

Manager's Report January 26, 2015

Town Hall Energy Report

The Town will receive a cash incentive from Efficiency Vermont of \$2,837.50 for the insulation and air sealing performed during November of 2014. Annual savings is estimated at \$2,804.79. Air sealing reduction was determined to be 12.6%

Community Center First Phase Repair Update

Daniels Construction was the low bidder, \$15,757, for the first phase of the repair. Work is scheduled to begin the week of January 26th. The final phase is expect to go out to bid soon and after the engineer finishes the bid documents.

Uninspected/Unregistered Vehicle Violation Notices

At the last meeting there was a request for the specific locations that were issued notices. They are 1. 42 North Main Street 2. 707 Skitchewaug Trail. 3. The old cider mill off County Road. 4. 44 Common Street.

EV Go Charging Station Update

The Town will incur no charging vehicles costs. There are two different ways a vehicle owner can pay for charging. They are:

1. Non-membership. There is a one time set up fee of \$4.95 and the cost is \$2.00 per hour to charge the vehicle. So travelers originating from any location can use the charger. All fees are paid via a phone.
2. Membership. There is a \$5.95 monthly membership fee and the cost is \$1.00 per hour to charge the vehicle. This maybe more economical for people living in the area and the membership allows users throughout EVgo network. Stations are planned to be installed in WRJ, Rutland, Waterbury and other location in southern VT. All fees are paid via a phone.

Steampunk Festival

I agreed to permit the Steampunk Festival organizers to place the Town of Springfield on their literature as a sponsor. There is no financial obligation on the Town's part to get this designation.

21 Cottage Avenue Pocket Park Discussion

The Planning Commission has agreed to develop pocket park creation criteria. After the criteria is finished the discussion can continue. This has been discussed with the spokesperson for the neighborhood group seeking the park and the group is agreeable to this process.

These are the draft minutes from the Planning Commission Meeting.

- After some further discussion, Chuck Gregory made the MOTION: the Planning Commission recommends to the Board of Selectmen to cooperate with the neighbors of this proposed pocket park to explore the possibility of developing this parcel, 21 Cottage Avenue, into a pocket park. The motion was seconded by Judith Stern.

- Discussion: Richard Filion commented that there needs to be criteria for the Board of Selectmen to base their decision on. Wilbur Horton responded that if the Selectboard wants

to move on this now they can, but right now there are no standards, including standards concerning ownership of such a park. Wilbur Horton asked for volunteers from the Commission to head a committee to develop such criteria, working with the neighborhood group that had proposed this park, and bring their ideas back to the Commission for development of park criteria for the Town. Chuck Gregory volunteered to work on the criteria, and to head such a committee, and to ask Commission members who were not present, if they would like to join him on the committee.

The MOTION made by Chuck Gregory was then called and passed unanimously.

The following is information already assembled on the topic and maybe of interest to the Board.

Zoning and Planning
96 Main St., Springfield VT 05156
Tel. 802 885 2104
Email: toszoning@vermontel.net



**Town of Springfield
Vermont**

Memo

To: Springfield Planning Commission
From: Bill Kearns, Zoning Administrator
Date: December 11, 2014
Re: Cottage Street, Pocket Park – www site examples - Google "pocket parks criteria"

I am writing this for two purposes. One is to communicate to you the request of the Board of Selectmen. The other is to help you with researching the issues. As set forth above, you can find more by googling "pocket park criteria." I am sending this to the PC and Town Manager by email. All the links to the documents cited should take the reader of this memo directly to the document. Also attached to the email carrying this memo are excerpts from each of the documents cited.

Request from Board

[From unapproved minutes of Dec 8th 2014] SB Motion (in pertinent part): GMcN moved to request the Planning Commission to consider the petition and any other information the Union Park Street Neighborhood Association wants to provide in regard to the proposal [... That 21 Cottage Street become a Pocket Park] and report back to the Board of Selectmen by the 1st meeting in January 2015 has to proposal and also to start formulating criteria with regards to siting of parks.

