



TOWN OF HUDSON

Benson Park Committee

Harry Schibanoff, Chairman

Shawn Jasper, Selectmen Liaison



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Benson Park Committee Meeting Minutes March 17, 2011

1. Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Benson Committee was called to order by Chair Harry Schibanoff at 7:04 p.m. on March 17, 2011 in the Community Development Room at the Town Hall with the Pledge of Allegiance lead by A. Desrosiers.

2. Attendance:

Vice Chair J. Barnes-late, C. Gagnon, A. Desrosiers, R. Empey, J. Leone, left early, P. Nichols, N. Undercofler, Alternates: R. Alio and D. Briand
Alternate: R. Alio will be seated in place of an absentee member.
Excused: Selectman Liaison S. Jasper

3. Public Input

None

4. Presentations

Curt Laffin presented two (2) projects for Benson Park that he is interested in doing. The first is two (2) water control structures and the American Chestnut Tree planting. The water control structures are in the early stages of planning. He handed out an information sheet and a brochure on the American Chestnut Foundation, along with a map that targeted the area near Rt. 111 that C. Laffin would like to see water controlled structures re-installed. A few years ago the Beaver did a good job retaining water in the two little ponds near Rt. 111, but since the park has been re-opened and the area sees a lot of traffic, he doubts that the Beaver will return. C. Laffin has been looking into the possibility of installing flashboard water-control structures to put water back into those ponds. Since the ponds drain freely, the wildlife diversity has changed significantly. At this time he would like to know if the Committee thinks this is something that he should pursue. D. Empey thinks this is a worthwhile project and at this point it has a zero dollar amount. He felt it should go forward at this time. C. Laffin stated that Fish & Wildlife have a grant program called Partners in Wildlife, and he had someone come down to look at the project and he felt that this would be Grant worthy. C. Laffin sees no problem with getting Grant money, he said that we would be looking at \$10,000 to \$12,000 for the total project. P. Nichols agreed with D. Empey and saw nothing harmful about this project and it will improve wildlife in that particular area. Chair H. Schibanoff asked if this project would affect the wetlands and C. Laffin said no, if anything it would probably benefit it. C. Gagnon asked if this would impact the trails in this area. D. Empey said that it could have some impact but the benefits far outweigh what ever it did to the trails. Chair H.

Schibanoff asked for a consensus from the Committee to forward this project to the BOS, and the Committee agreed. C. Laffin said that his second request was more imminent, it has to do with planting Hybrid American Chestnut Trees at Benson Park. He came before this Committee last summer and explained that he was a volunteer at the American Chestnut Foundation and gave a brief overview of how important the American Chestnut Tree was to the Eastern United States. One hundred years ago there was two hundred million acres of American Chestnut Trees. They dominated the eastern part of the United States and were extremely important for lumber, all kinds of wood products, and unique among other trees it was a food source for wildlife and people. In 1904 a blight was discovered in NY. This was imported from a Chinese Chestnut Tree and the American Chestnut Tree was totally susceptible to it. Within Fifty (50) years the American Chestnut was almost totally wiped out. The American Chestnut Association has been involved in doing genetic backcrossing for many years and now there is a tree available that the Foundation has produced and it retains all the characteristics of the American Chestnut Tree and is about 95% resistant to the blight. They are now on the verge of having nuts from those trees available for planting. When he came before the Committee last summer he said he would ask the Foundation for a few nuts for planting at Benson Park and he is pleased to report that he has been offered some nuts for the park. He will have between five (5) and eight (8) of these nuts from the Vermont/New Hampshire Chapter of the Chestnut Foundation, and he would like to get things organized and actually plant those nuts in the park, possibly in early May or late April. Referring to the Map that he handed out, there is an area where he would like to plant these nuts. This area is at the upper end of the North Field, and the soil has been tested, it needs a little more acidity, but otherwise it looks like a good place to put them because the trees like the sun. It would involve identifying sites where whatever number we get would be planted. They have to be planted between 30 and 40 feet apart and the soil has to be prepared. They would then have to be protected from wildlife, with a collar around the nut so rodents don't get at them and a small fence so the deer don't get at them. They would have to be watered and watched carefully but C. Laffin will take care of all that activity. He has contacted Alvirne High School and there is interest in the Forestry and Biology Departments to get some student interest in this. One thing that the American Chestnut Society likes about projects like this is the Out-Reach opportunities and attention to restoring the American Chestnut Trees. C. Laffin's main objective in this Society is to spread the word about the Chestnut Tree and promote interest to the propagation of these wonderful trees and bring it back. He has a PowerPoint® presentation that he can loan to anyone at anytime who is interested in learning more about these wonderful old trees. He will be going before the BOS on Tuesday to get approval to move ahead with this project. Question and answers followed.

