

**Minutes  
Dorothea Dix Park Public Meeting  
August 12, 2009 @ 7pm**

The public meeting was called to order at 7pm on Wednesday August 12, 2009, at the Hampden Municipal Building Community Room by Gretchen Heldmann.

Gretchen Heldmann and Kurt Mathies introduced themselves and explained that as staff, they had the time to create the PowerPoint presentation that they were going to present. However, all information contained in the presentation was citizen-driven, created, reviewed, and validated. Gretchen explained she and Kurt would present the visioning concept information to date, and then turn it over to Tree Board and Friends of Dorothea Dix Park members for a question & answer session afterwards.

Gretchen & Kurt presented the PowerPoint "Future of Dorothea Dix Park" which is available on the website. The presentation was no more than 20 minutes and afterwards they turned to a question & answer session. Gretchen recorded audience concerns and questions on a large easel notepad. There was much discussion throughout the meeting; these minutes are intended to represent a documentation of all concerns presented and not an exact accounting of all the detailed discussion.

**Front Section:**

Locust trees are a rare grove, will they be left? -> more than likely, as there is no market for them. However, they are not native to Maine. They would be removed as they age and become brittle, break and are potential hazard trees. Oak and maple are favored.

Other uses have decreased, such as weddings, football, etc.

Proximity of cutting to property lines?

- Keep in mind close neighbors
- Shining headlights
- Could plant cedars as screening buffers
- Would leave at least 15' of no-cut zone along line

Used to have softball field out front, this is not proposed to go back

**Middle Section:**

What is brown blob on map? -> suspect it to be an old gravel pit

Concern over protecting wetland area

Concern over 30% harvest level

**Rear Section:**

Was party central but not as much any more

Fear of increased partying, drugs, trash, etc if more access allowed

- Currently cannot easily patrol area
- Has been shown that when an interest is taken in a public property, negative activities decrease

**River Section:**

Wheelchair accessibility to river front

**General Forestry:**

Blue-painted trees are to be cut, pink flagged ones or no paint are to remain

Forest Management plan is on website

Educational component – contacted Project Learning Tree

Balance between harvest and wildlife

There has been an accident in the park with falling trees on people, thankfully was not extremely serious

What's done to the park can affect abutters with regards to changing the micro ecosystem spread over property lines

Apparently there was some sort of logger allowed in the park 8-10 years ago to cut trees?

**Budgetary:**

Where is funding coming from?

- Harvesting, depending on economy
- Grants
  - o Thought grants weren't given if not ADA accessible -> no, have to make accessible where possible, but is not required
- Reserve funds established for these purposes
  - o Recreation Conservation Fund – funded by cash in lieu of green space when developments occur, and from extra end of year \$ from Rec. Dept. fees
  - o Boundary Location fund – used thus far for determination of ownership of right-of-way and survey boundary of park
- No additional tax lines thus far for park work

What is current budget for D.Dix Park?

- Is there a budget for on-going basis/operation/maintenance?
- Public Works and Rec. Dept. remove trash, maintain picnic tables, etc.
- There is an opportunity for the Friends of D.Dix Park Group to generate revenue from donations
- There are already current donations and volunteers: Calkins donates flowers for flower beds, Hampden Garden Club plants the flower beds, Boy Scouts do projects – they've installed all playground equipment and flag pole

Liability/feasibility of volunteers?

- There were lots of volunteers that helped at the pool planting project and it was not a problem

Hopkins Rd maintenance

Sustainability of plan & on-going maintenance

**Hopkins Road:**

Traffic volume/narrowness of road

Not well built, very soft/poor bed under pavement

Budgetary concerns about road maintenance

Speeding

**General Other:**

Was there a survey to identify a public need for this project?

- No, this was born out of multiple citizen committees (Comprehensive Plan, Services Committee, and more) and citizens that were not on committees that came in and expressed an interest in the park

Effect on wildlife/bird populations?

- Audubon did an inventory, is on website

Wetland vs. Vernal Pool

- Did not find egg masses to deem the area a significant vernal pool
- Area is wet year-round and seems to have an inlet and outlet
- Lots of animals use this wetland as habitat including deer that bed down next to it

This is public property

ADA compliance

Public Safety looked at plan and was okay with it

This is a general vision of where to go – could take 1,2, or 20 years to get there -> Hampden decided in early 80's to have sidewalks and that vision is still unfolding

Enjoyment in winter time not an option right now because closed and no parking

Access to back of park for emergencies or patrolling not available currently

What about a road through the middle of the park?

- Would cross the wetland and would defeat the purpose of it being more of a natural park

Have considered one entrance and one exit – two separate driveways off 1A instead of the one currently there

- considered due to safety issues, not expected increase in traffic volume
- would require consultation with MDOT, may not even be possible
- would also make easier for keeping open in winter

8 1/3 walks around the front loop = 1 mile

No one opposed to improving the park to some degree, it's the level of degree under debate

There is a walkthrough scheduled of the park for 8/19 at 6pm, weather-dependent. The meeting ended around 9:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Gretchen Heldmann  
GIS/IT Specialist