

## **Roeliff Jansen Park Steering Committee**

### **Meeting Notes for January 10, 2008 Committee Meeting**

Attendance: Judy Anderson, Art Baer, Peter Cipkowski, Doug Clark, John Farrell, Ed Herrington, Wayne Miller, Jill Sims-Elster and Caroline Stewart.

Absent: none

The meeting began at 7:15 p.m. at Art Baer's house. Last month's meeting notes were reviewed and approved prior to Caroline outlining the status of the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation funding for demolition of structures on the land. John Farrell, acting as chair of the Facilities Committee, has sent necessary materials (including an aerial photograph noting all structures on the property) to explain that the steering committee would like OPRHP to remove the milking parlor and double-wide trailer. It is thought that it will take regular contact with OPRHP over the next several months to ensure this happens by early-mid- spring. John asked if there were others interested in helping him on the Facilities Committee in addition to Ed Herrington. Caroline suggested Joe Hanselman, Jr. and will contact him to see if he is interested. Ed mentioned that he would be happy to find contractors or related people to help evaluate structures as needed, and that they would not have to serve on the committee to help out. John noted that the property may be exempt from certain regulations related to removal of materials. He is working to clarify this.

Caroline explained that OPRHP's update to its consultant list is not anticipated to be complete until late spring and therefore the committee could not begin its interviewing and hiring of a consultant until after that list is made available. Upon reflection, she would recommend that the committee hold off on the community survey until the consultants are hired, recognizing that this timing would provide the committee necessary time to open the park for the general public two-three months in advance of the survey. Judy and Doug estimated that it might take a couple of months to interview and hire an appropriate consultant, and that the Steering Committee should expect the hiring of this consultant no earlier than July or August of this year. The committee discussed the benefits of this, including allowing the public to experience the park during the summer months prior to contemplating what it might want as part of the park. It was agreed to hold off on the community survey until the Park Design and Planning Consultant was hired from OPRHP's list. The committee also estimated that it is likely to take a year from the hiring of the consultants, to go through the community design and planning process to obtain a Park Plan and community vision.

Caroline conveyed that she had contacted Sheri Franks, of the Chatham Park Committee, and that she, certainly, and perhaps a couple of members from their committee would be willing to come talk to the Steering Committee related to their community and committee process, consultants, visioning/design, budgets, fundraising and project implementation. Caroline will confirm if they might come to the February or March meeting of the Steering Committee.

#### Interim Plan:

Art mentioned that the interim plan will be important to coordinate efforts and ensure that we prioritize our efforts, funding, and community presence. The committee acknowledged that agricultural was an important part of the park, but that given that the Park was owned by OPRHP as a state park, and that Hillsdale was acting as park manager via the management agreement with OPRHOP, that recreational and educational activities would dictate where the majority of the agricultural activities would take place. Agriculture and recreation would therefore have a dual presence. Interim trail design (before the Park Plan via the community design process with the committee) will need to occur fairly quickly to allow for a map to be included in agricultural leases related to the parkland. Judy and Ed suggested that the

committee draft up a short interim plan, as an internal management document, to help prioritize fundraising and implementation of tasks. The plan would cover the estimated three-year period prior to the implementation of the formal Park Plan resulting from the public design process.

#### Goals prior to opening the park:

The committee outlined the following tasks that would be completed, ideally, prior to opening the east-side of the park to the public (west-side park implementation is phase two, at a later date):

