

HUDSON, NH BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes of the August 1, 2017 Workshop Meeting

1. CALL TO ORDER - by Chairman Luszey the meeting of August 1, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. in the Buxton CD Meeting Room at Town Hall.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE - led by Jim Barnes.

3. ATTENDANCE

Board of Selectmen: Ted Luszey, Marilyn McGrath, Roger Coutu, Angela Routsis, David Morin

4. PUBLIC INPUT

Chairman Luszey asked if there was any public input at this time. Seeing none, we'll get into the purpose of tonight's workshop.

5. DISCUSSION

A. Discussion with Benson Park, Friends of Benson Park, and Road Agent Kevin Burns

Chairman Luszey stated I asked the Friends of Benson and the Benson Committee folks to come in tonight along with Mr. Burns the Director of the Highway Department and grounds keeping now I would call it for all of our parks to talk a little about where we came from with not only our parks but Benson's and the Friends of Benson's, where we are and where we think we're going so that we all get on the same page because the last few months at the Selectmen's meeting, we've had a number of conversations with projects at Benson's, the growth of Benson's, the parking issue at Benson's, the roll of the Friends of Benson's, and what they're doing there. With that in mind, this is a roundtable discussion. Hopefully we can get a free flowing discussion going where people can ask what's on their mind and get the answers from the people that sit on the committees and are doing the work. To start things off, I've asked the Chairman of the Friends of Benson's and the Chairman of the Benson Committee to give us a little overview. Looks like the Friends of Benson's presentation is up first.

Chairman Luszey went around the table and introduced everybody so the audience who is kind of on what team. Paula Hubert on the Benson Park Committee. John Leone - I'm the Chairman of the Friends of Benson Park and on the Benson Park Committee. Jim Barnes, Chairman of the Benson Park Committee. Kevin Burns I'm the Road Agent. Marilyn McGrath Board of Selectmen. Ted Luszey Board of Selectmen. Roger Coutu Board of Selectmen. Angela Routsis Board of Selectmen. Dave Morin Board of Selectmen and Liaison to the Benson Committee. Richard Empey Vice-Chairman of the Benson Park Committee. Richard Tassi Friends of Bensons. David Scion Friends of Benson. Ann Desrosiers Benson Park Committee. Jeremy Griffus Benson Park Committee. Chairman Luszey welcomed all. Hopefully folks will kind of put names and faces together.

Jim Barnes stated in the beginning - the Benson's Committee, the original Benson's Committee, was preceded the Benson Park Committee worked for nearly eight years to acquire Benson Park from the State of New Hampshire. The result was a successful transfer of the park to town ownership. During that time, a master plan for the park was developed and is available today on the town's website. In the eight years since the town purchased the park, the Benson Park Committee has overseen and guided the development of the park into what it is today. An extremely popular destination for Hudson residents and non-residents alike. The mission of the Benson Park Committee is to protect and maintain the rich history of the park. It will preserve and enhance the park which enriches the quality of life for the residents of Hudson and visitors alike. It will preserve the park for the enjoyment of present and future generations. It will foster harmony with nature by promoting a wide range of year-round passive recreational activities.

When the town and the State finalized the sale of the Benson Park property in 2009, Mr. Barnes said the Benson Park Committee was formed to be the focus for the development of the park as a passive recreational park for the Town of Hudson and surrounding communities. The initial efforts were to clear the undergrowth that had proliferated everywhere, clearing paved paths that remained in the center of the park, stabilizing the remaining buildings with new roofs and needed structural repairs, and established new woodland trails in the outer parts of the property. As a result of this work by construction contractors, the town Highway Department, and over 300 volunteers who invested thousands of hours to the effort, the park was opened in May 2010 and dedicated on September 5, 2010.

Since the park opening, Jim Barnes said the Benson Park Committee has continued to coordinate with groups of volunteers, scouts, organizations, and other nonprofit groups to complete projects in the park. Some of these projects include repairs to the gorilla house, the 9/11 Memorial, recreation of a playground, establishment of park trails, Eagle Scout projects including the ticket booth restoration, wildlife blinds, storybook, hill foot bridges, gorilla house walkway and landscaping. The Mallory Gray amphitheater which was just finally finished and donated to the town officially. The dog park inside Benson Park, the butterfly garden, 35 adopt-a-spots that are maintained by volunteers, Chestnut Tree planting, bat houses, restoration of the Old Woman's Shoe, and TD Bank tree grant plantings, and others. In addition, the Benson Park Committee continues to work closely with the Friends of Benson Park a 501(c) III nonprofit organization in their efforts to restore the old elephant barn to be a permanent home to the Benson's Wild Animal Farm memorabilia.

