

**Minutes  
Hampden Town Council  
Services Committee  
May 10, 2010 @ 5:00pm**

The meeting of the Hampden Town Council Services Committee was called to order at 5:30p.m. on Monday, May 10, 2010, at the Hampden Municipal Building by Chairperson Jean Lawlis.

Gretchen Heldmann, GIS/IT Specialist  
Kurt Mathies, Recreation Director  
Councilor Jean Lawlis, Chair  
Councilor Andre Cushing  
Chris Packard, Tree Board

Note: Agenda was rearranged due to lateness of meeting start and the fact that people need to leave shortly after 6 p.m., having made other plans because this meeting was supposed to start at 5pm and run one hour.

**1. Approval of Minutes**

Tabled.

**2. Old Business**

**A. Subcommittee Updates**

Tree Bd – Arbor Day – was not discussed due to time constraints.

FoDDix – Next meeting is Wednesday 05/28/2010

Dog Park – Next meeting is Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> and the goal of the meeting is to finalize the plan. The current plan is from 1992 and was hand drawn so it is being converted to digital by donation from CES, Inc. The group is working on proposed rules for the park and fundraising efforts/events.

**B. Old town hall property update**

Tabled.

**3. New Business**

## **Tree Board**

### **D. Dix Vision**

The final vision statement was presented as:

Dorothea Dix Park will be developed as a safe, inviting, passive recreation town park with a natural character. The area will be maintained following healthy forest management practices as recommended by the Hampden Tree Board. Forest management recommendations will promote forest development, maintain and enhance wildlife habitats, and control invasive species.

The front half of the park and more open areas of the park will be available and maintained for light recreation such as picnicking and playground areas, but not for formal organized recreation or motorized recreation. The rest of the park will be maintained as a safe and healthy forest which will foster various soft nature recreational experiences such as hiking, trail running, bird watching, and nature study. The development of the park will provide increased educational opportunities surrounding the natural ecosystems and the historic value of the park.

In honor of Dorothea Dix's mission in life, some high quality areas of the park will be developed in such a way as to be accessible to individuals with physical and/or mental challenges.

Councilor Cushing questioned the use of “will” do thus & such. Chris explained that it’s forward- looking and written as such on purpose. There are no timelines associated with it – Gretchen pointed out that Kay Carter noted a while back in regards to the efforts in Dorothea Dix Park that decades ago the Bangor area made a commitment to have interconnecting sidewalks and that’s something that is still being worked on. Councilor Cushing also questioned about any potential financial implication, but the sidewalk analogy still applies. There are no timelines or financial implications in the vision, because since it is written vaguely it can be interpreted in any way. Councilor Cushing motioned to accept as presented and send the Council for acceptance, all voted in favor and it passed.

### **Tree Bd – Forest Mgmt Recommendations (attached)**

Councilor Cushing moved to forward this document to Council for acceptance, all voted in favor and the motion passed.

### **Tree Bd – other recommendations (attached)**

This document should be re-worked so that the “To:” field addresses multiple groups: Dean, Comp Plan Committee, FoDDix, Council Services Committee, and Bob – but remove the full Council and the Town Manager.

### **\$\$ Request**

Chris explained the Project Learning Tree Teacher Tour

(<http://www.mainetreefoundation.org/programs/plt-index.html>)

The program is designed to train teachers on what a learning forest is, how to use one, etc. The entire workshop actually cost about \$600/person but the registration fee is only \$85/person. There are two upcoming “2010 Forests of Maine Teacher Tour” programs, July 13-16 in the Mt.

Katahdin area and July 27-30 in the Moosehead area. Chris proposed that in an effort to improve our connection with MSAD22, that the town should provide enough money to send two MSAD22 teachers to the workshops. Councilor Cushing motioned to send the proposal to the Finance Committee. All voted in favor.

**4. Public Comment**

No public comments.

**5. Committee Member Comments**

The next meeting is June , 2010 at 6:00pm.

