

**Ad Hoc Playground Committee
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 17, 2009
Waterford Community Center**

In attendance:

Jane Dunlop, Chair
Brian Flaherty, Director of Recreation and Parks
Eric Doshna
MaryLou Gannotti
Jerry Lokken
Amy Rencskowski, Day reporter

The meeting was called to order at approximately 6:00 p.m. The first motion made was to approve the minutes of the January 20th meeting. The minutes were approved.

Design Update

Jane Dunlop and Eric Doshna met with Peter Wallace of M.E. O'Brien and Sons to discuss the playground design. The playground will now feature a "multi-tiered" design to accommodate children of all abilities. Those in attendance agreed it was an exciting and innovative concept, taking advantage of the natural landscape at Stenger Farm.

Brian Flaherty suggested some of the current design and landscape elements may be driving up the cost of the project and should be looked at more closely. There are ways of creating the playground in a more affordable fashion that can still be aesthetically pleasing.

Eric Doshna has constructed a Stenger Farm Playground Sign. MaryLou Gannotti suggested the sign be dedicated at the April 25th "Earth Day" event that is being planned. It was agreed the sign would be dedicated that day.

Goals and Objectives

Jane Dunlop suggested we set a goal of raising \$300,000 by December of 2009. MaryLou Gannotti noted in the current economy this might be an unrealistic figure, adding that the committee is moving at a very slow pace in accomplishing various objectives. Discussion ensued and Jerry Liken noted the committee needs a designated staffer in the Rec. and Parks Office to help work on the playground project. Since the ad-hoc committee is purely volunteer driven, it has been exceptionally difficult to accomplish various marketing and fundraising goals. Staff support would be highly appreciated. A liaison in the Rec. and Parks Office could send a more consistent message to the public and act as a clearing house, clearly defining "who does what" in regards to the playground project.

Eric Doshna suggested \$200,000 might be a more reasonable figure to aim for in regards to fundraising for the year. MaryLou Gannotti created a "fundraising" calendar which she highlighted with the group. It is important to seek grant dollars. In some cases,

grants will be sent under the auspices of the Town of Waterford, while other requests will come from the Waterford Parks Foundation.

Fundraising Update

A \$2,500 gift was received from the Bruno family in Waterford. (Plumbing Business.) The fundraising committee has not been given a comprehensive listing of gifts received from individuals in the past few months. The committee has requested this information be sent to Jane on a regular basis. Again, this is where Rec. and Park staff support would be helpful. We also plan to include our levels of giving in the next Rec. and Park Bulletin. Jerry discussed issuing a “December Challenge” at Christmas to generate funds for the project. MaryLou also noted we should begin publicizing a holiday fundraising campaign as early as December to introduce the idea of giving a “green gift.”

Grant Applications

Jane and Jerry have put together the necessary information to apply for a grant with the Chelsea Groton Foundation. Jane has a running list of grants. We will apply for as many grants as we qualify for. Jerry and MaryLou have agreed to assist with the grant application process.

New Business

Plans are underway for an “Earth Day” celebration to take place at Stenger Farm on Saturday, April 25, 2009. Current ideas including a scavenger hunt for children, possible trail races, having boy scouts present to clear trails, and possibly inviting an animal display from the Waterford Country School. Melissa Gaurnieri is heading up this event with assistance from Jane Dunlop and Stacey Wielachowski.

Respectfully Submitted,
MaryLou Gannotti