Mr. Barnes indicated the Benson Park Committee works closely with the town Highway Department to coordinate activities such as mowing the open fields, tree removal, loaming and seeding of cleared areas and so on. Without their assistance, the park would not be as attractive as it is today. The Benson Park Committee continues to organize monthly volunteer work days in the park. In the past two years, more than 100 different individuals have volunteered to work one or more days during these events. The Trail Committee spends a couple days per week maintaining the existing trails and open space. Liberty Utilities has sent teams of volunteers to do work in the park clearing brush, maintaining trails, etc. The features of the park would not be what they are today without the continued efforts from many volunteers devoting many hours each month to maintaining and improving the park.

Last spring, spring of 2016, Jim Barnes noted the Benson Park Committee held a workshop to review and rank various project proposals for future work. The rank projects were presented to the Board of Selectmen in September of 2016. The prioritized project list including the following projects: office building restoration, public restrooms, gorilla house improvements, Benson Park revenues, wooden bridge replacement, repair of water control structures on Storybook Hill, kitchen restoration, electricity to the A-frame, repair of the waterway near the shoe, and restore the train station interior.

Current projects that we have in progress - Mr. Barnes listed: the office building sill and support beam repair, an RFP was issued and a successful bid was accepted for \$13,620 to replace the rotted sill at the front of the office building, repair the major support beams that have rotting ends, and improve the drainage in front of the building. A pre-construction conference was held on Monday, yesterday, with the contractor and representatives of DHR during their tour of the park. Construction is expected to commence in September. An application was submitted to the State for a moose plate grant to offset part of the construction costs. We should hear sometime in August whether our application was successful and if so, how much the grant will be.

Utilities. Jim stated the warrant article approved by the town voters in March 2016 to bring utilities into the park has been used to pay for the recent work extending the water and sewer lines and connecting those services to the elephant barn. That part of the project has been completed by the Highway Department. A quote in the amount of \$7,298 has been obtained for the upgrade of the existing temporary electrical connection between the office building and the elephant barn. A PO has been created and is pending approvals by the town. Work will largely consume the remainder of the \$98,000 approved in the warrant article.

Permanent restroom facility. Last winter the Benson Park Committee began exploring a possible restroom facility in the park to replace the portable toilets that are put in the park every year on a seasonal basis. Estimates for both a standalone structure and for a renovation of the storage room at the rear of the gorilla house were requested from two contractors. The gorilla house renovation was deemed to be the preferable option. Additional design elements have been considered and will need to be added to the requirements prior to requesting any formal bids for the project. Utilities will need to be extended to the site. This includes bringing connections for water and sewer to the building from the lines that were recently extended for the utilities project. Both lines are near the gorilla house so the cost of construction would not be extensive but we will need an estimate.

Mr. Barnes explained bringing electricity from Kimball Hill Road to the site will be done in two stages. First an underground line will be installed from an existing utility pole on Kimball Hill Road to a new transformer to be installed near the train station. The estimated cost for that phase is about \$4,000 plus the cost of

digging the trench. We will have to get an estimate for that. Note this will also provide the opportunity to make a permanent connection to the office building and train station and also the elephant barn through the office building. Second, a new transformer will be installed near the gorilla house and an underground line brought from the transformer at the train station to the gorilla house transformer. Estimated cost is \$8,500 again plus the cost of digging the trench which we don't have an estimate for yet. In addition to the construction cost of the restroom facility, there will be recurring costs for utilities and maintenance. The facility will need to be secured on a daily basis. This can be done with a programmable locking mechanism that would be included in the construction. The facility will need to be cleaned and serviced on a daily basis seven days a week.

Future projects. Jim stated complete office building restoration. When the office building structure is stabilized with the replacement with rotten sill and beams, additional projects will be needed to complete the restoration. These can be done over time and do not need to be completed at once. The windows will need to be replaced and restored with windows that match the historic design and the original windows. In 2012 we received an estimate of approximately \$19,000 for this work. That's obviously somewhat outdated. We will need to reach a consensus on the eventual use of the building before we start to restore the interior. The 2002 Benson Park Master Plan had an estimate of \$220,000 for the complete restoration of the building. This estimate is out of date and should be viewed only as a point of reference.

