

**Hamilton Town Council Special Meeting & Public Comment  
March 31, 2009  
Hamilton Town Office**

The Hearing was called to order at 7:02 PM by Mayor H. Ray Whitbey. The pledge of Allegiance was followed by Roll Call.

Present: Mayor H. Ray Whitbey, Vice Mayor John Unger, Mr. Ralph Baxter, Mr. Tom Rollins, Mr. Greg Wilmoth, Mr. Kenneth Wine, Mr. Michael Snyder (7:07 PM)

Absent: none

Also Present: Ms. Maureen Gilmore, Attorney, Mr. David Beniamino, Zoning Administrator, Ms. Lori Jones, Treasurer

**Guests**

Ms. Kim Weber, Purcellville Gazette

Ms. Margaret Morton, Leesburg Today

Officer Tim Lambert was recognized as a Resource Officer who will be starting Criminal Investigations in Western Loudoun County.

**Old Business**

Mr. Wilmoth made a motion to approve the Oak Ridge Availability & Connection application for water service to 112 Levenbury Place. Mr. Rollins made a second on the motion and the vote passed 7-0-0, (Yea: Whitbey, Unger, Wilmoth, Baxter, Rollins, Wine, Snyder. Nay: none. Absent: none.)

**Public Comment**

Mayor Whitbey opened floor to Public Comment, asking for suggestions and solutions be offered in reference to the concerns about the Hamilton Community Park.

Ms. Tamara Spink, 17708 Madison Av, expressed concern that the recent decision to close the parking lot damages the sense of community in Hamilton and feels the quick decision hurt the Town. Ms. Spink stated that the residents are not happy about the decision and believes that Council will find that the community will come together and is prepared to reach solutions. A suggestion of a park cleanup signup sheet that residents and organizations could volunteer for was offered, as Ms. Spinks' husband is a Boy Scout Den leader and is willing to participate in shared responsibility.

Ms. Ronni Ward, 53 S. Hughes St, inquired if the trash cans had been removed as printed in the local newspaper? Ms. Ward continued to say that there are many residents who would become involved and suggested donations as a way to raise funds for the park but there are fears surrounding donations in that money would be accepted but the privilege to use the park would be denied. The recent decision is divisive and puts the Town against the out of town park users. Ms. Ward also offered the help of the Girl Scouts in addition to the possibility of donations and is asking that the Town please reconsider the recent decision. Mayor Whitbey responded that there are 4 trash cans in the park but the 3 cans in the parking lot were removed due to construction trash being dumped illegally. Mayor Whitbey also noted that as far as he is concerned, if you have a Hamilton zip code you are considered part of the Town.

Ms. Cindy Trochlil, 17820 Julie Ann Ct, is pleased that the Town is working toward solutions and wants a clean and safe park and will do what needs done to help. The question about the Mom's Club of Purcellville was raised and Mayor Whitbey noted that he had invited the members for a meeting but since only 1 person was able to attend he cancelled the meeting and asked the members to attend the session tonight. Ms. Trochlil has reviewed recent Town Council meeting minutes looking for guidance to what is needed to keep the park clean and safe, and Mayor Whitbey responded that repeatedly the local newspapers have helped disseminate information about park discussion and challenges.

Ms. Lavonne Donohue, 145 E. Colonial Hgwy, suggested that park users take their trash with them as they leave the area, also stating that while parking is a concern and important for safety reasons, it does have impact on the park neighbors.

Mr. Tanner Michon, 20158 Curry Springs Place, stated that it would not be fair to close the parking lot because people from far away could not get there, they would have to ride their bikes or walk a long way. Tanner Michon is a member of the Cub Scouts and could ask his Den to help clean up the park.

Ms. Liz Carroll, 38572 Pheasant Hill Ln, brings her sons to the park and has not seen the trash as depicted in the photos but is willing to help clean up the park. Her understanding is that the Mom's Club of Purcellville had requested the recent meeting with the Mayor but the meeting was cancelled. Also raised was the issue of the portable restroom vandalism and Ms. Carroll believes the damage and vandalism might be caused by the truck which comes to clean out the unit. Ms. Carroll observed this first-hand and commented that it was in much worse shape than prior to being serviced. Also noted was the belief that the park vandals are walking in not driving in.

Mr. Chris McCarren, 17542 Deavers Ct, recognized that there are a multitude of issues and feels that closing the park to vehicles does not resolve any of the discussed issues. Perhaps a "Leave no Trace" motto, like the National Parks, is an option. There are a lot of people who do drive to the park, (enroute traffic to/from Hamilton, babies, etc) and perhaps possible solutions are to use railroad ties that might help define the parking area or an Adopt a Tree program to raise funds.

Ms. Emilie Towe, 17572 Tranquility Rd, is a former Hamilton resident who brings her children to the Park to play. This is not just a Hamilton problem but a problem for any small town that has a park. A lot of ideas have been brought forward and believes that if the community comes together the issues can be resolved.

Dr. Jim Towe, Round Hill, owns land in Round Hill and has similar problems with people dumping trash on his property and is considering installing video cameras to help deter activity. Dr. Tow noted that speeding used to be a problem in Round Hill but once Police enforcement began the problem was resolved and believes that the problems raised can be resolved through enforcement, ticketing, the addition of signs stating surveillance is being used and help from concerned citizens.

