

RED HOOK TOWN BOARD MEETING
October 24, 2018

A meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Red Hook, Dutchess County, New York was convened in public session at the Town Hall, 7340 South Broadway, Red Hook at 7:30 p.m.

Present: Supervisor Robert McKeon
Councilman Harry Colgan
Councilman William O'Neill
Councilperson Sarah Imboden
Councilperson Christine Kane
Town Clerk Sue McCann

Also Present: Attorney Christine Chale

Supervisor McKeon called the meeting to order and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Supervisor McKeon announced the following:

- November 8 at 7:00 p.m. – preliminary budget public hearing
- New speed limit signs on River Rd. and Route 9G are posted
- RH Community Center Annual Gala – November 3 from 6 – 10 p.m.
- October is weatherization month. October 30 at 4 p.m. at the Red Hook Community Center

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Supervisor McKeon opened for comments.

Pamela Governale addressed the Board and thanked them for the work they are doing to improve our local recreation parks. She was in attendance with Ben Hoen and Win Faber to present findings of a supplemental needs survey for Rec. Park West that several residents designed in response to a survey that was conducted by the Town. Tighe & Bond who focused on organized sports missed key questions that would address broader needs of a large portion of the community. She provided a slide presentation and handouts. The research goal of their supplemental survey was to acquire information from the community on desired uses for Rec. Park West and determine level of support for current plans. The data for their survey reinforces their opinion that the Town survey excluded broader needs of the community. She believes their survey gives a more accurate picture of the diversity of needs and interests of residents. She thanked Brian Fuhr who contributed to the survey which was live for seven days. They conducted outreach via various outlets and networks encouraging participation from a random sample of residents resulting in 141 completed surveys. She reviewed the questions. The survey is highly representative of residents.

Win Faber said they referred respondents to a link of the mock up of the current plan. It's been shared widely and they encouraged them to visit the Town site to find out more, then they asked if they supported the plan. He pointed out responses on the presentation showing that 76% of respondents are not in support of this plan. He explained the breakdown of responses in the slide presentation. The current plan does not, in the two most likely sets of users, meet their needs. He continued reviewing the slide presentation. It seems that one is hard pressed to find supporters of this plan.

Ben Hoen reviewed a slide he said is a little bit more complicated. He referred to the questions regarding the frequency of park use. Importantly, it is a set of respondents asking about park use outside of Red Hook. They did that as to not bias the results by any perceived shortcomings of the current Rec. Park offerings. He pointed out "weighting" on the chart, i.e.; more frequent users as opposed to less frequent users. They do not see compelling evidence based on the uses of regional parks to develop the area west of the current park. He continued review of his slide presentation and pointed out responses of those who are supportive of the plan and those who are not. There is a loud cry to keep the area as natural as it can be. We need to remind everyone that the current plan serves special needs. In looking through responses and how it could be changed, there are only a few that mention anyone with special needs and roughly half were for changing those uses for the Rec. Park East, not West. Yes, there is a need but we do not find it supported.

Michele Platt commented that these results are statistically significant and they believe there is a mismatch between what the community wants and what the current plans detail. She asks the Town Board to consider these findings before making decisions and planning for the park.

She lives in Upper Red Hook and her family relies on public property. They use the land and it is a treasure for her family. It is a special place. Living in Red Hook is an incredible gift and she would hate to see suburban sprawl in developing green space.

Bryan Fuhr played a role in developing the survey results. He was hesitant in speaking tonight because he is concerned that the Board is not listening and also worries that the Board will respond to the survey results in a negative manner. He explained his skepticism and suggested what the Board can do to prove him wrong. Professionally, he is in marketing and thought it would be relevant to get additional information in that survey. The Board should feel confident in the results presented tonight. After completing the survey, they asked for time at a Town Board meeting. While exchanging messages, it was learned that several email addresses of theirs had been blacklisted by the firm conducting the survey on behalf of the Town. They aren't sure why. The next request was after emails were cleared. The Clerk printed out the request and put them in the Board member's mailboxes. We were told that there was no discussion of the request and that a particular discussion regarding this particular parcel of land might be hopeless. When we did hear back the message excluded some people who were relevant. The implication is that public dialogue is not always welcome let alone time on a public agenda. Point blank, it should not be that hard to get on a meeting agenda. Ask the public what we need, let us know you are listening and show us you are working with us. Signal that you are committed and are accountable to community and your taxpayers. We will remember that on election day.

Brian Kent represents Red Hook Little League. He is the Vice President and runs baseball and softball at the Rec. Park. He understands what everyone is saying, but the facts are that there is a small window of time to schedule games on the fields at the Rec. Park and he has to turn teams away. There is a travel team that has to be sent other places. We have more children than fields. We just don't have enough. Rec. Park West would be advantageous to them. Most parents didn't know what is going on with these fields. We need more fields in this community and parents didn't see this survey. Look at this from a different angle.

