

**Sandy Hook Permanent Memorial Commission
Newtown Municipal Center – Council Chambers
3 Primrose Street, Newtown, Connecticut
Thursday, May 12, 2016 @ 7:30 p.m.**

Minutes

Present: Kyle Lyddy, Alan Martin, JoAnn Bacon, Joanne Brunetti, Steffan Burns (8:15), Brian Engel, Daniel Krauss, Sarah Middelmeer, Donna Van Waalwijk, Agni Pavlidou Kyprianou, Tricia Pinto

Also Present: George Benson, Director of Land Use, 20 members of the public, one member of the press

Mr. Lyddy called the meeting to order at 7:31 PM.

Mr. Martin made a motion to approve the April 14, 2016 minutes, seconded by Ms. Brunetti. Motion passed.

HIGH MEADOW LOCATION DISCUSSION & POSSIBLE ACTION

Mr. Lyddy reported that the Design Sub-Committee recommended another option, “Option G”, which would minimize impact on the High Meadow. The most appropriate entrance would be behind the baseball field. He asked the Commission for comments.

Ms. Kyprianou stated that the sketch from the May 3rd Sub-Committee meeting was so preliminary; retaining walls may be required. There was not enough detail. Mr. Engel felt that based on last month’s meeting, the utilities would be going through this way; therefore, it presents less disruption to the landscape. Parks & Recreation was comfortable with this option and felt it was desirable. A larger discussion on the High Meadow location specifically has taken place and concerns have been heard from the community. Mr. Lyddy stated that he wants individuals on the Commission to speak freely. Pat Llodra has communicated to the Commission that it would be best to consider other options.

Mr. Martin made a motion to suspend and table the High Meadow as a location of the memorial with the intent to consider other options. He later stated that he felt compelled to offer the motion but was happy with the site. Ms. Middelmeer feels after all that has happened even if permission was granted for the High Meadow, it would be surrounded by conflict.

Ms. Kyprianou agreed with Ms. Middelmeer and felt that Pat Llodra’s letter was discouraging. She has spoken to many people who were in favor of the plan and only a small group was in opposition. She said the Commission listened and their plan reflected exactly what is needed to enhance the meadow.

Ms. Van Waalwijk stated that when looking at site locations, the Town offered the High Meadow as an option. What if other sites are opposed to as well? None of this is going to be easy.

Ms. Bacon agreed to visit other sites but is very saddened by the insensitive remarks from a small minority of people. She feels the Commission has done its due diligence.

Ms. Brunetti is disappointed with the time and hard work put into this and having to start over again. Not everyone is going to be happy. This has put the Commission at a standstill. She is very unhappy with the rude comments that have been expressed.

Mr. Martin made a motion to suspend and table consideration of the High Meadow as a possible location for the memorial as other options are being reviewed with the ability to revisit the High Meadow as a location to be considered, seconded by Ms. Kyprianou. Motion passed.

George Benson, Director of Land Use, shared a picture of other sites to look at. He doesn't expect it to take a long time to look at these sites; the process can move ahead pretty quickly. Option 1 provides a view of the farm and requires a walk down from the cul-d-sac. Option 2 is situated up higher and is shielded by a line of trees. Option 3 is wooded and provides an open canopy. He encouraged members to go look at the 3 spots. He reminded all that open space is not just for wildlife, it can be used as a park.

Ms. Pinto stated that these 3 sites are more visible and wondered whether they would satisfy the objection we are hearing about "seeing the memorial."

Mr. Martin suggested setting up visits to the 3 sites, coming back and reviewing further.

Mr. Lyddy stated the Board of Selectmen did not appropriate the money to Stantec for the work done. The \$160,000 is in a special account which was made from donations from 12/14 and is earmarked specifically for the memorial. Mr. Lyddy said they will continue to provide accurate information.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Elizabeth Lincoln, 34 Echo Valley Road, said that she and others are not callous, not criticizing, and not victims. There was no agenda. Everyone is well intended; the reservations that all had were not organized. They just wanted a voice and have a right to their opinion to protect the High Meadow.

Dottie Evans, 1 Reservoir Road, said it is hard for us to listen to this. We are humbled by the work that has been done and our views are not negative, just different. She feels that everyone has gone through a lot and wants to be able to work together.

DESIGN SELECTION GUIDELINES

Mr. Lyddy provided a draft of Guidelines for Submitting a Design. He briefly went over the timeline. He stated that Parks & Recreation has been extremely cooperative. He asked if there were any questions about the draft. He said we are starting with sites that Land Use has presented but that doesn't mean other options can't be reviewed. The Commission will go through the guidelines and present an update to the Board of Selectman at their meeting next month.

Mr. Martin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:52 p.m., seconded by Ms. Kyprianou. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann M. LoBosco
Clerk