

Town of Glen Echo
Council Meeting Minutes
July 14, 2008

Attendance: Debbie Beers, Mayor
Nancy Long, Councilmember
Eve Arber, Councilmember
Steve Matney, Councilmember
Robin Kogelnik, Councilmember
Cathie Polak, Clerk-Treasurer

Visitors: Kym Elder, GEP Site Manager
Tom Helf, Echo Reporter
Willem Polak, Resident
Raya Bodnarchuk, Resident

Mayor Beers opened the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

GLEN ECHO PARK REPORT

Kym Elder announced NPS Regional Director Joe Lawler's retirement party. She extended a personal invitation to Councilmember Long.

Kym then thanked the Town for notifying the NPS of a homeless person, who was seen sleeping on the grassy hillside in the lower parking area. This person had set up a camp under the bridge over the Minnehaha Creek into the Park.

C/T Polak asked when the snow fencing, erected for the Minnehaha Bridge repairs, will be removed. Ms. Elder was not aware that the fencing was still up and said she would look into having it removed.

Carrousel

Mayor Beers asked about the proposed increase of a carrousel ride from \$1 to \$1.25; Kym Elder said the NPS supports the increase due to electricity and light bulb costs. Mayor Beers noted that the carrousel is a symbol of GEP and it should remain accessible to the community. Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture (GEPPAC) can rent out the carrousel for special events, along with other facilities; the carrousel cannot be rented by itself. Ms. Elder noted that the NPS has stood firm on limited use of the carrousel, only allowing a fixed number of hours each week. Councilmember Long said the carrousel was given to GEP with the requirement that it not be moved and would be maintained in running order and not become a museum piece. Kym Elder mentioned that a great deal of work has been done on the carrousel since it was donated. Mayor Beers asked that the NPS take the town's side if GEPPAC tries to increase the cost to ride the carrousel again.

Discovery Creek/Living Classrooms

Councilmember Long asked about Discover Creek's plans. The proposal for the Crystal Pool development has been pulled. Living Classrooms, the organization running the

programs, is in the process of trying to get the name changed from Discovery Creek to Living Classrooms.

Playground

Mayor Beers asked if the NPS is redoing the playground. Ms. Elder explained that the playground area will be closed for improvements after September 1, for 30-45 days. A few pieces of playground equipment will be repaired and the area will have a safer mat surface under the equipment.

Miniature Golf Course

Councilmember Long asked about GEPPAC's plan for use of the miniature golf course area. Kym Elder noted that the agreement gives that space to GEPPAC as a rentable space; GEPPAC could build a temporary structure. Kym said the current proposal is to remove the concrete padding; the area could become a picnic area, perhaps with an open pavilion.

Phase V Renovations

Phase V renovations will begin after September 1. It will include demolition of the bath house, re-stabilization of the retaining wall, and rehabilitation of the first aid building, the Caretaker's Cottage, and certain elements of the miniature golf course.

Oxford Road Ownership

Mayor Beers reviewed the draft letter on Oxford Road ownership. Ms. Elder suggested the letter be submitted to the Acting Superintendent John James; there will not be an announcement of the permanent Superintendent or Regional Director until after October 1. Ms. Elder asked to be copied on the letter. Resident Willem Polak suggested sending the letter to Secretary of the Interior Kempthorne. Mayor Beers said the letter should include Maryland Senators Mikulski and Cardin, and Congressman Van Hollen as well.

Councilmember Matney is opposed to mentioning traffic issues in the letter; Mayor Beers supports mentioning the problem.

Councilmember Long suggested quotes in the letter attributed to "The Echo" newsletter be attributed instead to the minutes of the December 17, 1974, Town Council meeting. She also noted that the word "purchase" should not be used in discussions of how the NPS assumes ownership of Oxford Road.

Mr. Polak also suggests the Town get a lobbyist and a lawyer (pro bono) to handle the issue. Mr. Polak offered to find someone to help the Town when Mayor Beers appeared skeptical.

Mr. Polak also suggested blocking Oxford Road and diverting traffic down the current exit; that would force the NPS consider the Town's request. Council did not respond to his suggestion.

New Site Manager

Kym Elder notified Council that she will be leaving GEP to be the NPS Director for Ford's Theater beginning on August 11. Her last day in the Park will be August 10. Ms Elder said she will remain available for the transition through October 1. Mayor Beers

and Councilmember Long offered her best wishes and kudos for service to GEP and cooperation with the Town. A new site manager has not been announced.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion 2008-18 to approve as amended the minutes of the June 9, 2008, Town Council meeting:

Page 2, paragraph 8: Councilmember Matney reported that he ~~found tree~~ saw WSSC personnel marking trees in the area near Whiskey Creek

Motion passed as amended

GEP REPORT

Councilmember Long noted that grounds maintenances at GEP has been outsourced to private businesses. She added that she is opposed to outsourcing of grounds keeping responsibilities for the Park because the companies have no vested interest in the Park.

Mayor Beers explained that the Town must reauthorize a town representative to the GEPPAC Board. In the past, Mayor Beers has held the Town's dedicated seat on the board. When asked, Councilmember Long said she was not interested. Mayor Beers offered to continue for one more term. Councilmember Kogelnik asked what kind of commitment is required. Mayor Beers explained that, in addition to an understood financial commitment, the representative attends a monthly meeting and subcommittee meetings for a three year term.

Motion 2008-19 to reauthorized Mayor Beers as the Town's representative to GEPPAC Board. Motion passed unanimously.

STREET REPAIR REPORT

Councilmember Kogelnik presented the attached proposal from A.M. Thomas to complete the bid process for the pavement resurfacing and rehabilitation project. She noted that the proposal is broken into five phases. Councilmember Kogelnik offered to take Council's questions to AMT for clarification. The concerns were:

- Inspection costs;
- Contract documents for which scope of work;
- Control of the subsurface spring to be addressed, with very explicit requirements;
- Advertising requirements for Town;
- Make sure bidders understand that bid opening will not coincide with selection decision; the decision to be made at next town council meeting. The Town is not required to take the lowest bid;
- Clarification of contract documents expenses;
- Bidding by segment;
- Town Hall Parking area; need concrete parking stops.

Discussion was held about removing Oxford Road from bid list, \$100,000. Mayor Beers and Councilmember Kogelnik support getting the bids and possibly do work in phases. Councilmember Long noted cost increases when complete repair is done versus done in phases. Councilmember Kogelnik said she will get back to everyone via email ASAP.

Councilmember Arber asked what ceiling limit council is comfortable with. There was general agreement that spending approximately 50% of the Town's reserves would be acceptable.

TOWN HALL MAINTENANCE

C/T Polak presented a proposal to repair the town hall wrought iron fence. She noted that Bethesda Ironworks, who has done the town's street signs and town hall fence for many years, has gone out of business. Bethesda Ironworks recommended Design-Weld.

Motion 2008-20 to accept the bid of \$1400 from Design-Weld to replace the bent section of Town Hall fence.

Meeting adjourned at 10:05.