

Town of Farmington

1000 County Road 8
Farmington, New York 14425

PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN UPDATE COMMITTEE

Monday, July 1, 2024 • 6:30 p.m.

MINUTES—APPROVED

The following minutes are written as a summary of the main points that were made and are the official and permanent record of the actions taken by the Town of Farmington Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update Committee. Remarks delivered during discussions are summarized and are not intended to be verbatim transcriptions. Video and audio recordings of the meetings are available from the Town.

The meeting was conducted at the Farmington Town Hall and via remote video conference.

R = Attended via remote video conference.

Board Members Present: Susan Charland, *Committee Chairperson*
Julie LaRue (**R**)
Julie Maslyn
Larry Potter
Sara Weidenborner
Leah Thomas

Board Member Excused: Adrian Bellis

Staff Present:
Eric Cooper, MRB Group, D.P.C.
Matthew Sousa, MRB Group, D.P.C. (**R**)
Ronald L. Brand, Town of Farmington Director of Development and Planning
Tim Ford, Town of Farmington Highway and Parks Superintendent
Steve Holtz, Town Board Member
Peter Ingalsbe, Town Supervisor

Attending Public: None

1. OPEN MEETING

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chairperson Susan Charland.

2. REVIEW OF TOWN BOARD CHARTERING RESOLUTION

Supervisor Ingalsbe opened the meeting to thank everyone for volunteering to be a part of the Committee. He emphasized to the Committee not to worry about the cost because that is the Town Board's consideration and to focus on creating a consensus on action items.

Mr. Cooper asked the Committee to introduce themselves.

Ms. Thomas said she has lived in Farmington for 14 years. Her family uses Beaver Creek Park often. She also uses the Auburn trail. She is looking forward to being a part of a committee and volunteering and being helpful and useful.

Ms. Charland said she lives in the Pumpkin Hook area. She is mainly a trail and Bluebell person. She just wants to help her town if she can.

Mr. Ford said he is the Highway and Park Superintendent of the Town of Farmington and has lived here all his life.

Mr. Holtz said he is on the Town Board, but also a lifelong resident and then has three young kids. They spend a lot of time at Pumpkin Hook and Mertensia Parks for soccer games.

Ms. Weidenborner said she has lived in Farmington about 13 years and has daughters that use the playgrounds and Auburn Trail and just wants more things around for the kids in the town.

Mr. Potter said he has been a resident for 84 years and has always been interested in the Town operations. His kids grew up here, and he now has great grandchildren in the community.

Mr. Brand said he has been in Farmington now over 20 years, and that the Town is bringing visions to reality; this Park and Recreation plan being one of them. He said we have a very active community that is growing, and there are a lot of demands placed on town government these days. He said the Committee has a chance to provide a guide over the next 10 years to get us into the future for parks and recreation programs.

Ms. LaRue said she is the chairperson of the Recreation Advisory Committee and has been a resident of Farmington for over 20 years.

Ms. Maslin said she was asked to be on the Committee by the Town Supervisor.

Mr. Sousa said he will be working with Mr. Cooper to complete this plan and is also a Farmington resident within the Beaver Creek subdivision right next to Beaver Creek Park. He has two kids and goes to that park all the time. He is also a runner and is on the Auburn Trail just about every weekend. He is also on the Environmental Conservation Board for the town and is the liaison to that committee as part of this process.

3. PROJECT BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Mr. Cooper introduced the project background. He said the last Parks Recreation plan was

completed in 2017, and it recommends updating it every five years which is general good planning practice to update your plans periodically. This way, after time passing and completing any actions, you re-evaluate any change to demand in park services and whether the actions goals are still representative of the community.

Mr. Cooper explained that the goal of this update is to, therefore, review the 2017 plan and revise it to today's conditions. The town established the steering committee to guide that process. He said there are limits to what consultants can independently achieve, the steering committee supplements this with essential local knowledge. The steering committee will provide advice on where information and analysis is inaccurate, or guide MRB to look for things that are appropriate but not easily apparent. The steering committee will help publicize events using their local networks in the community. The steering committee will help guide MRB to the right stakeholders. As established in the town board resolution, the steering committee must hold a public information meeting in late 2024 or early 2025. The steering committee will incorporate the public comments and approve the draft product as ready to be presented to the Town Board. At that point, the steering committee's work is largely done, and the town board will take it from there and through the adoption process.

