



FREEDOM

Board Members

Heidi Laub
Chairman
West Creek Township

Alice Dahl
Vice Chairman
Cedar Creek
Township

Dorothy Eich
Secretary
Park Advisory
Committee

Lowell Town Council
Will Farrellbegg

Freedom Park Committee Meeting Minutes Tuesday, August 20, 2019 6:00pm

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call: Freedom Park Committee members present: Alice Dahl, Dorothy Eich, Heidi Laub, Will Farrellbegg. Also present; Mindi Arnold-Buchler, Kevin Gray, and Cyndi Hughes.

Approval of Minutes: Motion to approve July 2019 Freedom Park Committee minutes was made by Alice Dahl and seconded by Will Farrellbegg.

Review of Freedom Park Claims: After review of the claims, Heidi questioned if the disc golf tournament has taken place. Mindi reported that will not happen until September. Heidi asked if the revenue from Archery camp came through. Mindi reported that those program fees were ran through the parks budget and not the Freedom Park budget. Heidi questioned why these funds are not going into the Freedom Park budget. Mindi explained that even though it has been discussed, she could not approve this change since the quarterly fees and charges were submitted for approval by the town council months ago. She explained that these types of changes would need to be discussed when Freedom Park Committee meets with the Lowell Town Council. Heidi stated that she would like to have a meeting with the council right away so the program fees can be addressed immediately. Mindi stated that we will discuss that later on in the meeting as we were still on approval of claims. Heidi redirected and asked the committee for a motion to approve the claims. Will Farrellbegg motioned to accept these claims, and Dorothy Eich seconded.

Reports

Bark Park Mindi stated the bark park has 94 members with the current revenue of \$4, 582 dollars. She reported that at this time last year the bark park had 7 more members with a revenue \$4,140. She stated that even though the park has less members, there has been growth in revenue since the committee decided not to offer half off memberships.

Mindi updated the board that line item 214 part-time employees which is appropriated for the janitor and part time maintenance balance is at \$283.52. Mindi explained that there are approximately 9 more weeks' worth of work and the committee should re-appropriate funds to appropriation number 214. She suggested that using \$1,000 for #301 Professional Services, \$700 from #221 Gasoline and moving \$700 from park gift park improvements over to part time maintenance for a total of \$2,400 to finish paying staff for the season. Alice suggested using Bark Park appropriations. The committee discussed bark park line items for a moment. Heidi questioned why the part-time funds are so low. Mindi explained line item 214 is budgeted for \$3,700 for the year which should be talked about increasing for next year's budget. Mindi addressed the committee explaining that this was an awful year for mowing. She stated that the street department has been called out on a few occasions to assist Rick. She also shared that park staff, town interns, and herself have put a lot of hours in at Freedom Park this season preparing the park for special events and performing general maintenance. She noted that these additional hours have not been accounted for in line item 214 and for that reason, this line item does need to see an increase in next year's budget. Mindi suggested that the committee consider this information while we try to figure funds for future seasons of maintenance. Heidi stated she did not feel comfortable moving money around at this time until the committee has the opportunity to meet with the town council. She explained that she didn't want to use park gift monies to take care of maintenance as the interlocal agreement states that the town of Lowell is responsible for all maintenance at Freedom Park. Mindi explained that she believes the interlocal agreement states that the Town of Lowell is responsible for overseeing maintenance of Freedom Park, however she didn't believe the Town of Lowell is responsible for paying for all of the maintenance at Freedom Park. Will stated that the park consists of a 3-way entity. Mindi stated the budget was set up to take care of the park and it is not covering the costs to care for it. Heidi addressed the use of program fees held at freedom park to help out with the budget. She stated the committee and town council need to have a meeting to fix this. Mindi stated she will be updating the committee on the tentative meeting further in the meeting. Alice asked what events happened at Freedom Park that needed additional maintenance. Mindi reported that the gazebo was rented for a 200-person wedding and Mommy's Havens fundraiser was the following weekend. She reported that her and Cyndi put in a few days of maintenance work pulling weeds around the gazebo and sidewalk and trimmed around the trees through the park and around the dog park. Mindi said she put a lot of TLC and utilized park staff hours to make the park as presentable as possible with limited staff and funds. Mindi also asked the committee if there was an agreement with Rotary or Lowell Garden Club about the continued maintenance of the gazebo? Alice stated the garden club was supposed to help maintain it. Mindi asked Alice if she could reach out to them and ask them if they are still willing to help as the gazebo area is not being kept up with the part-time maintenance hours allowed. Alice stated she would reach back out to Lowell Garden Club to see if they are still willing to assist with the care of the gazebo. Alice then stated that we need to move money to continue to pay for maintenance. Heidi did not agree and stated she would be more comfortable waiting until the meeting with the council before moving forward. Alice responded that we have to be able to pay the staff for the rest of the season. Discussion followed among the committee about the issues of program fees not going back into Freedom Parks budget. Alice offered that Mindi contact her next time extra work is needed and she would have been happy to help find someone to help weed at the park. Mindi thanked her and stated she is trying to keep Freedom Park above water and is trying her best to help make ends meet. Discussion about scheduling a meeting with the town council was brought up.