Meeting adjourned at 6:18pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Gretchen Heldmann  
GIS/IT Specialist

05/2010

MEMORANDUM

To: Hampden Town Council  
Susan Lessard, Town Manager  
Council Services Committee

From: Hampden Tree Board: Jim Feverston, Lance Case, Chris Packard, Shelby Wright and Larry Bruen  
Gretchen Heldmann, Intern Forester and staff to the Tree Board

RE: Forest Management Recommendations

In early summer 2008, the Hampden Tree Board was asked by the former Community Services Committee of the Council (now the Council Services Committee) to join with representatives of the Friends of Dorothea Dix Park to examine the park for potential recreational improvements and to make recommendations for the highest and best use of Dorothea Dix Park as a recreational and permanent green space for the citizens of Hampden.

Board members have extensively reviewed the recent forest management plan for the parcel developed by Prentiss and Carlisle and met jointly with Friends of Dorothea Dix Park representatives, town staff members and Council Services Committee members to establish a vision for the park. Additionally, Tree Board members together with town staff conducted GPS tracking activities to determine exact locations of existing trails and landmarks and walked the entire park both separately and together with the aforementioned community members.

Our recommendations are predicated on the fundamental premise that Dorothea Dix Park will be retained and developed as a public recreation area consistent with ecologically sound learning forest concepts. Additionally, we propose to increase access and promote a safer public environment for a variety of enhanced uses with the goal of making the park a more welcoming, attractive and useable encounter with nature. Speaking as private citizens of Hampden as well as members of the Tree Board, we recommend accomplishing the following activities to achieve our shared vision and goals with regards to forest health improvement in the park.

- 1) Forest health improvement by way of thinning of trees in the park should occur within the next twelve months at such time as is necessary to cause the least amount of disruption to the forest floor. Thinning is highly desirable and necessary at this point to retain a healthy and safe forest environment. A light cutting footprint should be used following trails jointly identified by Tree Board members, town staff, Council Services Committee members and friends of the park to the extent that it is operationally possible to follow the desired routes.

This cutting method will also help assure that erosion and other damage to the forest floor is kept to a minimum.

- 2) Thin the front 20 percent of the park closest to Route 1A leaving only the best quality crop and specimen trees. This will leave approximately 20 percent of trees remaining in this area. Much of the thinning could be accomplished from the under story. Some work will need to be done to shape and prune the remaining trees. The area should then be planted with grass and maintained to provide an open, attractive and inviting formal park setting. Trees should be maintained and replaced as needed to provide the desired canopy coverage.
- 3) The second section of the park would commence at the back edge of the newly expanded front section and continue to the west edge of a wetland area located approximately in the center of the park. We recommend removing about 30 percent of the forest to leave a forest dominated by hardwoods. The softwood trees are dead and dying and should be removed, as they are falling over anyway and create a safety hazard. However, some wildlife trees should be preserved, and have been jointly selected and identified with paint and flagging. Sections of the existing trail may need to be relocated to abate current and foreseeable erosion issues.
- 4) The wetland should be undisturbed to the maximum extent possible. A natural buffer of a minimum of 75 feet should be maintained around the wetland; 75 feet is the minimum recommended for many state and federal regulations.
- 5) The section of the park east of the wetlands to the open mowed grass field should be sufficiently thinned to maintain a healthy predominately oak forest. Softwoods in this area should be heavily thinned in order to accomplish that goal. Native understory shrub plant materials and grasses should be added to this area in the future to compete with the invasive understory plants present in the park such as Japanese barberry and honeysuckle.
- 6) The field towards the back of the park should be used as the temporary staging area for forest thinning and tree removal operations.
- 7) The last section of the park from the east edge of the field to the river should be thinned only to the level necessary to maintain a healthy mix of both hard and softwoods. Strict adherence to shoreland zoning cutting restrictions and setbacks should be observed. These setbacks have already been marked in this area with flagging.
- 8) The trees in the bluff area should be thinned and pruned to provide safe river vista viewing areas. However, every effort should be made to preserve the healthy majestic pine trees in this entire section.

