

TOWN COUNCIL
Town of Trumbull
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TOWN HALL
Trumbull

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EDUCATION COMMITTEE
MINUTES
November 27, 2012

Chadwick Ciocci, Chairman called the Education Committee meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. The chair noted that there was not a quorum; the meeting was for discussion purposes only.

PRESENT: Jeff Donofrio, Gregg Basbagill, Alternate, (arrived at 7:11 p.m.), Tom Whitmoyer arrived at 7:24 p.m.)

ABSENT: Ann Marie Evangelista, Vice-Chairwoman, Jim Blose, Kristy Waizenegger, Alternate and Vickie Tesoro.

ALSO PRESENT: Pam Georgas, Chairman of the TNAC, Frank Grazynski TNAC Commissioner, Scott Kerr Board member of the Patrons of the TNAC and Kevin Malone President of the Patrons of the TNAC.

DISCUSSION ITEMS: TNAC

Mr. Malone presented a power point to the Education Committee, (*Attached*).

(Mr. Basbagill arrived at 7:11 p.m.)

Mr. Malone noted that the TNAC's primary focus is education; they can envision the TNAC as a gateway to the parks. The TNAC's rapid growth stage was until 2007-2008, they then hit a ceiling. Ms. Georgas indicated that if the TNAC were to stay at its current location the vision of the TNAC as being a gateway to the parks would need to be removed, they would need a new building. There is no space in the current building to grow, this is their biggest challenge. There is unmet demand. Ms. Georgas indicated that they have just hired, on a contract basis, a person who would expand the Field Trip program. This is someone who would go out and seek business, his wage is based upon what he brings in, and therefore he is motivated and could double what is there now easily.

(Mr. Whitmoyer arrived at 7:24 p.m.) (*At this time there is a quorum*).

New Canaan's Nature Center is booked all year round, which is how they are self financed.

Mr. Kerr indicated their hope is to grow to the medium model represented in the presentation. Animal rescue is not included, based upon the TNAC's research animal rescue is a financial hardship for other Nature Centers.

TNAC has not looked into a partnership with Beardsley Zoo. Beardsley Zoo has come to their facility.

Ms. Georgas indicated that the New Canaan 501(3) c is structurally the closest Nature Center to what they envision. They have a specific agreement with the town and have specifically outlined with the Town who is responsible for what, this is what they would like for the TNAC. They do not envision being as big as that structure/building. They envision the TNAC to be primarily a nature center although they do envision a temporary art displays, some would be free others they would have to pay for. The art shows would include children's art and local art. They currently have an active children's art program. The current facility is 2,700 sf of that 1,200 is usable including the garage.

There had been plans drawn up joining the Ranger Station and the TNAC. The Ranger Station would include a changing room, office and 2-car garage per the Parks Director. The relocation of the TNAC was initiated by the current administration; the Parks Director and the Chief of Staff were given the task of working with the TNAC to come up with options. This was originally driven by the desire to sell the current property. The value of the current property is below the bonding for the property, there would be no value in selling the property at this time. There would be value especially to the neighbors in preserving the property as open space. Mr. Grazynski indicated that very few people actually use land that is preserved as open space and would not be sure how much it would be used for passive recreation. The future of the property is intertwined with the TNAC's presence there, but the property hinders them, they would need to demolish the current building and rebuild it, they would need more parking and a bigger footprint. Ms. Georgas stated that the Town purchased the property for \$2 million; it was not gifted to the Town and was not to be open space. It was originally purchased for affordable housing this information was relayed to Ms. Georgas per the previously Director of Public Works, Mr. Kallmeyer. Mr. Kerr indicated that they are not tied to the property and are focusing on growing the TNAC, meeting their vision and making something better for the Town.

End of presentation.

The Education Committee discussed the following points:

- Old Mine Park was the TNAC's number 2 choice amongst the park locations; Twin Brooks was their #1 choice.
- The TNAC can not have a concrete plan until a location is chosen.
- The Long Hill area is in the process of economic development and would be walking distance to one of the parks.

Ms. Georgas indicated that she had met with Mr. Lavenovich, the Town Economic Development Director and Chief of Staff Dan Nelson the day of this meeting. Mr. Lavernovich will now be the point person for the possible relocation of the TNAC. What was proposed as a result of this meeting is as follows:

- A 3-year lease on the current property
- A written partnership agreement.
- Having the Planometrix firm incorporate the TNAC into the Conservation & Development plan to see how the TNAC fits in with the overall town plan.

Ms. Georgas stated that they see the TNAC as something that is built for the Town by the Town and would like to see a committee formed that would work directly with Planometrix. Mr. Kerr did not speak in favor if the firm doing the evaluation but is excited to see the TNAC incorporated into the master plan. Ms. Georgas indicated that it is important to have the people currently involved in this process as well as consistent interaction with the Town Council to continue to be part of this process.

