

**TOWN OF OLD ORCHARD BEACH
TOWN COUNCIL WORKSHOP
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2007
TOWN HALL CHAMBERS**

A Town Council Workshop was held on Tuesday, November 27, 2007. Chairman James Long opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Present were:

**Chairman James Long
Vice Chair Shawn O'Neill
Councilor Roxanne Frenette
Councilor Robin Dayton
Councilor Sharri MacDonald
Town Manager James Thomas
Assistant Town Manager V. Louise Reid
Mary Ann Conroy, Public Works Director
Jason Webber, Recreation Director
Deputy Fire Chief John Fitzpatrick**

CHAIRMAN LONG: I have arranged this Workshop to consider Recreation in and Maintenance of the Ballpark and Memorial Park. Members of the Memorial Park Committee, Andrea Berlin, Chairperson, and members of the community are present to give their input as well. It is the intent of this Workshop to be an informational forum for the Council to be given a status report on work being done in Memorial Park and discussions of the need or a maintenance plan in connection with the updates and required projects at the Memorial Park. One of the areas of discussion will be the possible interest in a Garden Club working within the Park and being a uniting force within the community. The Memorial Park discussion will occur first followed by the Recreation and Maintenance of the Ballpark.

There was a large attendance of members of the Memorial Park Committee and citizens interested in this important town projects. Comments were made from several as to the time, energy and funding that has gone into this important town area. Andrea Berlin, Chair of the Memorial Park Committee focused attention on the need for maintenance scheduling and the necessity to consider the number of individuals available to be assigned to the park maintenance as it stands at the present time. The Council members spoke of their past history of support and committed to discussions on future improvements. It was mentioned that the Memorial Park Committee is an Advisory Committee and therefore has no authority and no budget including no control over the changes that are made. The Public Works Director gave an update on the work that has been done and the limited staff that she has to address all the issues of the projects, including Memorial Park. The suggestion was made of possibly a private contractor taking on that responsibility or the organization of a Parks and Recreation Department. The design and moving forward of the Veteran's memorial section is a priority to everyone. The issue of the sentimental value to so many was stressed. It was mentioned that a strategic person assigned to represent the town is important and that Jason Webber, the Recreation Director, has attended all the meetings and would be a good person to be assigned to that effort. The issue of the care and keeping of Atlantic Courts was raised again and the need to ensure a regular maintenance program in that regard. Discussion of the dog park included follow up on suggestions that are made. The need for members on the

Conservation Commission and the role of that group was discussed. All these issues were noted for further consideration by the Council at a later date.

CHAIRMAN LONG: In the area of Recreation and maintenance of the Ballpark I am asking for a focus on the status of ongoing recreation activities within the Ballpark; future scenarios for community uses; discussion of the possible need of a Parks and Recreation Department; and a continued focus on a commitment to serving the community in the positive manner. Naturally in discussion will be the economical input of current and future plans; more information on those providing financial backing for upgrades to the Ballpark; and a positive focus on the future. I am anxious that our discussion be positive and promote a sense of commitment to work together on these two areas of great interest and concern to the citizens. It is wholly unrealistic to think that we can bring the playing field back to life with a volunteer force. The cost to get the Ballpark up to the standard for public use far exceeds half a million dollar.

Again, there was good discussion and suggestions made regarding the possible use of the park but the need for maintenance and whether the desired plans suggested by some was reasonable in light of the amount of maintenance and work needed to be done and the lack of funding available at this time. The need for it to be at least maintained so that constant deterioration does not take place was emphasized. The suggestion was also made that attention be given to the enormous amount of graffiti. The rumors that had circulated about the Ballpark might become a home for the Old Orchard Beach High School Baseball team started to circulate after a local developer cleared the trees and brush from the field and town employees mowed the grass at the Ball Field, which had long sat in despair. According to the Public Works Director Mary Ann Conway, Tim Swenson, the developer behind the Grand Victorian Hotel and condominium project, donated equipment and employees to clear trees and brush from the field. She estimated that the cost of the work at about \$20,000. The Town also spent about \$7,000 of its own money to clear brush surrounding one of the outbuildings which is now being used by the Police Department. It was noted that this was an idea that circulated under the direction of former Chair, Joe Kline. Again the common sentiment was not to spend money on one thing and avoid keeping up where project work has already been done.

ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully Submitted,

**V. Louise Reid
Town Council Secretary**

I, V. Louise Reid, Secretary to the Town Council of Old Orchard Beach, Maine, do hereby certify that the foregoing document consisting of two (2) pages is a true copy of the original Minutes of the Town Council Workshop of November 27, 2007.

V. Louise Reid