- 9) Honeysuckle and barberry are invasive plant materials and can overrun areas of the forest where sufficient light comes through the canopy. This problem currently exists in some areas of the forest. We recommend adopting an ongoing strategy of systematic abatement that includes both a manual hand removal of the invasives, and/or a minimal application of a commercial herbicide. The chemical should be applied to the remaining exposed stem areas only to inhibit future growth while significantly reducing the amount of chemical applied in the surrounding forest floor. Another option that has been mentioned uses a fire control method for barberry, based on new research from the University of Connecticut. Mechanical methods of removal are not preferred because they will only ensure the invasives remain, as these methods break up root balls into multiple new seed sources as well as scatter existing seed further around. Unwanted growth of invasive plant material is of critical concern to board members. Such growth can significantly reduce the recreational enjoyment of the under story as well as crowd out native Maine species.
- 10) Drainage issues leading to erosion and sedimentation problems exist within and throughout the park. Remediation of these areas should be included in the operational forest health improvement plan and completed at the same time some sections of existing trails are relocated and possible new trails established.
- 11) Hampden Public Safety and the department of Public Works were consulted regarding trail widths and composition. Emergency evacuation of patrons and ongoing park maintenance and debris removal will need to be accomplished by use of park trails. The Director of Hampden Public Safety has stated that trails do not need to accommodate vehicles, as any rescue in the park would be conducted as any other wildland rescue operation. Regular park trail widths should be wide enough to accommodate maintenance operations.

It is a pleasure to assist the Town in planning activities and developing solutions and recommendations for park improvements. It is the expressed desire of this board and its staff to continue to provide support and specific implementation strategies and recommendations for the preservation and ongoing development of this treasured community asset.

Sincerely,

Hampden Tree Board members: Jim Feverston, Lance Case, Chris Packard, Shelby Wright, and Larry Bruen  
Gretchen Heldmann, Intern Forester and staff to the Tree Board

05/2010

MEMORANDUM

To: Hampden Town Council  
Susan Lessard, Town Manager  
Council Services Committee

From: Hampden Tree Board: Jim Feverston, Lance Case, Chris Packard, Shelby Wright and Larry Bruen  
Gretchen Heldmann, Intern Forester and staff to the Tree Board

RE: Other Recommendations for Consideration

Speaking as private citizens of Hampden as well as members of the Tree Board, we came up with these other ideas for consideration in the development of the park:

- 1) The playground area could be expanded.
- 2) The second section of the park would commence at a new trailhead at the back edge of the newly expanded front section and continue to the west edge of a wetland area located approximately in the center of the park. We recommend adding another loop hiking trail through this section to expand recreational and educational access to the park. An elevated point such as a small lookout platform from which to overlook the wetland is desirable.
- 3) An additional trail loop should be established on the south side of the grass field section and culminate at an additional new pavilion trailhead site located at the north end of the grass field.
- 4) The mowed grass field should be maintained as an open field with the following exceptions: A gravel roadway and parking area sufficient to accommodate patron vehicles and school buses should be constructed in this area, and a covered pavilion sized to accommodate a group of at least 35 people should be provided for public use at the north end of the grass field.
- 5) Vehicle and pedestrian access to the aforementioned field section of the park should be through an upgraded park entrance access off the end of Hopkins Road. The distance from the edge of the road to the park property line is approximately 130 feet.
- 6) The last section of the park is bisected by the traveled way mentioned in item one. While some areas are prohibitively steep, we envision the forest area between the field and the traveled way interspersed with stationary picnic tables.

- 7) The top of the bluff area located on the riverside of the aforementioned road should include a new trail and connect to a new loop trail from the pavilion trailhead area. Benches and picnic tables on the bluff are encouraged where possible. Part of this river vista trail should be built in a gently winding manner and paved so it is accessible to people with mobility challenges.
- 8) Drainage issues leading to erosion and sedimentation problems exist within and throughout the park. Remediation of these areas should be included in the operational forest health improvement plan and completed at the same time some sections of existing trails are relocated and possible new trails established.

It is a pleasure to assist the Town in planning activities and developing solutions and recommendations for park improvements. It is the expressed desire of this board and its staff to continue to provide support and specific implementation strategies and recommendations for the preservation and ongoing development of this treasured community asset.

Sincerely,

Hampden Tree Board members: Jim Feverston, Lance Case, Chris Packard, Shelby Wright, and Larry Bruen  
Gretchen Heldmann, Intern Forester and staff to the Tree Board