John Kuhn asked if the survey was anonymous. If so, we know nothing about these people. There is no way to verify information.

Sarah Imboden explained that Survey Monkey actually allows you to make sure people don't do multiple responses.

John Kuhn said that walking paths, trees, passive recreation, all are parts of the plan. This was all included in it.

Sarah Imboden said that our survey could also have been an issue.

Shana Weiler asked about when the surveys went out and asked if they are also available.

Supervisor McKeon responded that those will be discussed during the meeting.

Francisco said it is obvious that we need more fields. Is developing that field efficient right now? If fields are needed, let's do it. Can we use fields more efficiently? Is this the best way to handle it or not?

Supervisor McKeon responded to Bryan's comments. He fought to keep public comment periods as part of these meetings years ago. Two years ago, he fought to keep the Panda camera running so that everyone could see what this government is doing, worked to get screens so that the public can see what we are working on. As far as opening up for public comment with regard to this project, it's been in the works since 2007 when the land was purchased. The plan that was adopted in 2013 was sent to every household in the Town of Red Hook twice on the front page of our local newspaper. Once to solicit input and once to notify residents that the plan was up for adoption. At those two meetings, three people showed up. In 2016 recognizing that we would need to put away money and get grant money, we had a public hearing and nobody came and objected to it. In 2017 we received the grant and nobody came and objected to it. We do everything we can and we have a fairly robust email list and yet at the last minute, residents asked for public input. He said "let's do it". There were three more public sessions and people came in and contributed input. The plan was modified because of that input. Phase I has some parking and multi-purpose field that is also ADA compliant. We will do rough grading in such a way that there will be three level areas on the south side to be used for all types of activities. This plan is very different then the plan adopted in 2013. In regard to the emails that were rejected, the firm that did the survey had nothing to do with that problem. We switched over to a new website and unbeknownst to us we had problems with g-mail accounts. We worked with our vendor and got that straightened out. No one was being blocked. He wants to make sure that is understood.

A resident (woman) said when you held the prior meetings, you said there were no objections, but did you receive support?

Supervisor McKeon was not on the Board in 2013. He looked back in the minutes and watched the meetings to see who was here.

Bryan Fuhr questions whether the survey being done by the paid engineer is biased. You paid the firm to develop the land, and asked them to conduct the survey. Is there no bias in that structure?

Supervisor McKeon told him that Brandee Nelson from Tighe & Bond will explain.

DISCUSSION – RECREATION PARK ATHLETIC FIELDS NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Brandee Nelson, Professional Engineer with Tighe & Bond, introduced herself and began the presentation. She passed out a draft utilization study. An email copy will be sent to the Town Clerk. The purpose of the athletic field utilization report was in the context of some larger planning around improvements to recreational facilities. There was a desire to review existing utilization in more detail and confirm what the demand is. They were informed of challenges related to the fields. It was previously explained that this was going to be narrowly scoped around athletic fields and is not intended to replace the 1994 study that was done. This report could be a component of a broader recreational need's assessment in the future if the Town chose to do so. In general, their scope consisted of four principle tasks: review and inventory the existing fields in the Town review existing field utilization both by sport and user groups, look at benchmarking using national data, and then engage in a community wide needs assessment survey. There are two categories of fields. Those are publicly owned fields, and private clubs such as the Red Hook Soccer Club and Father Carroll Field. She explained the process regarding assessment of all of the fields and the evaluation summary for each field. She referred to preferred dimensions for fields and field utilization.

Councilperson Imboden commented that we were told that the Red Hook Soccer Club had a contract that says only club members are allowed to use those fields.

Supervisor McKeon explained that it is an easement. If the Soccer Club no longer uses the field it has to revert back to agriculture.

Former Soccer Club President said there is nothing excluding anyone from signing a waiver to use the field for other purposes. If the club ceases to exist, then the property would revert to agriculture, that is not what we are talking about, we are talking about field utilization.

Supervisor McKeon said that is between the club and the owner of the easement.

Brandee continued with the presentation.

Ryan Morrison of Tighe & Bond added that one of the key points of this utilization study is that we didn't want to discount any of the fields in the community. He explained an issue with a field that is unplayable.

Councilperson Imboden asked about field recommendations. She referred to a section on the presentation. Are school fields included?

Ryan told her it is defined as public recreation groups and it does not include school fields. They are separate entities. He explained components of fields.

Brandee continued review of athletic fields. She commented that community surveys provide insight as to how the residents feel about a particular topic. This study was focused principally on the actual utilization of the fields. She recapped her presentation.