Train station interior. Mr. Barnes said a conceptual project proposal is in development to restore the interior of the train depot building to the 1916 era when the building was used for Hudson's railroad station. This project proposal is still in the investigation stages. The intent would be to use the building as a railroad and town museum when the restoration work is complete. Next steps include doing an asbestos survey to determine whether there's any asbestos in the current interior materials. This proposal will be reviewed with DHR and phase I is being reviewed with DHR now which is the demolition inside and presented to the Board of Selectmen in the near future. The intent for the funding for the restoration work would be to apply for grants from such sources as LCHP, Trains Magazine, National Railway Historical Society, etc.

Finally a wooden bridge replacement. Jim noted the initial design work has begun for the replacement of the wooden bridge in the alligator pond area. The subcommittee will coordinate with the Friends of Benson Park to raise funds for this project. I think that's a summary of projects and where we are. I have printed copies of this for the Board.

Chairman Luszey had one quick question. When you listed off all the projects at the beginning you talked about the pond that goes from the Old Lady in the Shoe - the swale if you will. That wasn't listed. Jim Barnes said the water control structures.

Selectman McGrath asked do you have an overall total Jim for all those projects. Mr. Barnes stated no I do not. We have some estimates on part of the restroom facility. We have stopped on that because we wanted to make sure that if we can't have the town commit to doing maintenance and servicing of the facility, there was no point in building that. We had backed off on that a little bit until we get some kind of a consensus that that is the way to go. Just jotting down and I didn't get everything but looking at it, Selectman McGrath noted the office restoration estimate previously provided was \$19,000. Mr. Barnes said the \$19,000 was just for the windows. There is \$220,000 which was in the original Benson Park master plan from 15 years ago. Some of that won't apply now. So of the things have been done. Other things obviously construction costs have been changing over that time. It's not clear how much that would really cost until you start getting into the details. Selectman McGrath asked you do have a copy of what you just read for us okay. Thank you.

Chairman Luszey thought the way I'd like to proceed is we'll let John do yours and then we'll open it up for general discussion because I think some of this stuff will intertwine.

John Leone stated while Jim and I tried to compare notes a bit, there's going to be a little bit of an overlap. I'm more of a graphical person so I have some photos to look at. I'd direct your attention to the screen. Thank you Kevin with opening the slides for me. There seems to be one bit of confusion I wanted to try to put to rest right up front. The Friends of Benson Park is not a committee. We are a corporation. We were founded in 2010. The intent to remain separate from the Benson Park Committee and the Town of Hudson but to support projects in Benson Park. That's entirely our mission. We are a nonprofit. In April 2012 we were granted tax exempt status as a nonprofit 501 (c) III public charity. Our Board of Directors currently has nine members and two alternates. A couple of the gentlemen are here tonight. A few others send their

apologies. One board member acts as a liaison between the groups. At the moment that's me. Occasionally it rotates when we have other board members that are on the Benson Park Committee.

Our mission statement which actually was recently revised, Mr. Leone said we had a broader statement and we decided we really needed to try to focus on the restoration of the elephant barn. Once that's accomplished, then we'll open it up to a broader scope again to support other projects like some of the things that Jim talked about. More to come on that in a minute. Feel free to read through this. Friends of Benson Park's mission is to preserve the legacy of the once famous Benson's Wild Animal Farm by renovating the elephant barn at Benson Park into a museum which will house memorabilia and provide educational opportunities for the community. The Friends of Benson Park will accomplish this mission through volunteerism, fundraising, and the promotion of Benson Park. Any questions on that as we go? I'm happy to pause.

The lease - another point John thought of misunderstanding. I just pulled out a couple of highlights. I think there are copies of the actual lease on the front table if anyone wants to have a look at the actual document. Ninety-nine percent of that language was generated by the Town Attorney. The Friends of Benson Park leased the elephant barn from the Town of Hudson April 1, 2012. The lease was approved on town ballot March of that year by 81 percent of the voters. Per the lease, Friends of Benson Park is responsible to fund repairs, renovations - and this is where I paraphrase a bit but the quote from the lease is "except the roof and the exterior of the premises". A couple of pictures you see on the bottom of the page there different angles slightly but what I call the back of the building you can see the exterior work that's been done to date. In fact, there's even been more progress than when this picture was taken. To date, Friends of Benson Park has not requested any financial support from Hudson regarding the exterior restoration. We've replaced a good number of the windows, a fair amount of framing, working on vinyl siding, the end state being hopefully a building that will last for generations to come.

