

## Amherst Dog Park Task Force

June 18, 2020, 7:00 pm

Present: Carol Hepburn, Nina Allen, Michael Chesworth, Ted Diamond, Gina Fusco, Ana Devlin Gauthier, Jack Jemsek, Ellen Keiter, Jim Pistrang, and Dave Ziomek

Jim Pistrang called the meeting to order. Michael Chesworth volunteered to serve as secretary.

Task members unanimously approved the meeting minutes of May 21, 2020.

### Project Update

Dave Ziomek reported that the town awarded the contract to build the dog park to Valiant Group, with their bid of \$ 284,660. They will come back with a schedule for their work at a later date. The town DPW will be managing the construction and will determine a start date. The presence of Grasshopper Sparrow nesting sites will be a key factor in determining when construction can start. The Heritage Foundation will give the greenlight for when it is safe for the sparrows. Note that the sparrows do not come to the landfill meadow every year. As of this date, none have been seen at the old landfill. If they are not present by the end of June, Heritage states they will not be an issue. An independent monitor is to be established. The cost for that is being assessed.

The shed and fitting out the kiosk are not included in the Valiant bid but everything else on the wish list is.

We also received the balance of the 250,000 grant from the Stanton Foundation. Adding this to funds raised to date from private donors of \$45,950, and remaining funds from the first installment from Stanton and the CPA funds of \$72,800 the dog park now has a working total of \$344,550—well above the needed budget.

Jim Pistrang reports that there have not been other negative comments of late. He verified that the abutters were in fact notified previously.

Jim Jemsek asked if the fill required for the project had been acquired and Dave Ziomek reported that the DPW will be providing it free of charge, saving us that cost.

## Fundraising

Ted Diamond asked about any things left out of the Valiant bid. Dave Ziomeck responded that most everything on the original wish list is included, even the shade structures. He will check with DPW and verify this. There is a potential surplus now of about \$65,000, but there could be contingencies when construction begins. Unspent dog park funds will reside in the town account, earmarked solely for the dog park.

Ted Diamond questioned whether we need to fundraise now or wait. The consensus was that we should raise funds when sensible for an endowment to keep up the park so taxpayers would not be burdened. But, considering our strong funding situation it would be easier to postpone solicitation for now to wait for construction, covid opening, etc.

Dave Ziomek noted that the Stanton Foundation also has maintenance grants down the road to keep the dog park running.

Dave Ziomek suggested there could be a ribbon cutting ceremony scheduled to celebrate the start of construction, with COVID consideration taken.

Ellen Keiter questioned whether there would be an enforcement mask wearing at Dogpark.

Dave Ziomek responded the town guidelines currently are no mandate. Encouragement is ok, but the town currently does not require masks outside.

Jim Pistrang summerized that fundraising would be backburnered for now.

## Public Comment

Brenda Bushouse made the comment that she is hrilled with coming dogpark. eager to help dogpark.

## Other items

Jim Pistrang asked for volunteer(s) to kick off Friends of Dog Park, first by aggregating emails, drafting bylaws, and report back next meeting. For now there are no volunteers.

We also need volunteer(s) to determine what the kiosk will look like, what materials will be needed, what will go inside the kiosk, and talk to town about what we need to do. Then, come back to report. Mike Chesworth and Elle Keiter volunteered for this.

Carol Hepburn and Dave Ziomek volunteered to sit down with Barry Roberts to go over kiosk construction.

Ted Diamond volunteered to cope with plaques and memorial signs. He notes we should maintain a signage consistency throughout the park. And we should hire a designer.

Ellen Keiter also volunteered to write press releases.

Ana Devlin Gauthier volunteered to craft a timeline, and help facilitate group building process, draft wording. Brenda Bushouse agrees to help Ana.

#### Next meeting

To be determined by Doodle Poll. (It has subsequently been set for Thursday, July 23 at 7:00 pm via Zoom)

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm