



Cliff Walk Commission
DRAFT Minutes
March 16, 2016
5PM: Newport Public Library

IN ATTENDANCE

Commission Members: Lesley Brooking-Elms, Dave Downes, John Hirschboeck, Peter Janaros (Chair)

City of Newport: Scott Wheeler, Building & Grounds Supervisor/Tree Warden

Preservation Society: Jeff Curtis, Director of Gardens & Grounds, Preservation Society of Newport County

I. MINUTES from the 2/17/16 CWC meeting were approved, other than Scott requesting that the reference to the balance of funds remaining for Commonwealth repairs be omitted, as this number is uncertain at this point.

II. CURRENT BUSINESS

A. Erosion behind the Breakers

Scott and Jeff Curtis, PSNC Director of Buildings and Grounds, led a discussion on how best to address the erosion on the slope behind the Breakers that leads down to the Walk. The primary cause is attributed to runoff from the Breaker's back lawn, aggravated by foot traffic from those going up the slope to view the mansion.

Solving the drainage problem will be costly, and PSNC funds at present don't exist. Jeff and Scott will investigate and observe the extent of the run-off when it rains. The subject of additional vegetation that would assist in retaining the water was discussed as a less costly first step. There was also discussion about creating a permanent viewing platform for photographing the Breakers, perhaps applying a permeable paving solution similar to that being explored in front of the restrooms at 40 Steps. CRMC approval for any alternations will be necessary. Old wooden stairs with plastic sheeting will be removed. No one knows where the steps came from.

As a next step, Scott and Jeff will review the situation, advising the Commission as to their findings and recommendations.

B. Repairs between Webster St. and 40 Steps

As reported last month, construction bids for the work have been received, with a low bid of \$781,254 - significantly higher than Commonwealth's base estimate of \$600,000. The low bid excludes \$154,004 in additional work, which was also bid, bringing the grand total to \$936,248.

\$600,000 had been previously secured from a historic grant and \$271,182 in funds exist with DOT that have been earmarked for the Walk, however a new cooperative agreement must be reached with DOT before going to city council for final approval and a request to cover the remaining needs from other city repair funds.

As a result of these delays, all agreed repairs be postponed until fall so as not to interfere with summer traffic.

C. Photo Journal documentation/Location marker status

In his absence, Dave M. reported that he has recruited 3 groups to assist in photographing and documenting all sections of the Walk for an update of the Photo Journal.

Scott has contacted Chief Connerton alerting him that the location numbers have faded and should be refreshed. He will report back to Scott on suggested next steps. Dave Downes suggested that perhaps the Fire Department with Boy Scout volunteers could assist in this project. Scott has the stencils; thermally applied 3-M reflective tape would have to be purchased. John will contact Glenn Gardner to see if the Scouts might be interested in assisting and also freshening up the QR code marker posts.

D. G.R.I.P. green infrastructure project at Marine Avenue & Other Rights of Way

Test holes were taken to determine the subsurface and no bedrock was hit down to 5 feet at the location. Approval was given to apply for an EPA grant to implement the project. A revised plan is pending.

E. CRMC permitting for fence at Pell Property

Dave M. has forwarded the CRMC permit approving the fence with accompanying restrictions on its placement.

F. Spring maintenance

Trimming has taken place. The 40 Steps restrooms will be open as soon as the locking mechanism is fixed.

G. Stone placement/unevenness south of the second tunnel

Dave D. reported that the area just north of Rough Point has been smoothed out and that he will have remaining holes filled in during April. This will continue to be monitored by Dave to determine if additional work is required.

H. Trail Marker program & maps status

John advised that the new Cliff Walk brochure that will be distributed free at the Visitor's Center has yet to be designed. These should be ready by the summer season. There was also additional interest expressed

The two new Cliff Walk maps and stands that have been produced are ready for installation this spring. John and Scott will determine their locations.

I. Menco property repairs

Peter advised that work is proceeding per plan with completion scheduled by Memorial Day. Peter will advise when a review of the project will be scheduled on site. A private letter of gratitude from the CWC will be sent to the Menco's upon completion of this significant project, all privately funded.

J. Economic Impact Survey

It was suggested that the Salve students present their findings at the April CWC. John will contact Dave to determine this possibility.

K. New memorial benches

Locations for two additional benches north of 40 Steps have been marked out; one has been reserved.

L. Railings at Ruggles and Anglesea

Re-painted a year ago, the railings are starting to bleed and corrode, rusting the green paint. Scott will explore installing expansion foam as a pilot project this spring to assess its effectiveness in preventing corrosion.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Daffodillion's "Spring Fling"

John advised that the annual Daffodil Days Celebration at the Chanler is scheduled for April 21 from 6-7:30pm. All Commission members are encouraged to attend. This event is part of the 3rd Annual Daffodil Days Festival and includes activities on Cliff Walk and other programs in conjunction with the Tree Society's Arboretum Week.

B. Election of Officers

Peter has sought the opinion of the City Solicitor who advised that the election of CWC officers should be held at the next CWC meeting on April 20.

V. ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, the CWC adjourned at 6:15pm. Next CWC Meeting: 4/20/16