Another interesting paragraph, Mr. Leone thought folks talk to you quite regularly - utilities. This is an exact quote, "sewer, water, natural gas, electricity 200 amp service, and telephone conduit to the premises shall be provided by Hudson at its sole expense for the extension of these services to the building. Water and sewer we know have been connected. We heard about that as part of the warrant article from last year. As Jim talked about, electricity and telephone, perhaps Comcast, (inaudible) planning is ongoing. The Friends of Benson Park would like to investigate alternatives to natural gas which was written into the lease because we understand that it would be cost prohibitive to try to run a gas line in there for a connection to one building for heat. Comments or questions on that?

Chairman Luszey noted we'll get back to this.

Barn restoration. John Leone explained the restoration of the elephant barn is a pretty large multi-phase project. Our project manager Mr. Tassi is across the table. He's semi-retired I guess Rich or fully retired now. A professional architect. Nearly 100 percent of the restoration work, the labor, has been performed by volunteers including licensed contractors that volunteer their time. I would say the phase I the gift shop the front of the building that folks see now when they come in on the weekend is about 90 percent complete. Phase II the exterior and windows, we're probably halfway done with that. We're hoping to complete the vinyl siding this summer and we have a few more windows to install.

Phase III the museum space. Mr. Leone stated the back of the building which is probably a good 80 percent of the space square footage wise is frankly the hardest thing to tackle and that will likely be subdivided into further subprojects so we can tackle it in small steps.

John Leone indicated the Friends of Benson Park tries to as part of community outreach and promoting Benson Park sponsored community events. So a few examples here, the 5th anniversary celebration a couple of years ago. I think it was a solid turnout. A lot of local folks had tents up and supported activities for kids. We had a reptile demonstration last year that went pretty well. We've had a few cage concerts we're calling them - free concerts on a Friday or Saturday night. Folks bring down a blanket or a folding chair and can sit on the lawn or the pavement and get to hear some local amateur musicians. We've hosted photos with Santa a couple of times both as a fundraising even for us but also again as a community event. We have Elli the Elephant that makes pretty regular appearances and walking around, greeting kids, and shaking hands. We hosted the Alvirne Jazz Band for Gerry Bastien's last concert which was a fun event.

Gift shop. John noted it's become the unofficial welcome center at the park when it's open. We supply information and history and directions to park visitors nonstop from 11 a.m. in the morning when we open until sometimes 5 - 6 at night. It's busy enough we commit to stay open til 4 weather permitting. If there are enough visitors, we try to stay there longer. It's 100 percent volunteer staffed. We're open Friday to Sunday. We're selling snacks, ice cream, beverages, and gifts again trying to raise money to go back into the barn. A hundred percent of those proceeds I used to fund the barn restoration. Whether we like it or not, we're providing a bit of "official presence". We become the lost and found. I can't begin to tell you how many telephones people have lost. Someone will bring it up to us and hope that someone will come back to try to find their car keys, or purses, wallets, and all kinds of things. A few other examples that just come to our attention because we are the only folks that are there every weekend and I think visitors kind of do that as sort of an official point of contact. We're providing a bit of that service hopefully as a promotion of the park in general and supporting the public.

Mr. Leone indicated the barn restoration is clearly our top priority. The Friends of Benson Park continues to support other projects. Folks who have been there have seen the benches around the park. There are 61 of them now. That's approximately \$20,000 in costs and that was all arranged through donations through the Friends of Benson Park - orders placed, assembly done, installation with the help of the Benson Park Committee. That includes the 9/11 Memorial, the dog park, and the senior center. We partnered with the Benson Park Committee Trails Subcommittee on a grant from UPS. We partnered with the Dog Park Subcommittee when the Friends of Hudson Dog Park as a corporation dissolved a couple of years ago. Now any of the financials involving the dog park now come through the Friends. We did the initial I'd say half maybe it's a dozen or so of the picnic tables/benches around the park were done and paid for by the Friends of Benson Park. We try to coordinate with the Highway Department and the Benson Park Committee for the ad hoc inquiries that we get. We have a Facebook page. We have a website. We're constantly getting e-mails and requests - how do we schedule a group event? How do we volunteer for different things and we try to route those queries to the right places. Hopefully Kevin and Jim can attest to that. We're trying to be a communicate point I guess for the public. As Jim mentioned, we're in preliminary discussions with the Benson Park Committee regarding fundraising to support the replacement of that wooden bridge below the overlook picnic area.

