

Benson Park Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Date: January 15, 2026

Time: 7:00 PM

Location: HGTV Studio

1. Attendance

Attendance was recorded and confirmed, including contact information for new members.

John Madden- Absent

Susan Clement- Present

Jake Beauchemin- Absent

Nathan Muir- Present

Jan Horvath- Present

Matthew Pelletier- Present

Harry Schibanoff- Present

Heidi Jakoby (BOS)- Present

2. Approval of Previous Minutes

Old Business

A. Merrillbrook Covered Bridge Project

- Town Engineer reviewing site preparation and bridge placement; plans and photos available.
- Footings must extend 4 feet below grade; bridge length increased from ~8 ft to ~20 ft.
- Proposed construction: three concrete posts per side with crossbeam and prefabricated long beams.
- Estimated cost: Contractor ~\$20,000; Volunteer-built option <\$5,000.

- Funding may be sourced from capital fund.
- DPW Director may install footings in April.
- Committee investigating differing approval requirements compared to other park bridges.

Action Items:

- Contact Town Engineer and Lieutenant Flynn regarding permitting/certification requirements.
- Report findings at next committee meeting.
- Notify Board via email with recommended next steps for bridge footings and volunteer support.

B. Lions Pride Statue Restoration

- Originated at Benson's Wild Animal Farm (1926–1986).
- Donated back to park in November 2024 after ~38 years with a Hudson family.
- Each statue weighs ~2,000 lbs; visible cracks, discoloration, missing tail on standing lion.
- Currently stored in historical building ("The Kitchen") after DPW removal.
- On-site evaluation by Treffler estimated at \$200.
- Lions Club approved \$200 donation for evaluation.
- Committee seeking additional contractor options, volunteers, and business support.

C. Park Usage Ordinances & Enforcement

- Ordinances require rewording and review by DPW and Hudson PD.
- Enforcement scope and applicable fines unclear.
- Committee may adopt nonbinding park rules.

Action Item:

- Contact Lieutenant Flynn to clarify enforceable items and procedures.

New Business

A. Easter Egg Hunt Planning

- Proposed Date: March 28, 2026 (Rain Date: April 4, 2026).
- Estimated attendance: 200–400 children.

- Over 3,000 pre-stuffed eggs distributed last year.
- Registration via landing page; walk-up check-in available.
- Activities: Easter Bunny photos, cotton candy, hot dogs, face painting.
- Partnerships with Chamber, Lions, Kiwanis, Rockland Bank sponsorship.
- Basket-donation raffle planned for fundraising.

Action Items:

- Submit event forms and raffle permit through DPW.
- Invite Hudson Police Department to participate.
- Coordinate vendors and sponsors.

B. Volunteer Calendar (2026)

- Cleanups: Apr 18, May 16, Jun 20, Jul 18, Aug 15, Sep 19, Oct 17.
- Time: 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM.
- Average turnout ~30 volunteers.
- Promotion via banners, website, Facebook, and QR registration page.
- Follow-up with prior restaurant sponsors for 2026 support.

C. Centennial Planning – 'A Century of Smiles' (1926–2026)

- Friends of Benson Park leading centennial planning.
- Planning meeting: Thursday the 22nd at 7:00 PM at HGTV.
- Volunteers needed for archive/museum work.
- Seeking new treasurer.
- Contact: info@friendsofbensonpark.org

4. Upcoming Meetings

- February 19, 2026
- March 19, 2026

5. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:09 PM