Mr. Donofrio, Mr. Ciocci and Mr. Basbagill spoke in favor of the TNAC being in the parks system.

Mr. Donofrio stated what is known is conceptual, if this is going to be funded by something other than tax bills, how much it is going to cost and how long it would take to raise the money would need to be identified. A consultant is used to say that the town should have a specific area of town developed for industrial properties, and where affordable housing should be located etc., but a consultant should not say where the TNAC should located. Ms. Georgas stated that she had spoken with the Planometrix consultant; the consultant had indicated that they did not think that they would get to that level. Mr. Lavernovich had indicated to Ms. Georgas that the consultant may be tasked with that. Mr. Donofrio indicated that it needs to be incorporated into the plan, but it should not be up to the consultant. Ms. Georgas stated that the Parks Commission does not support the TNAC in the parks. Ms. Georgas stated that the Town Charter does give the Parks Commission power. Mr. Donofrio read the section of the Town Charter with regards to the Parks Commission to the committee, noting that the Parks Commission has an operational oversight role over which what the Town owns and has acquired for public park and recreational purposes. There is a provision written into this section that there is nothing shall prevent the Town Council from enacting an ordinance concerning the maintenance of order, safety and decency in park areas, and likewise an ordinance to enter a land use agreement. Mr. Basbagill stated that the Park Commission control issue needs to be addressed first, and then the details can be considered.

Ms. Georgas asked for direction from the committee. The Chair's recommendation was for the TNAC to accept the 3-year lease from the administration, enter into the public/private agreement (Town Council approval is required) and to have conversations with Planometrix.

Mr. Malone questioned that if the Wagner Tree Farm were sold or developed if the some of the funds could be used if they were to fall short of their goal? The Chair stated that

the community will is to maintain the property as open space, and would not plan on that happening. Ms. Georgas stated that it could be used as a satellite location for the TNAC.

There being no further business to discuss and upon a motion made by Mr. Basbagill and seconded by Mr. Whitmoyer the Education Committee adjourned by unanimous consent at 8:32 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Margaret D. Mastroni
Town Council Clerk



Vision – Mission – Goals

Presented to Education Committee, Trumbull Town Council

Tuesday, November 27, 2012

History & Milestones

- * Nature Commission established 2005
 - * Granted use of Wagner Tree Farm
- * Seasonal Program Launch 2006
- * Scout Program Expansion 2007
- * School Field Trip Program Expansion 2008
- * Added Playground October 2009
- * Began location search 2010
 - * Parks Commission denies proposal to locate within the Parks System - August 2011
- * Patrons of TNAC 501c3 formed 2011

Patrons & Commissioners

Patrons of TNAC

Kevin Malone, Pres.

Kris Saccone, Secretary

Scot Kerr, Membership

Rasa Malish, Publicity

Michael Daoust,
Development

Debbie Artinian

Nature Commission

Pam Georgas, Chairman

Bonnie Lindsay

Frank Grazynski

Ruthie Mohr

Kevin Malone

Support for TNAC

- The Trumbull Nature and Arts Center has enjoyed a broad base of support including financial, in-kind and volunteer participation from the Sponsors listed at the right as well as In-Kind Contributors and Community Groups on the following pages.

- * Fuss & O'Neil
- * GE
- * Deloitte
- * Mallet Family Foundation
- * RBS
- * The Herman and Henrietta Denzler Charitable Trust
- * Review Magazine
- * Ken & Linda Halaby
- * Sikorsky Aircraft
- * So. CT. Gas Company
- * Sun Products
- * Unilever

In-Kind Supporters

- * Ace Hardware
- * Accent Signs
- * Antinozzi Assoc.
- * Benedicts
- * Dunkin' Donuts
- * Carpet Place
- * Home Depot
- * L & L Landscaping
- * Master Gardeners
- * Oliver's Nursery
- * PJ's
- * Plasko Farms
- * Ponds Nursery
- * Rich Bernaud Locksmithing
- * Trumbull Rotary Club
- * Stop & Shop
- * The Review Magazine
- * Treeland
- * Trumbull Public Works Dept
- * Trumbull Parks Dept.
- * Twomblies
- * United Way

Community Partners & Volunteers

- * Beautification Commission
- * Trumbull Community Women
- * Boys Scouts
- * Easton summer camp
volunteer group
- * Girl Scouts
- * Long Hill Garden Club
- * School of Agriscience &
Biotechnology
- * Trumbull High Students
- * THS Environmental Club
- * St. Josephs HS Students
- * Fairfield Prep Students
- * Sr. Women's Club
- * Trumbull Historical Society
- * Young Women's Club
- * GE volunteers
- * Deloitte volunteers
- * Sun Products volunteers
- * United Way

Vision and Mission

- **Vision:** The Trumbull Nature & Arts Center is an environmentally integrated, educational facility that is a showcase of Trumbull's unparalleled acreage and diversity of open space.