Mr. Brand added that the members of the committee are seven members, and there are seven staff advisory members. Mr. Ford, Mr. Holtz, Dan Delpriore, and himself and others that are listed on the committee sheet. The town wants this to be the committee's plan. He asked that any questions be asked as they come up and not wait until the end. He publicly thanked Ms. Charland for helping with the survey of the residents on this issue, where she did an excellent job. He said the committee is fortunate to have her and captaining the ship here.

Ms. Charland noted we all use parks differently, and we need to understand different needs and concerns.

Mr. Cooper provided a copy of the survey. He briefly went through the benefits of the information in the survey and how it will assist with the information and analysis.

Mr. Cooper also provided and referred to the 2017 Action Plan Evaluation. He mentioned that Mr. Ford would be assisting to complete some of the action statuses. He told the committee that this evaluation should be helpful to the committee to understand where the past plan was addressed or not. He noted that this document will be used more fully in coming meetings.

Mr. Potter asked about whether the survey could be adjusted to obtain just the responses of Farmington Residents. Ms. Charland responded that the survey did attempt to do this for some critical questions and showed that there were slight differences in percentages between Farmington residents and total survey respondents. She said the survey format made it difficult to exclude so they felt it appropriate to include them. Mr. Cooper noted that even non-residents create demand for park services because they are difficult or impossible to exclude from parks. Mr. Potter expanded that his concern was non-residents influencing how taxpayer money is spent. Ms. Charland agreed, and this was why the survey accounted for those differences.

4. TENTATIVE PROJECT SCHEDULE

Mr. Cooper provided a high-level overview of the project schedule. He said it would start with

some level of public engagement specifically meeting with Stakeholder. The process would then move to an analysis of existing conditions. Then it would move into broader goals and strategies. This would then be narrowed into action items and funding strategies. Once this draft is in a more final form, a public information session would be held, and modifications made as a response. Once the committee is satisfied with the draft, it will be submitted to the Town Board. The Town Board has directed the committee to create a draft by the end of the year to early next year.

5. STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

In July, MRB would like to begin meeting with Stakeholders for the project. He stated that stakeholders represent groups or interested parties that might be partners or impacted by the Town's plan. Mr. Sousa added that the Town's plan goals should be reflective of the State goals and regional goals, and this influenced the Stakeholder lists.

Mr. Holtz said the Town of Macedon should be included as there is much overlap in the Communities.

Ms. Charland recommended included trail advocacy groups. Ms. Charland also recommended including senior groups.

Ms. LaRue asked whether we are assuming school districts talk to athletic departments. Mr. Cooper responded that this was our assumption, but that we could specifically include them. The Committee agreed.

Mr. Holtz suggested including local sports leagues although they may be inclined to suggest more facilities for their sport. Mr. Cooper agreed and suggested that, despite any bias, their input is important to understand how families and users feel parks can be improved. Ms. Larue said that the Town has this information on sports leagues and can provide it.

Ms. Maslin asked whether there were any garden clubs in Farmington. Mr. Ford responded that there are clubs from Canandaigua that operate in the Town of Farmington. He said he could provide information. Ms. Maslin also suggested reaching out to the local Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Mr. Cooper asked whether the committee had suggested additional questions that would be helpful for the Committee. There were no additional suggestions at this time.

Mr. Brand said that the stakeholders must include NYSOPRHP and the Ontario County Planning Department. Mr. Cooper asked how much they coordinated with the Town during the County's park planning process. Mr. Brand said, to his knowledge, they just sent the draft when it was prepared.

6. REFRESHING THE GOALS

Mr. Cooper then introduced the goals from the 2021 Comprehensive Plan and the 2017 Park and Recreation Master Plan. He said that the Committee should look to past plans to guide our work, especially the Comprehensive Plan which this plan should further. He let the steering committee know that understanding plan goals is important prior to existing conditions analysis because it

helps narrow the focus and improve efficiency.

Mr. Cooper read the Goals of the 2021 Comprehensive Plan as it relates to Park and Recreation.

Goal: To provide accessible and attractive parks and diverse recreational opportunities.

Mr. Cooper asked whether any members felt this goal could be expanded on in the Park Plan. Mr. Cooper explained his reading of the goal statement; that accessible can refer to the Americans with Disabilities Act or it could refer to physical access as when a park is not connected by sidewalks or other infrastructure. He suggested the plan update could more clearly spell out what is intended by “accessible.” He said the committee might further clarify what attractive parks or diverse recreational opportunities entails for the Town.

Mr. Cooper read, one by one, the goals of the 2017 Park and Rec Master Plan. He asked the committee to consider being open to rewriting the prior goals.

