrels are being used to help water the adopt-a-spot gardens.

J. Leone gave an update to the last meeting. The second trash barrel has been installed at the park. We just need to keep it in the spot the Committee agreed to, near the Elephant Barn.

Selectman Liaison S. Jasper said that for a number of years his wife has worked with the Hudson School District on Tours for the third grade students. Not all of the students have done the tours and this will be the first year that all third grade students will participate. They will be going to Benson Park for lunch so Selectman Liaison S. Jasper requested that a number of picnic tables be put under the A-Frame for their use.

Chair H. Schibanoff said he had a thought while we were talking that if anyone was watching this on Cable and knew nothing about this Committee what must they think when we are talking about a Gorilla House, Train Station, Elephant Barn and the Old Shoe. That was his final thought.

Next Meeting:

June 16, 2011

7:00 PM

Board of Selectmen Meeting Room

8. Adjournment: 7:58 pm

P. Nichols made a motion to adjourn

Selectman Liaison S. Jasper seconded the motion

All in favor...Motion Carries