Councilman Colgan asked about the number of teams as opposed to the amount of people in a certain age group.

Brandee did not include casual users. It is in one of the charts.

Ryan said there are user groups with multiple teams.

Brian Kent spoke about field scheduling for games, practices and makeup games.

Shana Weiler asked if there is a reason, we can't use removable mounds on existing ball fields and is there a reason we can't improve the existing fields we have in Tivoli.

Councilperson Imboden asked about field scheduling and user fees.

Supervisor McKeon asked Brandee if she feels they covered the condition of the school fields. That was a question that was raised.

Ryan showed the fields and explained the difference between the Rec. Park field and the high school fields. The HS fields break down faster because of the users. The availability was talked about in their report.

Councilperson Imboden asked about the table showing different sports per field. She asked for more clarification for use. She also asked for the teams to be categorized.

Supervisor McKeon said that needs assessment happens daily and weekly for the Recreation Department. He explained the Phase I plan which includes a little bit of parking, on multipurpose field, rough grading and seeding, leaving it open to Phase II. The plan was adjusted based on previous sessions to include a naturally looking meadow area and trails.

Shana Weiler asked if the proposed field is synthetic.

Supervisor McKeon told her it is synthetic.

Brandee explained the benefits of synthetic turf.

Shane Weiler asked the cost difference between adding synthetic fields and rehabbing the Tivoli field.

Brandee explained the drainage issue with Tivoli's field.

Recreation Director John Kuhn explained the constant maintenance needed on the fields. If you don't maintain every day, you don't have a ball field. Turf fields require much more maintenance than synthetic fields do.

Supervisor McKeon urged residents to continue making comments.

Councilperson Kane compared surveys. There is plenty of room for lots of uses on this property. Some development has to happen on this property. We have to have a safe entrance and a parking lot. That aspect of the plan has to go forward. While looking at the cost, she asked residents to remember that there are basic costs that have to happen. We are trying to look at a lot of aspects to the property and we do have a grant that will cover the difference between a turf and synthetic field.

Councilman O'Neill will wait until he gets the final draft and look at it carefully. Having lived here his whole life, that what is proposed has been around a number of years and has been thought out by many people. There is definitely a need for expansion of our recreation facilities. For many of us, we feel a lot of thought has gone into this.

Councilman Colgan considers it a work in progress and hasn't seen an actual analysis that leads to us having a handicapped field. This whole project has a lot of things to be looked at.

Councilperson Kane commented that we have people who volunteer and serve on boards and people so interested in the community that they do detailed research and take the time to present it to us. She thinks it is a great part of the fabric of our community.

Councilperson Imboden appreciates the time taken on the survey and the comments. It will be interesting to look at the overlap of comments in both surveys. There is a certain segment engaged in this and a segment that is not. She would like to see this room packed with people who have various opinions. She hopes that the Board is communicating that they are listening.

Councilman Colgan thinks the Town should subsidize Tivoli in terms of bringing that field up to standards.

Supervisor McKeon responded that the Tivoli field is a very small field surrounded by development and has very significant challenges. Everything is falling apart. The biggest challenge is the drainage.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ACCEPTANCE OF S.A.M. GRANT FOR TENNIS COURT RECONSTRUCTION

Supervisor McKeon explained the rebuilt tennis courts. The resolution is to accept a \$50,000 from NYS for the tennis court project.

RESOLUTION 2018 # 68

RE: APPROVING ACCEPTANCE OF A STATE AND MUNICIPAL FACILITIES PROGRAM GRANT

On a motion of Supervisor Robert McKeon seconded by Councilperson Sarah Imboden moved to approve the resolution.

Adopted	Ayes	5	McKeon, Colgan, O'Neill, Imboden, Kane
	Nays	0	

Copy attached

DISCUSSION – NYSERDA CLEAN ENERGY GRANTS PROGRAMS – TOWN HALL HVAC REPLACEMENT

Supervisor McKeon explained that one of the grants involved replacing our 1980's heating and ventilation equipment.

Denis Collet passed out a memo from the Energy Committee regarding replacement of air source heat pumps for the Town Hall building. He referred to the \$100,000 grant the Town was awarded and explained the work that was done to this point. In the last year and a half NYSERDA improved incentives for ground source heat pumps (GSHP). Well drilling technology has improved making the feasibility of using GSHP an option to be considered. The Energy Committee feels it would be worthwhile to consider going out to bid for replacement with geothermal as it may be more competitive than it was at the time of the CEC project delineation. Installation costs would be significant using a ground source heat pump over an air source pump. He asked the Board to approve the RFP for replacement.

Councilman Colgan commented that we would want to replace everything. How about heating water. He would hope it would be included.

Denis said the option of adding equipment is possible after GSHP installed.