Chairman Luszey asked to go back to the lease highlights slide. You said that you changed the mission statement and then when I took a look at this - I actually was on the Board of Selectmen very briefly when this was signed and I asked the question then and I'll ask the question now. The town is obligated to do the exterior siding yet you're doing that. There's no timeframe for that. The town is obligated to provide electricity but there was no timetable to do that. What was and what is the expectation for some of these things that there's an expectation or an obligation on the town to do?

John Leone indicated I was not the Chairman of the Friends of Benson Park when this was signed. As some folks who were around back then know the original founder and President Mr. Matthews worked through the details of this with the town. It was one of the points frankly as a Board of the Friends we were concerned with was not having any commitment dates or obligations trying to lock us into even rough timelines and that wasn't part of the agreement that was in place. I think it's been 5 plus years since we've signed the lease I think we're all hoping to continue to make progress and I think we feel good about the utility stuff happening and hopefully the town feels good about the progress that we're making on the building restoration. In our case, it's entirely driven by financial resources I guess to some degree as it is with the town. Yeah I think it's just part of just the partnerships that we have with the Benson Park Committee and with the town that we're all sort of relying on each other to do the right thing and get these things done in a timely manner. Is five years a timely manner? I don't know. Is ten years a timely manner? I'm not sure. We're going to try to keep reminding folks that while we want to keep making progress, we hope that these other things will continue to make progress as well and we work together to accomplish the goal. I don't know if that directly answers your question but yes I'd love to have dates in there and we don't.

Chairman Luszey said it partially answers it but I'm struggling with does the Benson Committee bring forward requests to the Board of Selectmen for funding for warrant articles or would it be you? Mr. Leone said the warrant article for the utilities came through the Benson Park Committee. While the elephant is the immediate beneficiary of that, the intent I think is to position us so that we could have restroom eventually. That we could connect water and sewer to the other buildings if we wanted to. It wasn't well this is the commitment that the town has to the Friends of Benson Park through the lease agreement. It's not the only place that those utilities could be connected and it had to get back into the park to make that happen.

Jim Barnes indicated the initial project for utilities had a three phase project. The first phase is what is being done right now or what has mostly been completed getting the utilities into the elephant barn. There were a couple of other phases to take the utilities down the hill for other...

Chairman Luszey recalled that. I guess what I would ask you talked about a master plan that had some goals. Real lofty goals when we had a raw piece of land and we're some 10 or 15 years now or whatever it is into it. The park has been developed. We're at a point where one of the things I see and I hear about is lack of parking because you have succeeded so well in developing the park. Given that and the finite resources that we have, you still listed a whole bunch of the original goals if you will of that. Have we given consideration to maybe we're done expanding the park and we now start putting it into and operate and maintain versus expansion?

Jim Barnes thought if we haven't gotten there yet, we're rapidly approaching that. If you look at the projects that we had listed, we're talking about the office building and the train station. Those are historic buildings and by the deed we're required to maintain those buildings. Chairman Luszey agreed. Mr. Barnes indicted that's really not expansion. You're providing more things into the park. Chairman Luszey said we maintain them. We put the train station on permanent foundation. We fixed the envelope. We've maintained it. It will not deteriorate. We can keep it weather tight. Maintain to me does not say we need to restore the inside to anything. Right? That's kind of where I'm getting at. What is the new vision if you will for where we're at given what we've done? Mr. Barnes thought what we need to do and Dick wants to say something too but I think we're probably at the end of expanding new facilities. The restroom and the facility that we're talking about would be replacing something. Replacing the portable toilets that are there now. We're not talking about a large number of new trails, or clearing new fields, or things like that at this point. We're just saying we're getting to the point where we have to look at overall maintenance and continued service of the park as a whole, and the things that are in the park.

Dick Empey noted a couple of things I'd like to add to what Jim said. If you look at the original master plan, to date we have probably succeeded in completing close to 90 percent. The trail system is 100 percent. No plans for expansion. It's just a matter of maintaining. The landscaping within the park is about 90 percent completed. There's a few little areas that could use some improvement. In the last couple of years, a lot of what we've worked on has actually been a program to make the maintenance of the park easier. What I say by that is for example the picnic tables. There's approximately 25 of them. We had wandering picnic tables 3 years ago. People would come in, they'd move the picnic tables where they want them, they wouldn't put them back. The picnic tables were all on pads that don't need to be mowed. When Kevin comes in to mow the park, he just mows right around it and doesn't have to stop. The moving picnic tables were a problem. Kevin came in on Monday mornings and found 10 picnic tables on the lawns which he's there to mow. That's a problem. We anchored all those picnic tables. All the benches have been put on pads so that they don't have to be moved for mowing. We've removed rocks in the north field area. Again, so that Kevin can mow the north field in 10 minutes instead of a half an hour.

