

**TOWN OF GIBRALTAR
PLAN COMMISSION/ PARKS AND LANDS
JOINT MEETING
TUESDAY, APRIL 23, 2019
GIBRALTAR TOWN CENTER
6:00 P.M.**

Call to order: The joint meeting of the Gibraltar Plan Commission and Parks and Lands Committee was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Linda Merline, chairperson.

Roll Call/quorum: Merline stated that a quorum of the Plan Commission was present.
Members present: Linda Merline, Brian Hackbarth, and Don Freix
Absent: Tom Blackwood

Hackbarth stated that a quorum of the Parks and Lands Committee was present.
Members present: Brian Hackbarth, Laurie Buske, Tom Thurman, and Bonnie Ansley
Absent: Dwayne Daubner (Dwayne Daubner submitted his resignation on 4/22/19)

Proper notice: *Motion (Plan Commission: Hackbarth; Freix) to adopt the agenda as posted. Carried*
Motion (Parks & Lands Committee: Thurman, Ansley) to adopt the agenda as posted. Carried

Approve minutes of previous meetings: Minutes from 2018 joint meeting were approved at the May 2018 regular Plan Commission meeting. No action needed.

Public comment: Wayne Kudick spoke in favor of the Commission and Committee supporting the Green Tier Legacy Community. Gibraltar is currently between two other Green Tier Legacy Communities: Egg Harbor and Ephraim. Kudick mentioned how having this status as a community could open doors to additional grant and funding opportunities.

Kudick also mentioned and encouraged commission/committee members' attendance at the Every Day is Earth Day/Green Housing event taking place at the Kress Pavilion on Friday, April 26, 2019 at 6 p.m.

Implement the Fish Creek Watershed Plan/Discuss Ongoing Projects:

a. Reforestation—Removal of Dying Ash Trees & Marking Young Trees to Protect:

Tom Thurman provided the update. He stated that Bob Bultman has been contracted for two days of work to mark the healthy trees/species to be preserved along the creek corridor. This coincides with the educational opportunity with the Gibraltar School students in May where students will learn about those identified trees.

In regard to the removal of dead ash trees, Thurman mentioned the timeline for removal might not have to happen in one year, but could be scheduled over the course of the next couple years to help spread out the expense. This conclusion was based on additional conversations with Bultman. Hackbarth said he would like further discussion on the topic based on conversations he has had with foresters, as there is also concern about removing the trees too slowly so you don't kill the good trees.

Thurman stated the initial focus of the tree removal effort will focus along the creek corridor. The other issue of consideration is what to do with the downed trees afterwards. Some things to consider include what is the best

way to dispose of them? How do we best preserve the existing trees? What plan needs to be put into place for planting new trees?

Hackbarth asked if the Plan Commission's experts could lend guidance to the Parks & Lands Committee for those plans. Thurman mentioned Bob Bultmann has experience working with both the Plan Commission and Parks & Lands, so he does have the background and could be a resource to consider for those questions and that plan.

Buske mentioned concern over the school field trip and the student activity portion of the event. Will the students be helping preserve trees, plant trees, both?

Hackbarth stated there is money in the budget for reforestation, but would advise having a reforestation plan in place first. Thurman added that the trees that need to be preserved must be identified before acting on a reforestation plan.

Thurman mentioned that Andy Hartman from Acorn Company has already identified some of the larger specimens to be avoided when dropping the other trees. Parks & Lands has used several tree companies in the past, with Acorn being one of them. Buske added that Acorn has some specialized equipment to do the work that makes them appealing.

Merline stated that as Bob Bultmann gets the young trees marked, the rest of the reforestation plan will proceed. She questioned whether the reforestation project is an opportunity to reach out to and involve the community. Thurman commented that the \$5000 budgeted is a good start, but will only go so far when it comes to replacing the trees. He suggested implementing a good communication campaign around that idea of community involvement in the reforestation project (volunteers, donated trees, etc.) would be a way to make that community involvement happen.

Merline mentioned that this topic and a possible community fundraising effort might be most appropriate further down in the agenda under Suggestions for Other Possible Shared Projects.

b. Invasive Species—Invasive Plants Removal:

Bonnie Ansley mentioned that the barberry was taken care of. It was a large area, but that removal made a dent in the overall problem. She noted that no permit is needed for the next treatment unless the area is wet. She suspects the effort to remove the barberry will go into the fall.

Buckthorn was also removed from Fish Creek Park. She feels Fish Creek Park is the park of greatest concern when it comes to removing invasive species as the other Town parks are more manicured and easier to monitor. Hackbarth added that the other parks were also aggressively addressed previously, where Fish Creek Park was not. Hackbarth mentioned that the committee could use additional support for funds for this effort because of the size of the project and number of invasive species to be removed.