- **Mission:** Engage the community to promote sound environmental stewardship and enhance community life through participation in collaborative nature, environment, and art experiences.

Goals for the future

- * Increase education opportunities
 - * More programs across broader topics
 - * More school field trips in “nature’s classroom”
 - * More outside field work in a more diverse ecosystem

- * Improve community engagement
 - * Community Partners
 - * Community Impact Days
 - * Community Service Opportunities
 - * Provide a Gateway to the town’s Park system

Current Operations

- * Challenges & Limitations
 - * Limited capacity due to small classroom size
 - * Lack of access to diverse habitats
 - * Uncertainty limits investment in facility
 - * Uncertainty limits ability to raise funds

- * Despite these limiting factors, we deliver a wide variety of self-funded programs:
 - * Six programs for pre-K - 4th Grade
 - * Three dozen programs for Boy & Girl Scouts
 - * 32 Seasonal Programs

Self-Funded School/Scout Programs

- * School Field Trips
 - * Intro to Plants (pre K)
 - * Hike with Insects (K)
 - * Maple Trees/Sugaring (1st)
 - * Soil Investigations (2nd)
 - * Habitat Exploration (3rd)
 - * Plant Cycles & Erosion (4th)
- * Nature - Scouts (Tigers - Scouts)
 - * Environmental Awareness
 - * Birding
- * Recycling
- * Wildlife/Habitats
- * Insects
- * Plant & Tree ID
- * Art - Scouts
 - * Tiger Program (2)
 - * Wolf Program
 - * Bear Program
 - * Webelos Program
 - * Boy Scout Merit Badge

Self-Funded Seasonal Programs

- * DEEP Archery
- * Into the Wild, and onto the Canvas
- * Endangered Species
- * Maple Sugaring Demonstration/Pancake Breakfast,
- * CT Trails Day Hike,
- * Animal Tracking,
- * Little Green Thumb Ambassador program,
- * Build a Birdhouse,
- * Campfire Story Telling,
- * Campfire Craft Workshop,
- * Colors of Autumn
- * Growing Herbs, adult and family
- * Basic Electricity & Magnetism,
- * Who Wants to Be a BEE keeper?,
- * Family Bee School
- * Grow a Rain Forest in a Bottle,
- * Fantastic Fotography,
- * Sun Printing,
- * Creative T-shirts with Plant Dyes,
- * Summer Splash Workshop Week,
- * Art Smart Explorer Workshop Week,
- * Waiting for Wings, Butterflies
- * Art Smart Art & Tales,
- * Eco-Art Patterned Planters,
- * Art in the Park
- * Eco-art Slinky Snake,
- * Flower Fairy Workshop,
- * Bird Pudding Feeders,
- * Adult Art night out!
- * Holiday Crafting
- * Fall Valley Hike,
- * Children's Valley Nature 'Walk-About' Exploration.

Annual Program Participation Projections

Program	2012 Estimate # Sessions	2012 Estimate # Participants	2017 Forecast # Sessions	2017 Forecast # Participants
Seasonal	32	500	50	1,000
Scouts	32	500	50	1,500
School	40	3,000	78	7,000
Special Needs	2	25	25	300
Private Event/ Birthdays	17	200	48	600
Camps	2	150	4	400
Events	3	200-400	6	1,000
Playground/ Passive Users		300		1,500
Total Participants		4,875-5,075		13,300 ~166% incr.

Additional Programs

- * Increased program variety & frequency
- * Seasonal environmental displays and art shows
- * Fundraising Events
- * Birthday Parties
- * Community Meetings
 - * Garden Clubs, Commissions, Sponsors, etc.
- * Educational Forums

Potential Unique Features

- * Largest connected open space of any area Nature Center
- * Access to diverse habitats – wetland, meadow, woodland
- * Visitor access via the Pequonnock River Trail
- * Integrated Park Ranger presence

Size, Structure & Scope

Size	<u>Small</u> 1,200-1,500 SF Office Classrooms	<u>Medium</u> 4,000 - 6,000 SF Office Classrooms Meeting Room	<u>Large</u> 7,000-12,000 SF Office Classroom Large Meeting Exhibit Space Conf. Facility
Structure	<u>Municipal</u> Town staffed Rangers	<u>Public/Private</u> Public Land Private Operation Volunteer and/or Staff	<u>Private</u> Private Land Private Funding Volunteer and Staff
Scope	<u>Limited Programing</u> No Private Use	<u>Educ. Programing</u> Limited Private Use	<u>Full Multi-Use</u> Education, Community and Business

