

Stuyvesant Greenway Committee II
February 28, 2008
Stuyvesant Town Hall

Attending: Peter Donahoe, Kent Keller, Tom Kilcer, Juanita Knott, Ron Knott, Kristina Kwacz, Bill Vick, Mike Naegeli

Absent: Gale Bury, Charlene Leach, Bob Leach, Brian Chittenden

Audience member: Lee Jamison

Chairman Ron Knott introduced Mike Naegeli, who he has asked to join the Greenway Committee. Ron stated that he will make a recommendation to the Town Board that they approve Mike as a new member.

Bill Vick made the following corrections to the minutes of the January 24, 2008, meeting: Para 2, Line 5, change overlay “maps” to overlay “zones”; and agricultural “zone” to agricultural “districts.”

Kent Keller made a motion to accept the minutes as corrected, which was seconded by Peter Donahoe. The motion passed with all in favor.

Ron thanked Kristina Kwacz for addressing the Town Board at their February meeting to convey the Greenway Committee’s recommendation that the Town hold an informational meeting about recreation in the Town and the Sharptown Road Park by the end of February. The timing of this meeting is critical so that the Town does not miss a deadline to apply for an Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation grant to implement possible improvements to the Sharptown Road Park. The Town Board scheduled that public information meeting for Saturday, March 8, 2008.

Ron stated that there are changing trends regarding open space in Stuyvesant as well as the county. More and more open land that people used to informally access to hunt and hike, for example, is no longer available for those purposes as landowners subdivide or seek to limit their liability against trespassers by posting their property. He added that more municipalities are therefore owning and operating open space areas that the public can access for recreation. He acknowledged that this is a shift of responsibilities that people are expecting, but that some Stuyvesant residents do not like.

Discussion then began regarding the Sharptown Road Park. Part of the acreage at the Sharptown Road Park is protected by a conservation easement, which limits development in perpetuity on the area that is so designated. It may therefore be used for activities such as hiking, bird watching, and hunting. Tom Kilcer noted that conserved land such as this is a rare gem for a rural town like ours.

Ron described his experience with scouting, expressing how the natural areas at the Sharptown Road Park are an ideal resource for Boy and Girl Scout programs. Juanita added that 4H programs would also benefit from the opportunities these undeveloped areas would provide for a variety of activities.

Another portion of the park may be developed with improvements such as playing fields, parking and picnic areas, and a pavilion. Recognizing the importance of a regional assessment for organized sports, Mike Naegeli presented figures documenting a stable student population in the Ichabod Crane School district, indicating that demand for recreational sports facilities is not likely to decrease in the area. Approximately 445 students participate in the Town of Kinderhook's soccer program, with about 10% of those students coming from Stuyvesant. (Fields for that program are located at Kinderhook's town park.) Mike added that the Northern Columbia Little League has 600 students participating on a total of nine fields.

Given that soccer and little league are regional programs for young people, Ron questioned why Stuyvesant would want to provide facilities for students from other towns if they are already participating in programs hosted by other communities.

Peter Donahoe reminded the group of Stuyvesant's strong baseball history. Juanita recalled the Twilight League, which played in Stuyvesant and other country fields, while Bill mentioned baseball that was played decades ago at the Stuyvesant Falls VFW. Peter added that providing a baseball field at the Sharptown Road Park would essentially be a replacement project, encouraging the sporting opportunities that our grandfathers had in Stuyvesant that today's children do not have.

Peter expressed concern about the Town missing another opportunity to submit an OPRHP application. (In order for the value of the donated land to be used as a 50% grant match, there is only a three-year window of time to apply. The Town did not submit a grant application last year, so one year out of three has lapsed.) Ron stated that the Town was not ready to submit a grant application last year since there was no plan established for the park at that time. He expressed his hope that with the right amount of information presented at the public informational meeting, the Town Board will come to a conclusion rather than make a decision on the grant.

Given that Supervisor Valerie Bertram was not at the Greenway meeting, though she had been invited, Ron said that he would recommend to her and the Town Board that the Greenway Committee host the public information meeting. He underscored that the Greenway Committee is a logical choice, given the group's work on updating the comprehensive plan.

Ron explained that his goal for the public information meeting is to allow the Greenway Committee to collect information from Town residents about their recreation needs and desires for the Town. That information can then be used to assess steps Town officials could take to meet specific recreation needs. He added his hope that a balance of recreational opportunities for the Town would be illuminated through the public meeting. The Recreation Committee would also have an opportunity to present their proposal of potential improvements to the Sharptown Road Park.

Kent Keller suggested that Kristina serve as moderator of the meeting on behalf of the Greenway Committee. She stated that she would be happy to do so, pending approval by the Town Board, and would meet with them at their convenience to discuss an agenda for the meeting.

The committee discussed ideas for the meeting's format, and drafted the following agenda:

- 1) Introduction – What/Who is the Stuyvesant Greenway Committee?
What is the Comprehensive Plan?
Explain the void in the Comprehensive Plan with regard to recreation in the Town
- 2) Group exercise - What recreation areas in Stuyvesant do you know of?
What outdoor activities do people enjoy?
- 3) Presentation by the Recreation Committee about proposed improvements to the Sharptown Road Park and the OPRHP grant that is available.
- 4) Distribute survey sheet for attendees to complete, which ranks certain recreational opportunities they would like to see in Stuyvesant.
- 5) Concluding remarks

Ron handed out a summary prepared by Juanita of Recreational Opportunity Areas in the Town that are accessible by the general public, as well as a list of additional recreational opportunities such as sportsmen's activities at the private Glencadia Rod & Gun Club and the Hook Boat Club. He suggested that this be distributed at the public meeting.

Juanita then read a draft press release announcing the public information meeting. Kristina suggested some revisions, which the committee agreed upon:

Do you know where to go for a picnic in the Town of Stuyvesant? How about a place to cross country ski? The Town of Stuyvesant invites residents of all ages to share their ideas about recreation opportunities in Stuyvesant at 10 am on Saturday, March 8th at the Stuyvesant Town Hall.

Facilitated by the Town Greenway Committee, members of that group as well as the Town Board and Recreation Committee seek public input on present recreation areas in the Town, what types of outdoor recreation are enjoyed by residents, and future needs. There will also be a presentation about proposed improvements to the Sharptown Road Park with opportunities for questions.

Ron will meet with Val to firm up plans for the public meeting, and follow up with Kristina regarding the presentation, format, and handouts.

Tom made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Juanita.

Next meeting: March 27, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. at the Stuyvesant Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristina Kwacz
Secretary