N. Undercofler made a motion to make a recommendation to the BOS to accept C. Laffin's idea to plant hybrid Chestnut Trees at Benson Park.

Dick Empey seconded the motion

All in favor-Motion Carries

5. Street Names

Natalie Undercofler gave a report and presentation on the Street Names Sub-Committee. Most street names came from two maps that were made when the park was open. A lot of the street names were extended to allow for less sign posts. N. Undercofler handed out maps for the committee to follow along. Benson Boulevard starts at the Handicap parking area and extends past the Gorilla House to Swan Lake. Behind the Elephant Barn there is

a street that will be known as Elephant Walk and extends to Main Street. The road around Story book Hill will be known as Story Book Circle. Just before the Gorilla House, the street on the left will be Elegant Way. This was an original name but it has been extended to minimize street signs. Just below the Main Entrance is Butterfly Way. Going by the Butterfly Garden is a road that will be called Shady Brook Lane. N. Undercofler and J. Undercofler pointed out all the other street names that the sub committee formulated, they include: Tree Shadow Lane along the front of Swan Lake, Heron Way on the back side of Swan Lake, Wilderness Walk, the street leading down to the overlooks, past Mambasa, Apple Blossom Lane, leading to Elegant Way and Wilderness Walk, Serenity is a crossover from Elephant Walk to Shady Brook Lane. This was a great undertaking and the sub committee did a wonderful job. Chair H. Schibanoff asked if the two paths or streets leading from the Main Parking lot have been named. N. Undercofler said that they have not been named at this time. Chair H. Schibanoff asked what the street called Mambasa meant. N. Undercofler said this name was taken from an original map and was formally known as the African Area. Chair H. Schibanoff said the Committee should study the names and not make a decision to accept them tonight. He thought we would have to go before the BOS for a decision, but he will check with Selectman Liaison S. Jasper. D. Empey mentioned three street names he would like to revisit and J. Leone also voiced his opinion on one of the street names. R. Alio commented on Mambasa and he thought it should be changed to Alligator Circle. D. Briand also had some comments. C. Gagnon suggested that when the Committee is doing their Spring Walk-around, we should visit the streets and see if this is what the Committee would want. C. Laffin suggested a Chestnut Street.

6. Approval of Minutes

A. Minutes of March 3, 2011

P. Nichols made a correction to the minutes. Changed name under (A) New Business, last paragraph, from D. Empey to R. Alio.

C. Gagnon made a motion to accept minutes

A. Desrosiers seconded the motion

All in favor...Motion Carries

7. Old Business

A. By-Laws

Vice Chair J. Barnes amended the by-laws and sent copies to all Committee Members. Did not change the number of alternates to read two, but will correct this now, added sentence about staggered terms, replaced Secretary with Clerk and updated Motions and Votes.

P. Nichols made a motion to accept changes to Mission Statement/Membership

C. Gagnon seconded the motion

All in favor-Motion Carries

B. Financials

Chair H. Schibanoff said that at the last meeting he told the Committee about the Financial Report...today we have the actual report and nothing has changed. He gave us a figure of around \$600 after taking out fixed expenses that were coming due. (i.e. rental of porta-potties, etc.). Vice Chair J. Barnes asked if the porta-potties would be placed in the park in the beginning of April. Chair H. Schibanoff said that was not decided yet. Vice Chair J. Barnes also asked if in the coming fiscal year there were

funds left over from the last year, would they be carried over to the new fiscal year or go into the Surplus Funds for the Town. Chair H. Schibanoff said he thought the funds would be returned to the Surplus Funds unless we could earmark it (he was not sure of the term).

C. Planning

C. Gagnon has put together a document based on our discussion at the last meeting. She set this up by sub committee requests for clean-up projects and included the Playground but did not know if the funds were released to the Recreation Department from the Planning Board at this time. No one had a definitive answer to this. She added it to the list of projects for clean-up with the idea that if this came about a special clean-up could be scheduled to get the area ready. J. Leone said that if possible we should list projects as high, medium or low priority. Chair H. Schibanoff said this list should be looked at before every clean-up to plan accordingly. C. Gagnon said we should revisit this listing at the next meeting so that the Committee could plan what order the projects should be done. Chair H. Schibanoff said he thought that the first clean-up would be different than others because of the winter damage, etc. Scheduling a priority project might not be a good idea for the first clean-up. C. Gagnon asked when we proposed to have our first walk-about to determine key areas to be taken care of. C. Gagnon would like to find someone to follow the Committee around with a TV camera because taking pictures does not work very well. People forget where the picture was taken, whereas a video would help target the worst areas for clean-up. Chair H. Schibanoff said he has contacted J. McIntosh from HCTV about another matter and when this meeting happened he would ask about this.