- Trails: Design, establish, maintain (mowing with tractor and brush-hog), and mark.
- Fishing access: Design, establish, and maintain fishing access. It was noted that that parkland contained a great deal of the Roeliff Jansen Kill stream, yet it would not be suited to fishing derbies or large numbers of people at one event due to the wetland access.
- Parking area: Design, establish, maintain an enclosed interim parking area that would allow for 15-20 cars. This parking area would likely be within the Farmstead Complex court-yard. The committee noted that in the future, it may be beneficial to have the parking area within site of the public road to enhance “community oversight” by those who drive by.
- Information kiosk: Construct and install an information kiosk to house rule and regulations, contact information, update and event information, trail maps and an overall property trail map.
- Trail map, brochures: Establish a well-designed, simple but professional, trail map and brochures to be educational and user friendly in tone, located at the information kiosk.
- Picnic area, overlook benches: Consider establishing tasteful, yet vandal “resistant” picnic benches and overlook benches in key areas of the park.
- Guidelines and rules: Establish the guidelines and rules for the park. The committee agreed that the phrasing of these guidelines and rules should be educational and user friendly, rather than the regulatory method of “No...”. Judy and Bill conveyed that this has been the philosophy of the Columbia Land Conservancy’s conservation areas, and that it has worked well.
- Plan of Action: The committee discussed the need to establish a “plan of action” to outline who, what and when would take action if there were incidents at the park. Examples might include loud kids, littering, four-wheeling, etc. This led to a discussion about if, and how, the residential tenants should serve as interim park ambassadors.
- Secure all buildings, remove “attractive nuisances”: Buildings to be removed include the milking parlor and double wide trailer. Removal of old metal debris and barbwire within the east side of the park was seen as beneficial.
- Public relations and outreach: The committee thought it would be helpful to have a plan in place prior to opening up the park, so as to schedule community and public events for the park and coordinate it with area activities in Hillsdale and Copake.

It was expected that OPRHP would have been kept in the loop prior to site changes. Art mentioned that he would clarify how and when local or park police might be involved in patrolling the park after hours. The committee discussed that it was important to clarify the roles of the residential tenants prior to opening the park for public use. Much discussion ensued related to possible roles. It was felt that this discussion needed to be continued at the next meeting, and John Farrell was asked to discuss further with Bill Furner, what his current duties are and report back at the next meeting.

#### Agricultural uses, leases:

The committee discussed the need to clarify what types of agricultural uses would be appropriate, and where, within the entire parkland (east and west). After considerable deliberation, the committee agreed that the east side of the park would be limited to a three year lease (to ensure flexibility to begin park improvements, should a park plan and funding be in place), and hay crops and/or alfalfa to allow the public to fully orient and familiarize themselves with the parkland (with open views) during planning process. The trail design would be conducted to ensure a variety of user experiences, with consideration toward maintenance expenses, throughout the east side of the park.

The Westside of the parkland would be provided with a five-year agricultural lease with the understanding that the 10-acre parcel currently leased by Martin Stosiak was organic, and that an additional 20-acre contiguous plot be organic as well with appropriate buffer zones surrounding this 30 acre piece. These lands would have a separate lease, and would be delineated on a map and on the ground utilizing global position system (GPS). The field size will be calculated using GIS. Doug volunteered his skills and equipment for these GPS and GIS tasks. The rest of the farmland (on both sides) is permitted to be farmed using best management practices for conventional agriculture.

All agricultural leases will include language that notes that the land is parkland, and that the public will have access to these lands (recognizing that access on the Westside will be more limited). Farmers will be expected to be ambassadors for the park and agriculture, recognizing that the public may have questions related to their work. The leases would also recognize the ability for the organic vegetable farmers to enclose their leased lands, to manage the public wandering through. Preference of lessees will be given to farmers in Hillsdale and/or Copake, assuming that farming qualifications and monetary lease payments are the same. Further discussions will take place in the context of the ag subcommittee meeting.

#### Ag. sub-committee meeting:

The park's agricultural sub-committee (Caroline is chair) will meet within the next couple of weeks to draft the leases (reflecting the above decisions), obtain outside legal pro bono review, and then send out the RFP for the leases by early February. Proposals will be required to be received by the Town of Hillsdale, with sealed bids, two – three weeks later. It is the goal of the steering committee to have the town award the leases for the agricultural land by the end of February or early March to allow farmers adequate time to plan for the coming season. Art noted that the Town would hold a special meeting if necessary to award the leases.

Interim “internal” Park Signs: Peter displayed two signs that he had commissioned on behalf of the park, at a cost of \$250. One sign states the name of the park, the other states it is closed until spring. Funding for the signs is covered by the rent from the residential leases. The committee thanked him for this work, noting that these temporary signs will go up in the farmstead courtyard .