Maintenance Report Continued

Will informed the committee that due to a few other town projects and the resignation of the own manager, the council has been very busy tending to other business. He stated that he felt the council will be confirming the request to meet on September 30th soon. Mindi stated she was waiting for confirmation from council president Chris Salatas on this meeting date. Heidi stated it is hard for this committee to move forward until these issues are figured out. Alice suggested the committee should move enough money to cover the next month of work at the park. Will made a motion to re appropriate \$1,000 for #301 Professional Services to part-time employees. Alice seconded the motion.

Mindi continued with reports stating that the gazebo was in need of mulch again and has begun seeking estimates. She has had contact with Newcomb landscaping. Alice stated that Touch of Grass originally installed the mulch and that Mindi should ask them to quote this too. Mindi agreed to do so.

Mindi then reported that there was a water line leak by the barn in July and the water department has been out to make the repairs. The leak was found and repaired between the back of the office. Kevin reported that he had also had the water department take care of cleaning out the septic tank by the restrooms too.

Mindi then reported that the revenue share from Chicago Fire Soccer Camp totaled \$1,195. She stated these funds were placed into park gift under park improvements. She then asked the committee if they were interested in having the camp return next year and they agreed to have them return for 2020.

Mindi continued with reports by letting the committee know that the Freedom Park Camp Out with the local boy scouts was cancelled due to lack of interest.

Reports continued with Mindi stating that she was contacted by Myra Harris about getting softball fields at Freedom Park. Mindi suggested to the committee and Myra that she felt it would be a good idea for Lowell Bluebird Softball League to approach the committee with confirmation of intent before moving forward. The committee also discussed that a softball field committee would be beneficial in this process. Discussion followed about the future of softball fields, the cost and who would manage and maintain them, grants and fundraising. The committee agreed that a group of 3-5 people should be formed as softball field committee. This committee will report to the Freedom Park Committee. The members agreed that this would be the ideal way to begin a project of this size. Mindi suggested asking Aaron Pollock of Lowell's Chamber of Commerce to sit on a future softball field committee. Mindi stated he is very involved in travel softball and would be a great asset to this project. Mindi also asked the committee if they were only wanting to move forward with softball fields if the local softball groups were interested in committing to them. The committee stated they would like to look at bringing fields to Freedom park either way. Discussion followed among the committee about how the fields could become a revenue source at Freedom Park. Alice stated that once they can get the fees collected from park programs at Freedom Park addressed, there would be more money in the budget to bring these types of improvements to Freedom. Discussion followed among the committee about special event fees at Freedom and in the town parks. Will stated that the towns special event fees were not established for the town to make money and that these permit fees were established to help with the costs of hosting events for the community by the

community. Alice questioned why the Town of Lowell is not asking developers to pay fees to the town for development. Mindi questioned if she was speaking of a park impact fee. Alice stated that surrounding communities have these fees in place which helps their parks substantially. Will stated this has been discussed with the Lowell Town Council over the years. Will was unsure on exactly why this has not been incorporated and stated he will get back to the committee on park impact fees in the future. Discussion followed about the need to find a way to increase the park budgets and how this would be beneficial to the improvements needed in the park system.

Mindi continued with reports stating that Leslie Bailey Events has decided to investigate the use of Liberty Park for an upcoming event called Brewfest. She had made this decision due to time constraint of a quickly approaching event and the inability to meet with the Freedom Committee in time to get a possible event together. Discussion went back to special event fees and procedures for town parks. Mindi updated the committee on the fee structure and procedures for special events in the town parks. Discussion followed about how the fees charged at either location does not cover all of the cost of a special event and how the parks are not supposed to make money off of hosted events. The committee discussed revisiting the special event fee at Freedom Park after they have met with the Lowell Council. Will stated he will get confirmation of this meeting and a start time back to the committee as soon as possible. Mindi reported that she did ask Leslie Bailey if she would consider making a proposal for a fundraiser for Freedom Park. Leslie said she would be interested in working on some type of fundraising opportunity for Freedom Park in the future.

Old Business: No old business to discuss.

New Business: No new business to discuss

Announcements & Correspondence: Alice suggested that Freedom Park Committee does not meet for their regularly scheduled meeting in September in hopes that they can meet with the Lowell Town Council that month. The committee agreed. Alice then made a motion not to meet for the September meeting. Will seconded that motion. Heidi announced the next meeting will take place on Tuesday, October 15, 2019 at 6pm.

Public Comment: No public comment.

Adjournment: Alice motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:42 pm. Dorothy seconded this motion.