

**Special Park Commission Meeting  
Public and Beals & Thomas invited to discuss Mt Hood Feasibility Study  
August 3, 2009**

**Present:** Mike Interbartolo, Joan Bell, Bob Christiansen, Bill Gardiner, Tom Friel, Cindy Brickley, Mike Farrell, Mike Ford, Phil Friel, John Mercer, John McLaughlin

**I. SIGNING OF WARRANTS**

Warrants were reviewed and signed.

**II. MOUNT HOOD FEASIBILITY STUDY**

Mike I. introduced the Park Commissioners, Park staff and GMC staff. He explained the purpose of this community meeting was to discuss what the Park Commission has been discussing over the last few months while doing a feasibility study at Mt. Hood. The purpose of the feasibility study is to look to improve the golf experience and non-golfing activities at Mt Hood. The Park Department has constant pressure trying to take care of all athletic and recreational requests on the number of fields that Melrose has. Hence an athletic field is being looked at too. If any possible configurations are possible the next step would be to bring on consultants to design a facility, golf improvements, and other improvements. Once done a bidding process would occur to determine the construction company. The time frame would be late winter or early spring for the design phase, after which the bidding for a construction company would take place.

Mike I. introduced the company doing the Feasibility study, Beals & Thomas. Robert Weidknecht, consultant, is present to explain their findings and answer questions.

Robert Weidknecht explained the process Beals & Thomas used to come up with their information. He showed an aerial exhibit of the site. They have been looking for access alternatives also. In the grand scheme of the park they looked at all information they could get, past and present, and as they got into it they identified specific sites that could be built on. The tower area, and the area adjacent to hole 17 were focused in on. Topo information was outdated in the big dig fill area. Wetland areas were studied.

One safety issue they looked at was the driveway that cuts through the 11<sup>th</sup> hole.

Access to the big dig fill area was not available, eliminating the possibility of an athletic field. So Beals & Thomas looked at making it into a longer driving range and some parking possibly.

The area adjacent to the 17<sup>th</sup> hole was found to have the best geometric area to accommodate some sort of athletic field. Upon researching the area two certified vernal pools were found and 1 potential vernal pool was found. There are wetland protection acts and local wetland bylaws that would guide development in the area. There is also a stream flowing out of one of the pools.

The first analysis Beals & Thomas did was to fit a track and field in the area. They found one area where they could fit it. This would include several high retaining walls. Parking and a concession stand were also included. Only 20 parking spots could be construed, 100 would be optimal. The cost premium for this plan would be very high and it is not ideal, so Beals & Thomas came up with some alternatives.

Another concept was to shift the 17<sup>th</sup> hole and build a multipurpose athletic field. See attached plans. This had a medium cost premium.

The lowest cost premium plan would be to build a multipurpose field in this area and to not move the 17<sup>th</sup> hole.

A new plan to completely move the 17<sup>th</sup> hole and then build a multipurpose field near the existing driveway was brought to Beals & Thomas's attention several weeks ago. See attached. The cost premium would be medium to high...

**Motion:** By Bill Gardiner to change the order of business to Public Participation

**Second:** Bob Christiansen

**Vote:** Unanimous

#### PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Allan Swarze, 16 Stillman Rd, if hole 17 were to be relocated it would require clearing woods and crossing a stream. How do you know that clearing that much of an area will not have deleterious effects on the eco system? Mike I. replied that assessment would be in the next phase. Allan asked who owned the property. Mike answered that it is part of Mt Hood Memorial Park and that the Park Commission is in charge of the area. Robert added that the Conservation Commission would work closely on this. Allan asked how hole 17 would be irrigated. Mike suggested that the sprinkler system throughout the golf course would be brought in to include the new hole.

Robert Boisselle, 585 Main St, asked how many acres of woods would be cut down in any of the scenarios. Robert W. did not have the figures readily available. Mr. Boisselle asked how much fill would be brought in. Robert W. answered that based preliminary studies the first alternative (track and field) would mean 30,000 cu yds of cut and 89,000cu yds of fill. The second alternative (multipurpose field, slight move of hole 17) would mean 13,000 cu yds of cut and 40,000 cu yds of fill. The last alternative (multipurpose field, 17<sup>th</sup> hole relocation) would mean 32,000 cu yds of cut and 55,000 cu yds of fill. Mr. Boisselle voiced his concern that this big change would alter drainage. Robert W. answered with the different possibilities that he has seen used. Mr. Boisselle asked how the trail system would be impacted. Robert W. gueestimated 5-10%.

Kevin Allison, Stoneham, present MHS Cross Country Coach and past MHS Track Coach, asked if the shape of the track could be altered to fit. Robert W. said they did try using the several different track shapes (oval, more round, etc). Kevin remarked that he feels that is preferable to have the track at the high school for logistic reasons. He feels

that besides the existing track being in terrible condition that it is too short and the lanes are too narrow. They did used to have track meets at the high school, before it got so bad. If it does get redone he would suggest making just 4 lanes and that there are possibilities for the existing track.