Goal 1: Promote the creation of a diversity of active and passive recreation facilities within the Town for all age groups.

Mr. Cooper asked the committee whether this goal has been achieved. Ms. Weidenborner said that there are a number of events throughout the year although fewer during some periods. Ms. LaRue said that youth events are held quarterly and senior events several times a year including providing meeting places for them. She feels the Town does very good reaching young people to Seniors.

Ms. Thomas felt that Teenagers may be the only group left out and not provided a safe, accessible space. Mr. Cooper asked if she could provide more detail on what that would look like. Ms. Thomas responded maybe a big space with video games and books. She noted that it would require staff time. Mr. Cooper noted that “gaming” is a novel idea of what recreation looks like, but e-sports are growing. Ms. Thomas added that this could also include informal games like cornhole or kan jam and maybe leagues for kids. Ms. LaRue added that basketball courts are generally busy, that teenagers do attend Town events and are also employed by the Town. She added that while it is a job they are participating in outdoor events.

Mr. Potter asked whether this plan was intended to provide year-round programs. The Committee agreed that this was important.

Ms. Charland asked whether the 2017 plan goals were numbered in rank of priority and whether the committee is looking to rewrite them? Mr. Cooper responded that they are not ordered as such, and that the Committee should be open to rewriting them.

Mr. Brand added that the goals and document should educate the public on priorities which must be influenced by state and federal grant programs; planning must be well thought out and forward focused which means it must be flexible, this is why the plans are worded broadly. He further noted that one problem with accessibility to parks is dependence on the automobile. The Town is now looking to provide these connections and ensure that new developments also provide pedestrian connections. He wants the Town to be able to go after State grant funds for these park improvements. Plan should be more than just stating desires, but also focusing on realism and funding. Ms. Charland noted that teens also suffer from vehicular access problems because they do not have cars.

Mr. Brand said that the demand for additional park facilities is continuing to grow but new parks face difficulties being in the more rural areas. Mr. Brand wants to see removed from the plan the suggestion that trails should be along streams. Mr. Cooper asked for clarity on why trails should not be on creeks. Mr. Brand said challenges from easements and maintenance of these trails make it less desirable. Ms. Weidenborner added that these trails are extra difficult for first responders to access in emergency situations.

Ms. Charland said that, when the public is involved, we should set expectations about what the Town can achieve in the plan's time frame.

Mr. Cooper added that the plan should set a vision with actions in the first 5 years intended to move us in the direction but not necessarily realize the vision immediately. Mr. Brand added that the existing railroad trail provides a great example as the Genesee Transportation Council (GTC) has already identified the Finger Lakes Railroad right-of-way as a future opportunity despite it currently being in operation. He further referenced the Peanut Line Trail in Canandaigua as another regional opportunity and the importance of planning and timely action.

Mr. Brand asked Ms. Charland and Mr. Cooper to edit a draft article for the town's newsletter, stating the submission deadline is July 10th.

Ms. Charland asked if the plan could include public health as a goal. Mr. Cooper agreed and said it could be added in during the drafting process.

Goal 2: Capitalize on unique scenic, historical, and cultural assets, and scenic ravines, for recreational and education pursuits.

Mr. Cooper asked whether the Town is appropriately taking advantage of these. Ms. Weidenborner suggested the Park plan should also bring in the Town Historian to consult on opportunities.

Goal 3: Provide high-quality recreational lands, facilities, and programs in a fiscally appropriate manner.

Goal 4: Ensure that parks and recreational offerings are responsive to the needs and desires of the community.

Mr. Cooper said this is a good goal intended to focus on organizational capacity which is important to vision realization.

Ms. Charland added that these goals aren't intended to reflect priorities necessarily.. Mr. Cooper suggested that the goals may not exactly say what is included but it does give a good idea of what is excluded – like public health. He further said these goals could be revised to provide more clarity on accessibility. Mr. Brand added that goals should be somewhat vague to allow flexibility when applying for grant funding and for implementation.

7. OPEN DISCUSSION

None.

8. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Cooper provided an overview of planned items to address at the next meeting including some initial existing conditions and analysis and stakeholder engagement.

Mr. Sousa asked for Committee members to share any park and trail photos that could be used for the plan.

Mr. Cooper said he would establish a cloud folder for the committee to share documents. He further asked if anyone had comments from the meeting materials to share with him.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:19 p.m.

The next Committee Meeting will be held on Monday, August 5th at 6:30 p.m., in the main meeting room at the Town Hall. Notice will be provided to the Daily Messenger and posted on the Town's Website (August Calendar).

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Cooper