

Milton Disability Awareness Committee
Meeting Minutes
January 9, 2013

Committee Members In Attendance: Ken Woods, Renee Catanzaro, Van Black, Gary Arnold, and Tass Welch.

MDAC Liaison: Sudie Gordon

Guests in Attendance: Dudley Arnold; Katharine Farrell, Community Specialist with Smart 911 (via phone); and Jim Cregge, City of Milton Interim Parks & Recreation Director

Ken Woods stated that presentations would be given before the meeting would be called to order.

Presentation of Smart 911:

Katharine Farrell presented on Smart 911, and then had a Q&A session. The presentation will be emailed to Sudie to distribute to the committee members.

Presentation by Jim Cregge, City of Milton Interim Parks & Recreation Director:

Jim Cregge has two area park projects that he would like input on: Deerfield Park, and Bell Memorial Park.

Deerfield Park is the triangle area across from the Chevron service station. The triangular shaped area is owned by the City of Milton. (In relation to Building 100, where MDAC meetings are held, the park is located at parking lot for Building 300 on Deerfield Pkwy.) Since Marta donated money, the City is obligated to put up 2 benches. One concept is to make it an exercise park-build access and then put a series of winding trails. The land slopes, but slopes downward toward the curb and must have access also at the end of the slope. Traditionally, concrete is put in, which looks pretty but adds to water issues.

Jim asked, "How hard is concrete for a wheelchair?" Other ideas that Renee mentioned: concrete, asphalt or hard impact; or another suggestion is diamond dust, which is expensive. We discussed other surfaces like gravel-- you have the problem of wheelchairs, strollers and rolling walkers sinking down in the gravel. Ken added he has problems with uneven surfaces. Leila Thompson Park in Roswell, GA, has pathways that are aesthetically amazing and softer surface, but are more difficult for wheelchairs—we are not sure that wheelchairs could use that surface. Different disabilities require different surfaces. Ken stated that he has trouble with rubberized surface and that others may have trouble with rubberized surfaces or recycled material. Jim stated that the upkeep for diamond dust and rubberized surface cost is high. Jim said there was an idea of doing it in bricks and making the park a memorial park. However, bricks become uneven and the surface then becomes a problem. The brick idea may work as an area around the path.

Some things to consider for the Deerfield Park: Currently there is no access to the park from parking lot; the park will be built on a "shoestring budget"; concrete has a lower price; the area is only an acre; where will people park to gain access; the park may be used more by people that live in area; and the park could include exercise stations, a pavilion, or places that have an arbor. Jim would like to get back to us around April for more definitive suggestions.

Bell Memorial Park on Thompson Road is currently a baseball park (there were 15 acres that were given from the Bell family). The City of Milton has purchased more property. (Jim showed the area on a map.) This increased the area to 32.61 acres with existing access off Thompson Rd. The City has received proposals from multiple design companies. The park has 4 fields and serves 680 children (In comparison, Alpharetta has 14 fields and serves 900 children). The growth has been phenomenal. The city has talked with design teams, discussing ideas to include fields for other sports. We also have access to Alpharetta fields since we have partnership with them, giving us access to other things like tennis courts, etc. The city is considering walking trails and is looking at the changes in topography. There is a higher area around the baseball fields because the land was pushed back to make the fields. The park needs more parking. The City of Milton is working with a generous budget for this project.

We all agreed that, regarding trails, they do not have to be something that everyone has to be able to access all of trails—just a few. You could have parts of the trail that is accessible to wheelchairs. You can have as many surfaces as you want. The city should make its best efforts to have the trail accessible to many different people or accessibilities. So one part can be accessible to wheelchairs, strollers and walkers. Some people would love to have slopes and highs and lows. As long as there are elements that those with problems of access can experience it.

Some other things we discussed regarding Bell Memorial Park: If you use money to have things put in for those that do not have problems with access to the park, and then do nothing for those that need accessibility, that would be upsetting, but if the city makes an effort to include as many as possible then the effort to meet everyone's needs is appreciated. If you have access for wheelchairs, strollers, walkers and ambulatory difficulties then you have helped.

There will be upcoming town hall meetings in April to get opinions of citizens—we would love for this committee to be there. Renee asked what happened to the \$70,000 that had been previously allotted for the bathrooms. Jim replied that the money (Jan Jones helped get) went to updating bathrooms to make them "newer." Renee suggested that one of the things that is needed is family bathrooms because her son that is in a wheelchair is too old to go in to the Women's Bathroom with her—it would be better if there was a separate bathroom they could use together. Not only would this help in situations like that, but it would also help children of divorced families (for example, if dad is with his daughter), and also elderly people that need help. There needs to be at least one unisex bathroom/family bathroom. Jim says that he will definitely say that there needs to be family or unisex bathrooms. He likes our input.

Jim says he will need our input as they go along. Renee said that the city should think about accommodating family members like grandparents and younger siblings that come along to watch boys play baseball. The group talked about the pros and cons of a dog park (mostly cons). We all believe that the city should maximize the possibilities. Renee mentioned a park in Williamsburg that had a family swing and wheelchairs could pull right up on it. Jim asked her to get photo. Great opportunity and would be great in this setting. Tass said she saw a similar swing at an "all abilities park" in NC.

Ken Woods called the meeting to order.

Ken stated there did not seem to be any corrections needed for the minutes for the previous meetings. There was a motion by Van Black to approve the minutes of the previous meetings, and seconded by Tass Welch. The minutes were approved with unanimous vote.

Business

- Ken proposed that we do a check-in on experiences that members have had with other events/meetings etc. or disability issues each month. This will start in February 2013.
- Ken stated that Tass was designated as secretary in November. Due to problems with her transportation, we may need to have a back up, and the person should be someone other than Sudie. Gary Arnold said, "Why don't we have a "back up as required" and appoint one at the beginning of meeting?" Everyone agreed this was a good idea.
- Positions on committee that needed to be filled:
 1. Van's term has come to an end- he could be re-elected if he wished to do so. Renee nominated Van Black to fill term and Gary Arnold seconded it. Vote was unanimous for Van to continue another term.
 2. Sharon Lockwood resigned. Her position on the committee is available. Dudley Arnold is interested. Discussion continued. Van Black moved that Dudley be appointed to take Sharon Lockwood's place on committee. Renee seconded the motion. Voting was unanimous for Dudley to be on committee. Dudley will need to be sworn in by the mayor—Sudie will give date options to Dudley.
- Ken attended Milton Grows Green to hear what is going on with Earth Day, April 20th from 11am-3pm. It will be held at Friendship Park near schools (Milton High and middle school). It is hugely accessible. They are going to have the accessible port a potty on site. We could have a booth there and will discuss at a later meeting what we could do at the booth.

Motion was made to adjourn by Gary Arnold and Renee seconded. Vote was carried that we do so. Next meeting scheduled for February 13, 2013.

Minutes Submitted By: Tass Welch

Minutes Approved By: Kennard B Woods
Kennard Woods, Chair

Date Approved: 2/13/2013