Henry Hooton, 66 Stillman Rd, said that no one wants this in their back yard. He asked if there is any other access to the field from the Penney Rd side. Also, he would hope that the island at the top of the hill would be fixed. No one knows where they are going. It is a zoo. Especially since the traffic would increase. Robert W. answered that they looked at Penny Rd and it is too narrow to use without taking some land from the car dealership.

Mr. Jewell, 100 LynnFells Parkway, feels the Park Commission should leave well enough alone. This area is what Audubon refers to as an IBA (Important Bird Area) and an IWA (Important Wildlife Area). He has documented 155 species of birds here. He feels the need is not great enough to warrant the loss of woods. Please think of the future and what it will look like then.

Tim, Mt View Terrace, reiterated that the traffic is terrible as it is and does not want it worse.

Ron Harding, Mt Hood Terrace, asked about the last plan shown. He wanted clarification of where the multipurpose field would be in comparison to hole 17.

Rich Altonaga, 1059 Franklin St, president of Melrose Youth Soccer, thanks the Park Commission for revisiting the issue. He has 900 children in his program and would much appreciate any additional space they could get. He is willing to provide any information needed.

Pat Ruggiero, Athletic Director of MHS, agrees that field space is needed. Melrose shares with Malden at Pine Banks now. Her programs are growing and she needs more space. Many of her fields are not regulation size now. Pat asked if a concession stand is included in the later plans. She would highly suggest that changing areas would be needed more than concession. A home and away locker room would be preferable.

Mark Norton, representing Melrose Youth Lacrosse, would like to reiterate what Rich Altonaga said. There are 300 kids now in the Lacrosse program, and the high school now has lacrosse teams trying to survive.

Myran Ditmere, 93 Altamont Ave, likes the last plan described. He likes that a new 17<sup>th</sup> hole could be built then the field, and there would be no downtime for the 17<sup>th</sup> hole. He asked what passive recreation areas have been looked at. Have the trails been discussed? Mike I. answered that their focus has been on safety issues, golf improvements, building a field, fishing, walking and hiking. The trails have been addressed and in the past and are not forgotten.

Lea, 16 Stillman Rd, saw the devastation from the last effort. She feels it was so very expensive to repair. She would like to understand why the study needs to be done. She is very concerned for the passive recreation at Mt Hood Park. She would like to see bocce, fishing, walking and hiking to increase not decrease.

Peter Mortimer, 47 Mt Hood Terrace, Alderman Ward 6, reminded that when the woodlands are gone they are gone for good. He is a soccer coach, but he also likes hiking. He feels traffic is the biggest problem to this project. Bill G. mentioned that the traffic is going to be addressed in the next phase. Mr. Mortimer feels that temporary speed bumps, as at Wingsheet Beach, should be seriously considered. If the road could be bought by the park then they could make it such to slow down traffic. He feels addressing the traffic needs to be done now not later. Mike I. feels the work to take control of the road would be very difficult.

Megan Weaver, 30 Slayton Rd, is also concerned about the traffic. She worries every day about the children.

Susan Murphy, 34 Poplar St, Conservation Committee, wanted to comment on the trail issue. Whatever is decided the trails should be added to this plan. Please don't lose the trails. If left to just NEMBA and GMC she is afraid that they could get lost.

Gladys Latshaw, 198 Upham St, would like to advocate for the very young and the very old. Please keep them in mind.

Myran Ditmere, 93 Altamont Ave, asked what the actual costs could be. Robert W. estimates that the first plan would have a cost premium of 3 million dollars, the second plan would have a cost premium of 1 million dollars, and the last plan would have a cost premium of approximately 1.6 million dollars. Then to build the field after the land was prepared would be approximately 700,000 dollars.

Allan Swarze, 16 Stillman Rd, told about an old trail with access to the old tower. You can find it off of the road that leads to the Fish and Game. It passes 8 or 9 WPA BBQ pits. This trail would be wonderful if fixed up. Please think of everyone, not just the athletes. He is adamant that passive recreation not be forgotten!

Henry Hooton, 66 Stillman Rd, asked what the lifespan of an artificial turf field is. Robert W. answered that it was 8-10 years. Only the turf usually needs replacing, and a lot of the other parts can be reused. Maintenance is

Mr. Jewell, 100 Lynn Fells Parkway, complained that the dog mess is terrible up at the playground, especially in the winter. Something should be done, signage and fines.

Mark Norton, Melrose Lacrosse, asked for an estimated time frame for each plan. Mike I. answered that the last plan would take the longest, 2 years. or so. He also reminded the audience that the Board of Aldermen would have to approve the plan brought forward

**Motion:** By Bill Gardiner to close Public Participation

**Second:** John Mercer

**Vote:** Unanimous

**Motion:** By Bob Christiansen to adjourn

**Second:** Bill Gardiner

**Vote:** Unanimous