Size, Structure & Scope

Trumbull Nature & Arts Center

Size

Small

1,200-1,500 SF
Office
Classrooms

Medium

4,000 - 6,000 SF
Office
Classrooms
Meeting Room

Large

7,000-12,000 SF
Office
Classroom
Large Meeting
Exhibit Space
Conf. Facility

Structure

Municipal

Town staffed
Rangers

Public/Private

Public Land
Private Operation
Volunteer and/or Staff

Private

Private Land
Private Funding
Volunteer and Staff

Scope

Limited Programing

No Private Use

Educ. Programing

Limited Private Use

Full Multi-Use

Education,
Community and
Business

Limited Scope of Programs

- * Field trips limited to about 100 children at one time
 - * Requiring only 2 buses maximum
- * No Animal rescue and rehabilitation
- * No “full service” kitchen; catering only
- * Private events limited to endemic topics or purpose
 - * Environmental
 - * Visual or performing arts
 - * Community Groups or Sponsors

Competitive Set

	Org/ Struct.	Facility	Acres	Educ	Animal Rehab	Static Displays	Nursery School	Gift Shop	Play- ground
<u>Trumbull</u>	Public/ Private	Ranger Station, Classrooms, Community	TBD	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes
<u>Ansonia</u>	Public	Visitors, Exhibit, Classrooms, Nature Store, Library	150 acres	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
<u>Westport</u>	Private	Visitors, Classrooms, Auditorium	62 acres	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<u>Darien</u>	Public / Private	Gallery, Theatre	27.5 acres	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
<u>New Canaan</u>	Public / Private	Visitors, Green- house	40 acres	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
<u>Larchmont</u>	Public / Private		60 acres				No		

501(c)3 Structure

- * Public / Private Partnership
 - * Land Use Agreement
 - * Service Agreement

- * Participate in funding new building
 - * Corporate Fundraising
 - * Grant Writing
 - * Membership Drive
 - * Private Fundraising

Revenue Streams

- * Program Registration
- * Membership
- * Summer Camps
- * Grants
- * Fundraising
- * Facility Rentals

Environmental Impact

- * As environmental stewards, TNAC will seek to have the minimal impact on the environment during and post construction, regardless of final location
- * We seek to build a Silver LEED certified structure
 - * Potential for “Green” rooftop gardens
 - * Pervious surface walkways and new driveways
- * Positive impact of environmental education outweighs concern over building within parks

Benefits to Trumbull

- * Gateway to Park System for residents
- * Reduced maintenance costs (2 or 3 facilities → 1)
- * More visible Ranger presence
- * Improved public safety
- * Economic impact for area businesses
- * Lower environmental impact by combining functions
- * Increased attraction of families to Town
- * Additional meeting/activity venue for town

Support for Nature Centers in Parks

“Placing the TNAC within the Trumbull Park system will provide a Town-owned facility that can serve the entire community for recreational and educational programs.”

Don Watson's May 2011 report to the Parks Commission subcommittee

“The mission of the Connecticut State Park System is to provide natural resource based public recreational and educational opportunities through a system of state park and forest recreation areas, environmental centers and nature centers which provide an understanding of, access to, and enjoyment of the state's historic, cultural and natural resources.”

Diane Chisnall Joy, CT DEEP

“In Trumbull, we are blessed with great parks and hiking trails...I am asking the town council find a suitable location for the Trumbull Nature Center that will allow the facility to reach its true potential”

John Massari, Trumbull resident & DEEP Bowhunting Instructor

Support from Teachers

"Ranger Mark was fantastic. the students loved their interaction with him"

"The program was an excellent culmination activity to our unit on ecosystems. our students learned many new things"

"The hands on activities helped the students process information"

"Fantastic learning experience. Extremely well organized, grade age appropriate. Provided challenging experiences. The kids loved it!"

"The field trip was wonderful. The students especially loved making their adaptations animals with clay."

"The content related to what they are learning in class, animal adaptation, habitats, food chains, ecosystems"

"The program included all the important areas of our science curriculum"

"The content of the program was very relevant to what students were learning in the classroom"

"The material was presented in a way students could understand....bo ok us for next year!"

Summary / Next Steps

* Summary

- * The greatest benefit to the TNAC, Parks System, Rangers, and town overall will come from a combined facility within the most ecologically diverse setting possible along the Pequonnock River Trail.

* Next Steps

- * Prepare a revised recommendation based on the scope as presented – including Park and non-Park locations
 - * Need disposition of non-Park sites including Wagner Tree Farm, Quarry Road, and the Bill Property
- * Organize site visits to select Nature Centers

