

Tree plantings considered for Ft. Getty master plan

By Michaela Kennedy

Ft. Getty Master Plan Committee member Betty Hubbard met with the town Tree Preservation and Protection Committee last week to present an overview of the Ft. Getty Park Land Use Master Plan.

Hubbard is a professional landscape architect and the Planning Commission representative on the Ft. Getty committee.

The master plan for restructuring Ft. Getty Park has been accepted by the Town Council, and is now in its implementation phase, according to Hubbard. She detailed the plan and showed the design, rendered by landscape architect Don Sharp, for the park.

Hubbard noted that the committee considered the layout of the park for maximum play use by everyone — campers, visitors, and locals.

Hubbard went on to request suggestions from the tree committee on possible plantings. "I am here for your input and to learn how you might like to participate," she said.

On the layout design, she pointed to a stretch representing about 1,100 feet of green space running along the roadway entering the park. "This is the place we could think about doing planting. There will be a need for trees up on the hill as well, but that will not be done until the road is removed and the campers are moved," she noted. If the trees were planted 50 feet apart, "that would be about 100 trees," Hubbard said.

Hubbard and the committee discussed some of the varieties of trees that could be planted, which included littleleaf linden, green ash, sycamore, and Norway maple. "We all felt it would help to have shade trees along the road," she said, adding that compatibility with the nearby farm trees was a consideration.

Hubbard mentioned that the funds for the project were growing. "Our wonderful planner put together at the last minute a grant application and got \$150,000 (for the park project)," she noted in praise of Town Planner Lisa Bryer.

Tree committee member Patrick Driscoll expressed enthusiasm for the project, and emphasized the importance of the trees

being an organic part of the landscape.

Committee member Bob Dolan supported all the trees, but voiced concern about how the trees would be watered. He suggested installing waterlines. Committee Chairman Emmet Turley shared Dolan's concern about the lack of an irrigation system. In response, Hubbard said money may need to be budgeted into the plan to provide for the watering.

Committee Vice Chairman Judith DiBello made a motion to put the park design on the agenda for the next meeting to discuss how to support the plan.

In new business, the tree committee expressed disappointment in the poor showing of volunteers to help with the tree inventory on June 17. The members agreed to hold another inventory day in the fall in the hopes of attracting more volunteers to help complete the count.

In a discussion of the tree planting program update, DiBello said, "This is a grant project and the grant involves volunteers." DiBello warned against creating too many projects that rely on volunteers to complete the work. The next time the tree warden wrote a grant she suggested that the committee be a part of it in order to evaluate how much work would be involved.

There are just so many volunteers on the island, she noted.

In unfinished business, the committee revised its Tree Care Policy. The one-page document was marked as an outline for a more comprehensive policy to be created. The policy includes a master list of tree plantings, procedures for site selection, watering and maintenance.

DiBello noted that in case of a drought, the town Department of Public Works would take over the watering of all trees. The tree warden added that he contacted Town Administrator Bruce Keiser to request the possibility of the town taking responsibility for watering of town trees on a regular basis.

Turley asked Tree Warden David Nickerson for a copy of the correspondence between him and the town.

DiBello supported the chairman's request, and told the tree

warden that it was important to "keep us in the loop and let the committee know what you're doing."

Nickerson replied, "Not everything," adding that the committee was considered only an advisory group, and he did not need to keep them informed of all of his work with the town.

Also in new business, DiBello made a motion to postpone the reelection of officers since the committee has been short of members. Committee member Frank Andres and Business Community Representative Matt Largess were again absent from the meeting. Planning Commission representative Michael White agreed, saying, "I think we need two more members."

Nickerson disagreed with delaying the elections, and read from the bylaws that the election of officers must be done by July.

Turley reminded the group that the members cannot be replaced "until we receive a letter of resignation." Dolan noted that if the matter went before the Town Council, the council would have the authority to remove them from office.

Turley moved to postpone elections until July and said he would send letters to the council concerning the absentees on the panel.

DiBello went on to show the brochure for the tree trust fund. "We are always looking to fill the fund," she noted, adding that the committee could pay for an insert in the Jamestown Press. Nickerson responded that the brochure could go on the Web site, and the committee could send a press release announcing new improvements to the Web page. "Then we wouldn't have to spend anything," he said.

Woodside a top-10 student at NKHS

Senior Julie Woodside of Jamestown graduated seventh in her class at North Kingstown High School.

Biddick receives research fellowship

Neal Biddick of Jamestown, was one of four students from the College of the Holy Cross selected to participate in an undergraduate research fellowship program, according to the Connecticut Business & Industry Association and Pfizer Global Research and Development in southeastern Connecticut.

The program helps students develop the research skills necessary for successful careers in the high-skill, high-demand pharmaceutical research industry by providing research support scholarships.

Biddick is a chemistry major with a pre-medical concentration. At Holy Cross, he is co-chairman of the men's club lacrosse team and founding member and treasurer of the Holy Cross chapter of the American Medical Student Association. This is the second year in a row he has been awarded this fellowship.

Biddick plans on earning a doctorate in chemistry or attending medical school.

Neale named to Maine school's dean's list

Tucker Neale was named to the dean's list at the Maine Maritime Academy for the spring semester. A member of the class of 2008, Neale is majoring in small-vessel operations.

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