8. New Business

A. Commercial Use according to Deed

J. Leone requested that this come before the Committee at this meeting. Chair H. Schibanoff sent copies of a few Deed articles relating to Commercial Use at the Park. There were a few areas in the Deed that referred to Commercial Use and basically they said the same thing. There are a few things allowed if they are Historical, Educational and Cultural. You can get permission for a Commercial activity if you get permission from the Town, the State, and the Department of Historic Resources. R. Alio asked if the Segway Tours would be allowed and Chair H. Schibanoff said that would be a Commercial activity because they want to charge a fee for this. Questions and discussions followed.

B. Donations

Chair H. Schibanoff said that we have received a donation from S. Lichtenberg, the Eagle Scout that built a bridge on Benson Park Property for his badge. This was left over money from his project in the amount of \$120.76 that he presented to the BOS at their last meeting and the BOS accepted this generous gesture. The money will be used for buildings in Benson Park. This is our second Eagle Scout Project that has been completed.

C. Committee Reports

D. Briand spoke about the Dog Park Committee and said that they are working on forming a Fund Raising sub committee. If the BOS approves, they want to have a Bake Sale in front of Walmarts on April 10, from 10 am to 2:00 pm. They are also working on an Adopt-a-Fence program. D. Briand said that for a fee you could have a plaque placed on the section of fence that you adopted. This would help raise funds to

build the fence. Chair H. Schibanoff asked if any clearing has been done and D. Briand said that until the weather improves and the snow is gone nothing has been done. He is hoping someone will donate a piece of equipment to remove tree stumps or possibly the town could help.

Chair H. Schibanoff spoke of a meeting held by the Communications (Out-reach) Sub-Committee. We are working on a Promotional Program for HCTV. We will be meeting with J. McIntosh who will help the sub committee understand how to do this program because it is a requirement that this must be done by the sub committee. Chair H. Schibanoff has already done a Presentation to be shown at the Kiwanis Indoor Yard Sale on April 2, 2011, and this will also be used for the Promotional Program. There will also be a display of pictures at the Kiwanis Indoor Yard Sale. Chair H. Schibanoff mentioned that last year, A. Desrosiers, P. Nichols and himself did a display in conjunction with the Friends of the Library at Barnes and Noble, in Nashua, NH. It was a huge success because not too many people knew Benson Park reopened as a passive recreational park and expressed an interest. We should be proud of our Park and get the word out to those who don't know about it yet. We have to advertise the Park and let everyone know it's free.

D. Empey said that they are working on drainage issues on Paths and Trails. This is an ideal time to work on this because the water is flowing and it is easy to see where it is going and to see where the Paths and Trails sub committee would like it to go. The sub committee will be having a workshop meeting Sunday morning at 10:30 am and continue to work on the drainage areas to try to improve the mud and water situation.

Chair H. Schibanoff asked J. Leone how the Building sub committee was coming along with the Picnic Tables. J. Leone said that they had recovered legs from some of the original picnic tables that were in the park and the sub committee is working on welding and re-painting at this time. Friends of Benson Park donated lumber for tabletops and benches. He expects that they will be ready around the first half of April. J. Leone also sent spec's of benches to the Committee for their review. He also asked about installation of the benches. He would like to close on this but did not know if it would be better to wait for Selectman Liaison S. Jasper to be in attendance. D. Empey mentioned three (3) ways of installing the benches and C. Gagnon asked if bolting the benches would be less secure than installing them in cement. D. Empey said that would not make a difference. N. Undercofler said that someone that has an area from the Adopt-a-Spot program asked if they could put in a bench of their choice. N. Undercofler wanted direction from the Committee as to what she should tell this person because at the present time we do not have a standard bench chosen. Vice Chair J. Barnes said he would like all benches to be standard and not allow anything different at this time. Discussion on cost, type, etc. followed with Chair H. Schibanoff saying he will talk to the Recreation Dept. about this.

9. Other Business/Remarks by Committee Members

A. Remarks by Committee Members

A. Desrosiers said that she went to the Park this afternoon and except for a few places where water is running or areas with a little crusted areas of snow, most of the paved paths were clear. Also, we will be at the Kiwanis Indoor Yard Sale on April 2, 2011 displaying pictures and informing people about Benson Park. The Friends of Benson Park will also have a table selling T's, Sweatshirts, and Hats as a fund raiser.

P. **Nichols** said that she was also at the park and people were walking dogs, strolling with baby carriages and she saw a young family having lunch at the wall near the remote control car area. It was a beautiful day in the Park.

Next Meeting:

April 7, 2011

7:00 PM

Community Development Room, Town Hall

10. Adjournment: 8:17 pm

C. Gagnon made a motion to adjourn

A. Desrosiers seconded the motion

All in favor...Motion Carries