

Open Space and Recreation Committee

Town of Tisbury
Department of Public Works
115 High Point Lane, Tisbury, MA

Meeting Minutes

Note: Based on edited AI meeting summary with CD edits to be revised and edited by GH

Date: May 8, 2025

Meeting called to order: 10:35

Place: Zoom/Town Hall Annex

Attendance: Committee members - James Burrows (JB, Zoom), Cheryl Doble (CD), Gerard Hokanson (GH), Carolyn Wallis (CW)
Others: Kirk Metell DPW, Phil Wallis, Taylor Stone, Elaine Barse

Approval of minutes

1. Update – Kirk Metell

Kirk provided an update on summer preparations for various parks and facilities. Water is being turned on at all facilities, and work has been done at Veterans Park, including mowing and preparing the softball infields. At Owen Park, a trench has been dug for electrical work, and a landing platform and ramp have been constructed to provide ADA access to the bandstand. At Lake Street, footings are set for a new pavilion. He is planning to build the pavilion from a kit, and he will send information on the kit options for the Committee review. The fencing bid is out and due back by May 14. He noted that Wi-Fi installation at Lake Street is pending due to the IT person being on medical leave. Kirk aims to have Lake Street Park operational around Memorial Day. He also mentioned ongoing field maintenance at Veterans Park, including de-weeding, aerating, and slice seeding.

2. Discussion - First Friday activities at Owen Park

Taylor Stone and Phil Wallis from the Vineyard Haven Harbor Historic District (VHHHCD) met with the Committee to share their proposal for the First Friday events at Owen Park on the first Friday of the month from June through October. They also provided a written reply to the questions in the revised Special Event Parks Application form and a breakdown of their expensed for the First Friday events.

Kirk expressed concerns about the increasing size of these events and the need for proper safety measures. He mentioned the need for the Department of Public Works (DPW) to prepare for these events and the DPW staffing shortages that may impact their ability to assist. Kirk reported that we may require more robust barrier systems such as concrete barriers or parked vehicles for safety reasons. The VHHHCD will need to meet with the police and fire departments to address this.

The Committee discussion focused on the impact that the event might have on the park and any additional work that might be required on the part of the DPW. The discussion addressed trash management, parking, ADA parking and access, placement of lighting on the beach, and additional services that might be needed as the size of the event continues to increase. VHHHCD representatives reported that they oversee the event set up, ensure proper cleanup Friday night, and have a sweep through on Saturday morning to make sure all is in order. They pay Brunos to drop

off and collect trash bins (on Monday morning) and the police to manage traffic. Parking on the site is limited to the Harbormaster and vendors. There have been spaces for ADA parking on Main Street.

Taylor and Phil shared the cost for putting on each First Friday event in addition to hiring a detail police, and Brunos, they also pay musicians, a food coordinator, vendor coordinator, and a person to manage sound, music and electrical hookup. They hire local people and on average these costs are between \$7,000 - \$8,000 per event. They recognize that costs may increase if they need to address new security issues or rent additional equipment such as porta potties. Taylor and Phil discussed the mission of the HHHCD, the fact that First Friday is free to the Public, attended largely by local islanders, supports local artists and is an economic generator for Tisbury businesses.

The Committee explained rental fees for special events at Town Parks, the need to cover Town expenses, property damage, and ongoing maintenance. Our rental policy allows us to establish custom rates for special events that provide public benefit. The Committee felt that First Fridays should cover Town expenses but because of the community benefit they need not pay the full rental rate. CD will write a letter recording our decision, send it to Committee members for review and then send it to Kirk to share with the Select Board.

The Committee requested that VHHHCD share their proposal with the Police and Fire Departments discuss the beach lighting with Kirk and provide two ADA parking spaces on Main Street and one space for ADA drop-off. The Committee will contact the BOH regarding the bathroom capacity. Elaine Barse suggested that the VHHCD explore a possible rider on their 1-day insurance to address damage. Going forward, the Committee recommended that special event park requests go through Kirk so he can coordinate application review with appropriate departments and committees.

3. Tennis Court Sign

The Committee reviewed the draft text for the sign at the Church Street Tennis courts. JB stressed the importance that players recognize their responsibility to sweep the courts and brush lines after playing. That text will be moved up on the sign and highlighted. CD recorded minor changes to the draft text, will type up recommended changes and send them on to Kirk. There was a recommendation that we have a separate small sign with the QR code.

4. Court Maintenance

The Committee reviewed a maintenance schedule developed by JB last year. JB will talk with David McNamara to see if The West Chop staff would be able to give a training session on court maintenance to DPW staff again this year if needed. It was unclear how much watering would be needed, and JB will reach out to David McNamara to ask about the watering schedule. JB noted that we will need midday watering and the Committee decided that this should occur from 12:30 - 1:00pm since the midday heat makes this time less desirable for play.

The Committee also discussed issues presented by rain events including -- the ability to shut off sprinklers on days when it rained, letting people with reservations know that the courts are closed and how to handle refunds. The Committee agreed that there are several issues to be addressed, including the need for someone to manage court reservations and rain day cancellations and the potential lack of staff to carry out maintenance.

5. CourtReserve

CD reported that Marie had made progress on the CourtReserve system addressing concerns that JB and CD identified after an earlier test and review. However, Marie reported that CourtReserve can't be set up to require approval for Tisbury membership and not require approval for Pay to Play sign up. Marie proposed that they require approval for all accounts, review Town memberships to assure that individuals are Tisbury residents and automatically approve Pay to Play applications. The group discusses issues regarding user approval processes and considered two options: requiring approval for all users or having no approval process at all. JB argued that immediate access for pay-to-play users is essential, while CD expressed concerns that non-Tisbury residents will sign up for the Town resident memberships. The Committee ultimately leaned towards removing all approval requirements to simplify the process and get the system running. JB agreed to follow up with Court Reserve to see if there is any way to address the approval issue on the CourtReserve platform.

6. Tennis Schedule and Outreach

CD and JB will review/revise the court schedule (clinics, Senior Center play, watering schedule, etc.) and pass on a schedule to the DPW. CD will begin work on Tennis fliers to share with the Tisbury community, the Tisbury School, and visitors. These will be distributed after the CourtReserve test. The Committee also discussed the need to add updated tennis information on the website.

Meeting Adjourned 12:05

Moved by JB, second by GH, Vote 4-0