

Draft Minutes of the Mine Falls Park Advisory Committee, April 5, 2021 (Meeting was conducted virtually)

In Attendance:

Jeff Hannigan, chair
Paula Lochhead, vice chair
Greg Andruskevich
Pam Anderson
Judy Barry
Dick Gillespie
Doug Gagne

for the City of Nashua:

Jason Puopolo, Parks and Recreation Dept. Superintendent
Susan Bielawski

Representing Eversource and its contractors:

Walter Quinn
Sarah Hoodlet
Jeremy Belanger
Elizabeth Bradshaw

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. Minutes from the March meeting were accepted.

New Business:

1. Eversource appeared to inform us of an upcoming project to take place at their substation beside the former Nimco building at Technology Way, since we are abutters to the site. The existing substation was built in 1954 to serve the needs of the millyard complex. It is now at the end of its service life, and presently provides power for 2000 customers. Eversource has entered into an agreement with the City to build a new substation on City property adjacent to this one, and to conduct a land swap, granting the City a larger parcel that it may use for future development. The parcel Eversource would receive is atop fill consisting of demolition materials placed there after a mill building was removed sometime in the past; it was also the site of illicit dumping, including of asbestos shingles. Test pits at the new Eversource site have revealed the presence of industrial chemicals and heavy metals, ranging from TPHs (Total Petroleum Hydrocarbons) and SVOCs (Semi Volatile Organic Compounds) to lead, arsenic and the like, in varying degrees from "low level" to amounts more concerning. They have agreed to remediate by removal of all environmental hazards exposed as a result of the construction (they will not mitigate hazards outside these boundaries.) Once the new substation is built, the old one will be removed and any environmental remediation carried out on the older site. Lot line adjustments are being submitted for approval and

easements are being drafted which will allow the placement of power poles along the outer edge of the Park. The digital slides from this presentation will be shared with the MFPAC.

2. No financial report was provided for this meeting. Jason and Jeff agreed that going forward, financial reports will be sent out with the agendas for future meetings to allow time for review.
3. An area of downed trees was reported by the steps leading to the Cove Trail; it is thought that they resulted falling of a large dead tree.

Old Business:

1. Jason reported that the City Engineering Department will be adding the bridges within the Park to its list of bridges requiring inspection.
2. The dog waste bag saga continues. Paula contacted the manufacturer of Mutt Mitts, our bag vendor, who informed her that the formula for making the bags changed some time ago, and that the bags are no longer made of “biodegradable” materials, as most end up in landfills anyway. We need to remove any references to “biodegradability” from existing signage; Paula will cover up text with suitable tape. There was further discussion about whether there is a need for additional signage reminding dogwalkers to carry dog waste out of the Park. Paula will check to see if there are “There is no Poop Fairy” signs by every bag dispenser. Pam will check into submitting an article on social media and elsewhere informing the public that these bags are not biodegradable.
3. Boardwalk wood treatment: Jason is concerned about the balance between preventative/protective wood treatments and future maintenance. A copy of the correspondence received from the USDA Forest Service and the American Wood Protection Association will be shared with him for decision-making guidance.
4. Report from Normandeau Associates’ investigation and consultation on the Mill Pond Flow Enhancement and related environmental studies, including questions posed by the MFPAC: status is currently unknown.
5. Jeff corresponded with the alderman who had previously contacted the MFPAC about a constituent concern relating to the lack of a hand rail on the steps leading from the canal level to the river level. The alderman believes that a solution should be explored. By consensus, the committee agreed that this has been the only known complaint since the steps were first installed many years ago, and that the steps are merely a short-cutting convenience for Park users to switch paths: they are not a necessary part of any trail. Further, most trails in the Park offer a range of surfaces. Some are easily-traversed paved paths, while others present challenges to some users: rough grades, uneven surfaces, protruding roots and rocks, etc. Addressing this lone complaint may lead to an

expensive “slippery slope” of future accommodations, diminishing the experience of being immersed in a unique 300+ acre nature park setting in the middle of a city. No action is to be taken at the present.

6. Trail Day signs are being printed, and Jason hopes to have them available for hanging soon.
7. The first Trail Day is set for April 17th, and will focus on a Park clean-up, including the “Triangle”, which Jeff will lead. Other assignments will be given that morning. The
8. Jason informed the Committee that the installation of artificial turf on one or more of the Soiffert athletic fields to replace the natural grass surface will be a multi-step, multi-year process due to the scope and expense of the project. It is presently in the exploratory stage.

Subcommittee Reports:

None. The Cove Trail and Knotweed subcommittees will be meeting at 1 p.m. tomorrow at the Millyard entrance to discuss both issues and present any information at the next MFPAC meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Doug Gagne