Town of Cape Elizabeth
Fort Williams Park Committee
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 19, 2025

Present: Lauren Springer (LS) Chair, Curtis Kelly (CK), Jim Kerney (JK), Ken Pierce (KP)

Absent: Terry Bagley, Dennis Liener and Doreen Theriault

Staff: Kathy Raftice, (KR) Community Services and Fort Williams Park Director, Andrea Southworth (AS), Friends of Fort Williams and Dominic Walker (DW), Fort Williams Park Supervisor

Call to Order: LS called meeting to order at 6:01 pm.

Public Comment Opportunity for Discussion of Items Not on the Agenda - None

Approval of February 20, 2025 Meeting Draft Minutes

Motion by KP to approve the February 20, 2025 draft minutes, second by CK. Motion passed (4 – Yes, 0 – No).

Friends of Fort Williams Update

AS discussed her Ecology Report for March. She highlighted the various programs and events she has been working on including, the Four Season Walks, the return of the Gnome homes, Maine Audubon training, the return of the birding group and the always-popular Garden Tour. Additionally, she mentioned a grant opportunity with the Wild Seed Project, where she is looking to include Fort Williams.

Fort Williams Update

JK shared his concern with the Canadian Gaming Geese in the park. He suggests we need to get this under control before they take over the park much as they have in Millcreek Park. He also praised the work at the pond. All on the committee agreed the work was well done.

KR provided an update on the B2B vendor fair and packet pickup. During a meeting with B2B representatives and the town department heads it was agreed that holding the packet pickup and vendor fair at the school campus would be more effective. There were too many obstacles to holding this event at Fort Williams.

KR also provided an update regarding the relocation of the high school graduation from the Parade Ground to the Green. While this change will involve adjustments with parking and dropoffs within the park, to meet ADA requirements and take advantage of the beautiful lighthouse, all agreed this was the best solution.

KR provided a summary of the Town Council workshop. The presentation of the Powers Road project was well received; however, the council felt this project should be presented as a single project and not spread throughout multiple fiscal year budgets. Additionally, the council was receptive to the Goddard Mansion project, supporting the need for work at the mansion. In this discussion KR provided information on her budget meeting with the Town Manager and the request for the Fort Williams projects not exceed the revenue generated in the park excluding the pay and display money. KR went through the projects with the committee to prioritize should the council ask. The committee agreed to remove the Powers Road project from consideration. They all recognize the great work Gorrill Palmer put into the project however, they also acknowledge the town constraints at this time. Powers Road will be a future fiscal year consideration. The committee also agreed the removal of the bleachers is not an immediate need. JK suggests some minor projects from our previously allocated fund such as; continue to center of the road striping and something by Bite into Maine to highlight the crosswalk.

JK shared his presentation on the Pond Pavilion. LS asked about the distance from the back of the pavilion to the tennis courts and JK estimated it to be approximately 20 feet. KP expressed appreciation for the work that has been done and is leaning towards one with a fireplace inside. Cost differences need to be considered. The committee discussed the project and shared thoughts and ideas including discussion on whether this would be a rentable site. LS thanked JK for the work and for providing the handout that helps visualize the project. JK explained next steps; budget approval, permits and possible Planning Board review.

JK brought up the previous discussion around a pay and display kiosk in the playground parking lot. KR to revisit this with the vendor.

The brush piles and rocks around Battery Garesche need to be picked up. KR will follow up on the request.

Public Comment Opportunity for Discussion of Items on the Agenda – None

Motion to adjourn by CK, second by JK. Motion passed (4 – Yes, 0 – No). The meeting adjourned @ 7:48 pm.

Respectfully submitted

Kathy Raftice.