Mr. McCann, 41 W. Colonial Hgwy, owns property that borders the Park and has observed trash being dumped inside the park limits. Though Mr. McCann believes that the Park should remain open to vehicles he stated that half of his property borders the park which means the park trash blows into his yard and the people who are in the Park at the middle of the night disturb his family. Repeated calls to the Sheriff's office have been made but it takes almost 30 minutes for them to arrive at the scene, not to mention that there has never been a ticket written and no action is taken. Mr. McCann has spent many hours volunteering in the park and he and his wife have spent several years raising money for the park. Additional concerns are the chemicals from the portable restrooms and the vehicle oils that come into his yard from parking on the grass. "Though everyone has special needs, please recognize that you are next to my home and please take that into consideration, recognizing that it is great to hear the sound of kids in the park but it is not great watching kids destroy the park. It is important that committees are formed and solutions reached but asked the public to please remember that there are people that live next to the park 24 hours a day versus the 30 minutes that you may use the park."

Ms. Heather Judd, 38460 Broad Oak Place, just moved here and understands the concerns of Mr. McCann. A request was made as to whether a delay would be considered and solutions discussed now that that the community has come together. Concern was expressed for safety as there are no sidewalks that make the park accessible via walking or parking close by. The suggestion to schedule a date for a solutions meeting was made and Mayor Whitbey stressed the need for volunteers in the community for the park and other community events like for Hamilton Day planning. Mr. Snyder noted that the idea that this is a "we/they" thing as suggested by the comments today is offensive. Mr. Snyder stated that he has lived in Hamilton for 30+ years, has served 22 years on the Council, and was on the Planning Commission when the park land was purchased by the Town. The current Council is not trying to keep out of town residents out of Hamilton but added that there are parking and safety issues that need addressed. The Council was trying to find a middle ground to resolve the immediate problems while keeping the park open. Mr. Snyder also noted that yes, we are part of a larger community but the Council also represents the people of Hamilton and while funds are an issue in this year and the coming budget, the notion that this is a "we/they" thing is incorrect. For years nobody has come forward for Hamilton Day, etc and the question now is money, parking and responsibility for the park. Ms. Judd restated her request for consideration to delay the decision for a month to allow for solutions to be considered and Mr. Baxter responded that this is a matter of self-enforcement and the Town will not be enforcing parking. It is incumbent for the citizens and the people who use the park to take care of the area through parking and safety. The council has enforced only one issue at this time, parking. A concern for the safety on the streets of Hamilton was raised and Mr. Snyder noted that the Sheriff's Department can enforce parking on the streets but not in the Park.

Ms. Wendy Lin, 38290 Stone Eden Dr, believes there a number of people who would come forward to help serve the Town, but it seems that time after time Council disregards the people who live outside the limits. The feeling of no voice and no representation is felt by the people who live outside Hamilton limits and Mr. Lin volunteered his time to rebuild the playground not thinking that one day his children would not be able to use the facilities.

Dr. Towe stated that the Mr. Snyder seemed more on the side saying "no" rather than being positive.

Ms. Karen Peterson, 205 S. St. Paul St, son Brandon painted the Pavilion for an Eagle Scout project and stated that the best way to get involved is to come to the Council meetings and ask how to help. The meeting times are posted on the Park sign and on the Office door. Ms. Peterson wants to be involved and stated that her son had an Eagle Scout project to put in a path but he does not have a volunteer force now because the very people who helped with the Pavilion project last year do not feel they cannot use the park any longer. Ms. Peterson wants to find a solution and encouraged all participants to come to the meetings, become involved, and volunteer.

Mr. Brent Campbell, 62 E. Colonial Hgwy, commented on the parking needs and possibilities, noting that 13 cars can legitimately fit in the current lot. Mr. Campbell took time to contact local businesses about associated costs to improve the lot and Mr. Wilmoth diagramed how parking could possibly be expanded within the present space. Mayor Whitbey expressed comment for the proximity to Mr. McCann's property and Mr. Campbell stated that amendments are needed to the current zoning ordinances as well as comments and review. Mr. Baxter responded that once the committee has made recommendations for resolution the Town can then discuss what steps are necessary to move forward.

Mr. Snyder made a motion to postpone the decision to restrict parking in the Park from April 15, 2009 to June 15, 2009, to allow for time for solutions to be considered. Mr. Baxter made a second on the motion and the vote passed 7-0-0, (Yea: Whitbey, Unger, Wilmoth, Baxter, Rollins, Wine, Snyder. Nay: none. Absent: none.)

Mayor Whitbey reinforced the need for volunteers, community involvement and meeting involvement. Mr. Snyder suggested that a committee be formed and passed out a sign-up sheet for volunteers. Mr. Unger requested that names, phone numbers and emails be included on the sign up sheet. The Town will email a complete list to all who signed up to allow coordination and communication. The members of the Parks committee are Mayor Whitbey, Mr. Wilmoth, Mr. Unger and Mr. McCann.

Mr. Baxter noted, for the record, that the reason the vote only took "60 seconds" as quoted in a recent local newspaper is because the discussion sometimes takes place prior to the motion being made, which results in a fast vote.

Mr. Unger made a motion to adjourn at 8:18 PM.

  
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Mayor H. Ray Whitbey

  
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Ms. Mary Tussing, Recorder