#### Interim trail design:

Given the need to identify trail routes as part of the ag. leases and RPFs, Judy and Doug will provide some trail design sketches to a sub-committee (who ever wants to come to the site) on January 16th at 1 p.m. (weather permitting). The trail design will then be reviewed and finalized by the Steering Committee at the next meeting in February.

#### Hillsdale Town Website:

Pat Baer has drafted an outreach piece that would be placed on the Hillsdale Website. This information is referenced on the sign that Peter had prepared—and will need to be on the website prior to the park signs being installed. It was agreed that anyone who had comments and/or suggestions should get them to Caroline by Monday evening (January 14<sup>th</sup>), to allow for revisions. The steering committee set a goal completing the outreach piece and placing it on the Hillsdale website by the following Monday.

#### Budgeting:

The committee discussed the need to establish both project budgets, and an overall interim park budget, to ensure park improvement coordination, fiscal tracking, and fundraising. To do so, it was agreed that Art would clarify what role (and the costs) that town employees could play (e.g. road and maintenance, attorney, building inspector). Judy noted that in some cases, the committee might be able to obtain volunteer work for technical services. Jill agreed to provide the committee with a monthly report related to income received and expenses allocated/spent. In-kind donations of time or materials would also be tracked using a database. Art noted that all rent money will come to the town, and be ear-marked for the

park. Donations for improvements are expected to come via The Hillsdale Economic and Community Development Corporation (the Town's 501(c) 3). This organization will be meeting shortly to discuss how this will work. Art is having the HECD Corp. file a "doing business as" statement to allow the town to accept donations/work on behalf of the park.

Decision making process:

It was agreed by the committee that decisions for the park should be made by the full committee unless formally allocated to a person or sub-committee. This includes but is not limited to any monetary expenses, lease agreements, outreach materials, planning of events or programs, and maintenance plans.

Process for adding or subtracting steering committee members:

Caroline requested clarification on how this would be done. Art explained that nominations should be conveyed to the committee, with the committee then sending recommendations to the Town Board. It was agreed that it would be helpful to delineate overall expectations of committee members (time, availability, communication, etc.). Resignations should go to the steering committee chair, who would convey it to the Town Supervisor. The committee agreed to nominate Patti Rohrlich in recognition of her fundraising and community connections, and Ira Halfond as an attorney interested in assisting with the park. It was also noted that in order to keep the committee a manageable size with consistent committee attendance, that community members and technical people could be assigned specific tasks or serve on sub-committees, rather than join the full steering committee. Caroline passed around a sign in for steering committee names and contact information (copies were given to all present).

Other:

Jill noted that the Library Committee had requested that the Park Steering Committee walk the land with Jim Sponable and them. She requested a couple of dates that people might be available.

Wayne and Bill noted that June 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> was designated as Copake's Community Days. They relayed that the Park Steering Committee might want to reserve table space at the event.

Bill noted that it was important that the Steering Committee's outreach efforts continue to reflect a friendly tone.

Peter asked for any dates that would be appropriate to put on the Town of Hillsdale's calendar which is being finalized next week. June 1<sup>st</sup> was identified as the park opening date.

Art noted that there may be opportunities for inter-municipal grants related to the park. Judy relayed that the OPRHP municipal grants like this sort of partnership and that they require (as of last year) 50% matching funds—much of which had to be in hand, prior to the application.

Next steps:

Caroline to create draft committee expectations for review by the steering committee.

Ag. sub committee to meet, complete and send out lease RPF packages for organic and conventional east/west lands.

Trail sub-committee will meet, prepare draft trail and interim parking/entrance design for steering committee review.

Outreach sub-committee will review a draft for the Hillsdale website and post it on the website.

Facilities committee will continue to encourage OPRHP's timely removal of the milk house and doublewide.

Art to request at the town board meeting the addition of two new committee members. Art will also confirm availability and cost of town services.

John Farrell to clarify current tasks by tenants.

Next Steering Committee scheduled: The next meeting will be held at Caroline Stewart's house at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, the 29<sup>th</sup> of January.

Meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.