There are two parts to the motion: 1. Comment on the Cottage Street proposal and 2. Begin the process of developing criteria with regards to siting parks. Both of these items will be on our January 14 Planning Commission agenda.

Beginning with the 2nd part of the motion: I have found on the Internet the following items:

Parks:

Erie Co. PA

<https://www.erieco.gov/DocumentCenter/Home/View/933>

Fort Worth, TX

<http://fortworthtexas.gov/uploadedFiles/PACS/Parks/Dedication.pdf>

Melissa, TX

[http://www.cityofmelissa.com/document/Melissa Parks and Recreation Master Plan.pdf](http://www.cityofmelissa.com/document/Melissa_Parks_and_Recreation_Master_Plan.pdf)

Pocket Parks:

Pocket Parks – Alexandria VA

<http://dockets.alexandriava.gov/fy05/031205ph/di6.pdf>

Baltimore, MD - Preserving Community-Managed Open Spaces: Criteria and Process

http://baltimoregreenspace.org/downloads/CMOSguide_000.pdf

Bill Kearn's Summary of the info contained in websites above

A summary of the concerns over pocket parks expressed in each of the planning documents of the cities referred to in the attachments would be:

- o Preservation of important natural or historic features or resources; or needs of the neighborhood. If the latter, proximity of the proposed park to other similar facilities.
- o Proposed purpose. Is it compatible with the abutting properties?
- o Suitability of the parcel for the purpose proposed.
- o Cost of procuring the parcel.
- o Cost of developing the parcel for the purpose proposed.
- o Cost of maintaining the facility.
- o Cost of securing the facility and managing it for the purposes proposed.
- o The commitment of the neighborhood to the use and maintenance of the park, including financial support.
- o And tied to all of the above the ownership of the park. Most of the documents cited require that the pocket park be owned by an entity other than the municipality.

In all the cited documents financing the parks is discussed, with the majority requiring no cost to the municipality for maintenance and operation, and in some no municipal cost to acquire, that is, only required with new development at the developers cost.

A concern not explicit in most of the cited documents is the loss of tax base. However, it is noted in one of the cited studies that the assessed value of parcels in the neighborhood should increase, thus raising the tax payments in the neighborhood and offsetting the loss of taxes attributable to the park parcel.

Does the Town want a Parks Policy?

Is there a need for such a policy for town parks, or are the current Parks and Rec Department recommendations through the budget process sufficient for the Town?

Is there is need for a plan or policy because the demand for pocket parks in other neighborhoods is bubbling up and the Town needs a policy to guide the Town in resolving the demands?

If there is a need for planning the future needs of Springfield for parks, will it follow that money will be budgeted for acquisition, maintenance and operation of new parks of any size?

Is there a continuing expansion of Springfield through residential development of tracts of land such that a Policy or Plan requiring private or HOA – owned parks and recreation areas is an important issue to be considered and taken care of now?

In Springfield, is a policy or plan needed because multi-residential developments have sprung up, which do not provide open space and recreation areas to those who reside there?

Does the PC want to make a recommendation on 21 Cottage Street without a Plan or Policy in effect? Does this proposal require the Town to adopt a park plan or policy in order to decide whether or not to support it? Can the PC use the criteria of the various plans cited as a basis for deciding this issue without first developing a formal plan for the Town? Or should the PC take up the Recreation Chapter of the Town plan first, amend it to include park planning and criteria for new, or expansion of existing, park areas?

Private Pocket Park.

Should the neighborhood wish to establish a pocket park without the financial backing of the municipality, except for transfer of the land at little or no cost to the residents, and should the Board of Selectmen support those wishes, there would appear to be several ways to accomplish this with minimal municipal impact outside those benefitting from the park. One would be establishing a "pocket park district," the purpose of which would be to tax those in the vicinity of the pocket park for the funding of that park. A second would be a land trust, as is done in Baltimore, MD. A third might be a homeowners association of the neighborhood, which HOA would receive title to the parcel from the Town and manage and maintain and be responsible for the park.