

Bartlet Mall Commission Meeting
November 15, 2012

Date: November 15, 2012

Time: 6:00-7:30

Location: Newburyport Public Library, Children's Activity Room (1st Floor)

Attending: Sadie Cathcart, George Masterson, Alex Pittman, Bill Plante, Andrew Simpson, Walt Thompson

Agenda

1. Call to order
2. Approval of minutes of last meeting
3. History of the Mall... another in a continuing series
4. Newburyport High School water quality update
5. Bench Sponsorships
6. Status of fundraising and beautification projects
7. Social media
8. Open discussion

Notes

Approval of minutes of last meeting:

- Minutes approved pending edits suggested by Walt

Newburyport High School water quality update (See attached for document provided by students)

- Only shade behind the courthouse
- self-perpetuating cycle, temperature is the largest issue
- Try to keep the water level higher, shade trees could be helpful, Georgie Vining suggests that this might not be a great idea as it would conflict with the historical integrity
- Adding water would dilute it, which could be a useful solution
- Bill Plante does not recall that it has been as stagnant as it is now
- Every time the water level is as it is, there is a dramatic winter, so that is what we should hope for
- Mall was never scraped, John Kelly suggests that it was?
- Error in having the water come from the swans, rather than surrounding the swans

History of the Mall... another in a continuing series (guest visitor Bill Plante)

- Basic environmental problem is people, who are failing to address maintenance of the park, money and effort is required for this
- Used to be that there was a fireman with a row boat who would distribute chemicals throughout the pond which somehow, though it would be controversial now, maintained the life and quality of the pond
- Pete Moss handled five cent savings bank in town, Bill Plante contacted him and he immediately cooperated
- Interesting thought- "Environment was people living."
- In the wintertime the Bartlet Mall was a great place to go, things are over thought now

- Bill Plante is totally in support of the Mall aeration program
- Get a public relations program going, needs to be properly handled publicly
- NADE (Newburyport Area Development Organization) turning point in bringing people together in Newburyport
- Long term people in the city who have contributed in the past are all on record in Newburyport
- Studies have been done with runoff in the past, never such a significant problem
- The major asked about maybe having a different color other than the white
- The entire front of the pond was a rope walk before, though there was much activity around, there also must have been more trees
- Used to be that people would swim in the ponds in town at Atkinson Common and around, that was before there were so many regulations and concerns
- "The regulated world today"
- Working with the City Improvement Society, though we can't work with them until they are reinstated
- 501c3 charities in Newburyport, very long list
- 205,000 would take care of everything
- NADE mostly into other things, might not consider contribution to the Mall as they fund things that are critical in the community
- Don't think only in terms of the money in Newburyport, think beyond High Street- consider the entire community
- Long term and short-term planning- let the public know about this. Emphasize that there will be many stages
- Blood and meat of a community
- New people who come into town haven't attached themselves to some of the structures already existing in the community, town runs the risk of becoming exclusionary

Status of fundraising and beautification projects

- You have to incorporate the Daily News in the planning process for raising funds
- Other media is important, paper carries weight, especially in digital form
- Chamber of commerce, Walt will contact
- Text \$10 to the Bartlet Mall?
- Bill Plante 1984 raised money for this projects
- Problems ahead in raising the money, Freddy Frog needs to come out of hiding, twenty some people donated money, received sterling silver lapels in exchange during past fundraiser

Bench Sponsorships

- Sponsor a bench program now available in full force
- We will all distribute flyers, information up at the Library and other public places!

To Do (Before Next Meeting):

- Sadie will talk to people at Starbucks

- Andy- man online who is obsessed with frogs, all about bringing frogs back, possibly contact?
- Walt- contact Chamber of Commerce

Next Meeting

Thursday, December 13, 2012

6:00 PM

Newburyport Public Library, Children's Activity Room

**Presented to the Bartlett Mall Conservation Commission
November 15th, 2012**

These data tables are a culmination of our study for the Frog Pond this season.

Presenting from Newburyport High School are:

Rebecca Kell, Mike Sweeney, Elizabeth O'Connor & George Masterson

Temperature Data collected from mid-June of 2012 through October indicates as the summer months pass the temperature rises precipitously resulting in turn, low oxygen levels. Dissolved oxygen levels are inversely related to water temperature thus a prolonged temperature spike means certain death for aquatic organisms. The causes for a radical rise in temperature at the Frog Pond are shallow, unshaded and turbid waters. These factors are all manageable through adding water midsummer, planting coniferous trees on the south bank of the pond and mitigating run-off respectively. There has been some resistance to this suggestion by the historical society on the planting of trees but it can be argued that trees have bordered the shores of the pond sometime in the past, thus planting is justified in this case.

pH The data here is favorable, this finding was a surprise due to the predominance of acid rain here in the Northeast. Students predicted the waters would be acidic (pH 5.5) but testing indicated a neutral pH of 7. Since regional ponds all tested acidic we postulate that the underlying strata of the pond may be composed of limestone, leaching calcium carbonate into the waters thus neutralizing normally acidic local readings.

Turbidity and Total Solids These graphs speak to the suspended particles in the water. Whether it is algae, phytoplankton, cyanobacteria dust, etc., turbid waters present a variety of negative effects on water bodies. Darker more turbid waters absorb more sunlight which increases water temperature, smother fish and frog eggs and clog fish gills essentially suffocating them. Run-off is the culprit here and can be easily mitigated with the planting of shrubs along the ponds shoreline.

Phosphates and Nitrates Data suggests significant non-source point run off during the rainy late summer and early fall. Both these compounds act as fertilizers, causing algae blooms known as eutrophication and decreased oxygen levels. Low dissolved oxygen can be caused by many factors. The most common is eutrophication via the excessive inflow of nutrients into ponds, which causes phytoplankton blooms resulting in high respiration or consumption of oxygen. Phytoplankton usually die off quickly causing a rapid decomposition of algae by increased bacteria concentrations. It is this decomposition of organic matter and the presence of abundant bacteria which consumes massive quantities of oxygen.

It is our observation that the grass surrounding the pond is not a thick or tall and this has two profound effects on the area: first short sparse grass does little to foster insects which would potentially supply food for adult frogs and second rainfall pours into the pond quickly meaning little absorption for plant roots and almost no buffering against chemicals such as nitrogen and phosphorus.