Attorney Chale clarified that it is a bid, not a request for proposal (RFP).

Councilman Colgan suggested including everything in the quotes. It would be easier to include it in the initial bid than to have it as an add on.

Councilperson Kane said initially we allocated \$40,000 of the NYSERDA money. If we decide to go out to bid, we can hopefully get it within that price.

Supervisor McKeon clarified that we are doing nearly \$300,000 worth of different projects to save on annual costs to the Town. \$100,000 of that is being granted.

Councilperson Kane clarified that up to \$40,000 was allocated for a more efficient version of what we already have.

Councilperson Imboden asked Denis what a rough estimate might be.

Denis said we won't get a real number until we go out to bid. The number he is hearing is between \$48,000 and \$60,000. That is an initial onetime cost. The operating costs will see a savings. He will provide an analysis. We know the equipment has to be replaced.

Councilperson Kane asked where the equipment would go.

Denis explained.

Councilperson Imboden wants a cost analysis.

Councilman Colgan stressed that we will not get a firm number until we get a firm design.

Denis responded that we won't get a firm design unless we want to do it. He is not prepared to do it.

Supervisor McKeon said he doesn't think we need to do the design.

Attorney Chale explained that there has to be a specification that is sufficient to be able to award a bid on a least cost basis with apples to apples comparison. She explained further.

REORGANIZATION

Disaster Preparedness Committee

On a motion of Supervisor McKeon seconded by Councilperson Kane moved to appoint Randy Clum as At-large community member #3, Eleanor Troy as At-large community member #4, Highway Superintendent Theresa Burke, Red Hook School District representative Perry Sheldon, Bard College representatives John Gomez & Steven Perog as alternate, Red Hook Fire Company representative Rich Hilbrandt, Tivoli Fire Company representative Tom Crisci and Police Department Patrick Hildenbrand for terms to expire December 31, 2018

Adopted	Ayes	5	McKeon, Colgan, O'Neill, Imboden, Kane
	Nays	0	

Energy Committee

On a motion of Councilman O'Neill seconded by Supervisor McKeon moved to appoint Dan Smith to the Energy Committee for a term to expire December 31, 2018.

Adopted	Ayes	5	McKeon, Colgan, O'Neill, Imboden, Kane
	Nays	0	

Ethics Board

On a motion of Councilperson Imboden seconded by Supervisor McKeon moved to reappoint Gail Nussbaum to the Ethics Board for a term to expire December 31, 2022.

Adopted	Ayes	5	McKeon, Colgan, O'Neill, Imboden, Kane
	Nays	0	

Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan Committee

On a motion of Supervisor McKeon seconded by Councilperson Imboden moved to appoint Christine Kane to the LWRP Committee for a term to expire December 31, 2019.

Adopted	Ayes	5	McKeon, Colgan, O'Neill, Imboden, Kane
	Nays	0	

REPORTS

Planning Board – The report was for the period of August, September & October. Held 8 public hearings and granted conditional approval to them, commenced review of two projects.

Assessor – The report for September & October showed a total of eleven sales. She attended a meeting and spoke to residents, answering questions regarding new process for Enhanced Star, there was multiple new constructions of single-family homes that will be on the 2019 tax roll.

Building & Zoning – In September and October there were 56 permits issued, 45 inspections, 27 CO/CC's, 4 complaints and \$16,517.00 in revenue.

Disaster Preparedness Committee – They met yesterday with the Red Cross and provided an inventory and plan of action.

Intermunicipal Task Force – At their weekly meetings they continue to discuss and review short term rentals and prospective regulation of Airbnbs in the Town.

Recreation Department – Tennis court rules are updated, ongoing upkeep and repair, budget line was reported, playground committee is getting closer to their goal, 2019 Programs grant application was submitted, Flag Football is going on, pickle ball court is discussed and it is recommended to paint and line for pickle ball courts.

Senior Services Committee – There were two meetings in October where they planned their Weatherization Sign Up Event.

Tree Preservation Commission – The large stump cluster on Pitcher Lane was removed and re-graded. Councilperson Imboden was contacted about the new webpage, details for fall tree planting were finalized, and they will seek bids to drop a large diseased maple on the north side of Pitcher Lane.

Red Church Cemetery – Final versions of rules and regulations, price list, cemetery plot deed, Town Board resolution and local cemetery law were approved. The report contained maintenance information, fuel use, equipment servicing. Cemetery map has been updated. The process of restoring toppled stones will take several years to complete.

On a motion of Supervisor McKeon seconded by Councilperson Kane moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:10 p.m.

Adopted	Ayes	5	McKeon, Colgan, O'Neill, Imboden, Kane
	Nays	0	

Respectfully submitted,

Sue McCann, Town Clerk