Hackbarth raised concern about the potential of invasive species being in the seed mix that will be used in the parking lot landscaping. Buske said she met with Meissner Landscape and went over the seed mixes to be used. Hackbarth asked if both the Plan Commission and Parks & Lands Committee should propose seeding sooner or additional seeding to help reduce the probability and amount of potential invasive species creeping into that area before the landscape plan is complete.

Discussion was had about conversations with the State Park removing honeysuckle on their part of the property near the creek. Hackbarth said it has been cut back but not removed. Merline mentioned that the Town has spoken with personnel at the State Park about the creek project; it was suggested to raise this issue with the State Park again.

Motion (Hackbarth, Ansley) to encourage the Town Board to seed more of the boat parking lot property to prevent invasive species and to ask the Town Board for assistance with encouraging Peninsula State Park to remove the invasive species or approve the removal of the invasive species in the park along the creek. Carried.

Ansley reminded the Commission and Committee about the 50 Buckthorn Blasters the Town purchased in the fall. She would like these to be made available to the public and asked about efforts to get the word out to the public. Merline she would be willing to work on this shared project and suggested having it on the agenda for a future meeting.

c. Gibraltar School 5th Grade Field Trip to Fish Creek Park:

The 5th grade class from Gibraltar School will be visiting the creek May 31, 2019. The students will be divided into three groups: reforestation, macroinvertebrates, and invasive species. After 30 minutes, the groups will rotate so at the end of the morning the students have been to all three stations. Afterwards, they will eat lunch and then return to school. In the afternoon, a second group of students will arrive and repeat the morning schedule. Volunteers/stations will be teaching six groups total, three groups in the morning and three groups in the afternoon. Merline would like to have the stations located in or near the area of the boardwalk.

Merline reminded the Commission and Committee that those interested in volunteering need to have a background check done. The process takes about a month to complete, so those who haven't already done so should contact that school and submit the appropriate forms as soon as possible.

Hackbarth suggested inviting Dave Bultman to volunteer at the event. Buske said she would contact Dave Bultman.

Buske talked about her activity station for the event. Her original plan was to purchase the tree protectors and have the students "reidentify" the trees that are marked to protect and put a tree protector around it. Her backup plan is to have small trees on hand to plant those trees and talk about how important the trees are for keeping the creek cool.

Merline suggested making the activity station more of a demonstration using only six trees, one for each group. For example, first talk about the importance of protecting the young trees that still exist and show how that is done. Then, follow up with talking about the importance of replanting new trees along the creek, and plant a ceremonial tree with each group. Merline explained that this would be a little quicker and help teach and demonstrate to students the "circle of life" and role of trees.

Buske stated concern over getting enough trees that quickly. Merline said it would be nice to have trees that are large enough that the students would be able to return to the park and identify which trees they helped plant.

Motion (Thurman, Ansley) to authorize an expenditure not to exceed \$500 to pay for six (6) trees, as well as any funding needed for tree protectors, to be planted by the 5th graders as part of the Fish Creek fieldtrip activity on May 31, 2019. Carried.

Ansley talked about her invasive species activity. She will focus on wild parsnip and the danger of it. She will also bring attention to dames rocket and garlic mustard, including how to identify and remove it, as well as what native species can be planted in place of invasive species. Merline suggested having both a hands-on and take away component of the activity.

Merline stated that Vinni Chomeau will be handling the macroinvertebrate activity station.

There will be approximately 50 students in attendance. Merline will email the schedule of the day to the Committee and Commission members, as well as the volunteers.

d. Grant Work:

Merline reported that Miller Engineers Scientists out of Sheboygan has been hired to do the work on the Fish Creek culvert. The Plan Commission will also be going before the Town Board to ask that Miller Engineers Scientists also add work on the meander to their contract. Bob Bultman has also been working on this project.

Suggestions for Other Possible Shared Projects:

Previously in the meeting the Commission and Committee discussed a joint project around the Buckthorn Blasters the Town purchased last fall. The next step is to get them into the hands of the public. Ansley said she would work with Merline on this joint project.

Thurman suggested a shared project of a PR campaign for residents and visitors to make donations and contributions for trees to be planted throughout the Township. It was suggested to tie this PR campaign into the existing Giving Tree project. Buske asked that any such shared project and call for community involvement also be included in the spring newsletter.

Merline also suggested the addition of rain gardens as a potential shared project. These are currently in the creek plan.

Set the next meeting date: *TBD (next year spring of 2020)*

Adjourn: *Motion: (Freix, Buske) to adjourn at 6:57 p.m. Carried*

Respectfully Submitted,

Sara Rae Lancaster
Administrative Assistant