Mr. Empey indicated we've cleared out areas where brush impeded mowing in some cases. Some cases to beautify it. A lot of what we've done has been with the eye on how do we make this park more maintainable. I think we've made some pretty good strides there. As far as the buildings, the train station has been mentioned. We as a committee are not looking at spending any of the town's money on that train station. We have a man here tonight who is working on a program to fund and do improvements to the interior of the train station. My viewpoint of this is what do we got to lose. If he restores the inside through his work, and grant money, and materials and everything, restores inside of the railroad station, we've improved that building at no cost to the town. Why would anybody say no?

Chairman Luszey said I'll give you a real quick answer and that is what happens to the obligation of the town going forward. Whenever you improve something like that, I believe there would be an expectation and we begin to maintain it at that level. So whenever you restore a building, you now have an obligation to maintain it at that level. That's the answer to that question why would you or why you may not want to.

Not to be disrespectful, Dick Empey thought that is a pretty lame excuse. If it became a financial burden to the town to maintain the interior of this train station and I really don't conceive any way that that could happen to a great extent, you still have the opportunity to put a lock on the drain. Drain the plumbing and put a lock on the door. Now you're back to where we are today. It hasn't cost you anything that you haven't

had the opportunity to vote on and decide on. The office building. We're trying to work on funding for it. We're not coming to the town and saying we need \$200,000 to restore this building. We're trying to work out of money that we have in our budget which admittedly comes from the taxpayers but we're also looking at outside sources of money. We haven't dove into this building and asked you for \$200,000. We're going at it piecemeal, piece by piece, doing what we have to trying to get to an end goal. Again if we restore that whole building and the funding goes away, you still are in the position to lock the door. If the taxpayers say to you, we will not put up the money to support this building. You can put a lock on the door and look at the taxpayers and say this is what you said. You said you didn't want to support this.

Chairman Luszey said I got that. I'll give you a little bit of history and I'll use the train station. The taxpayers approved \$80,000 to move it. It cost us almost \$400,000 when all said and done. That's the concern when we're in that historical envelope up there is nothing is on face value. That's why I think if we're going to go ahead and restore the office building or the train station, that should be put on a warrant article and let the voters know what they're buying into because it's not always face value. We bought into an \$80,000 train station move that turned into over a \$300,000 move. That's for real.

Dick Empey brought up also that the Benson Park Committee and their management and their interest in this had nothing to do with the money that was spent on that train station. That was authorized by this Board. Chairman Luszey indicated I'm not implying that. What I'm implying or what I'm trying to state is that somehow we need to get a handle on where the committee thinks they want to take Benson. I don't believe the Board of Selectmen is on the same page as the Benson's Committee where that is. A plan was put in place some 10 years ago and that was a vision back then. A lot of money and time has been invested by volunteers and by town assets and resources to put together this park that is a very desirable destination for residents and non-residents alike. We're at the point I believe that we need to address are we going to continue to expand it or are we going to put it into a state of let's maintain it and keep it going the way it is. We have a gentleman here that is required to go in and to maintain it and he's saying to us I need help. I need resources to maintain it now because it's consuming time from a pool of hours available to do work that quite frankly the town did not budget for because it was done by volunteers. It's got to the state now where we're being asked by the volunteers for the town to pick up the support, and maintenance, and ongoing operational care of that. What I'm trying to get out of this tonight is where are we headed? How much more?

Selectman Coutu asked for point of order. I'd like to get away from a two person debate because we're getting into the weeds. I think Selectman Morin had his hand up. I'm sure there are other people that would like speak. We can get into the weeds later if we want to.

First of all to answer your question Mr. Chairman on where we go, Selectman Morin believed after tonight's meeting I believe it's going to give the Benson's Committee a direction on where they need to go with the master plan. So hopefully we can give them some direction on where to go tonight. I would like to so everybody knows if Mr. Barnes can tell us what projects that were in the original master plan have been met and what were the additional projects that weren't in the plan that have been completed.

Jim Barnes thought we touched on most of those already - the trails, stabilizing the building. We haven't done a lot the restoration and renovations to those buildings. The Friends of Benson Park has taken care of the elephant barn. Those are the main things. The original master plan had several restroom facilities that were scattered around the park in different areas. So we're trying to create one at this point if we decide we're going to do this. There were a lot of differences with some of the buildings. For example the train station was supposed to be a welcome center that was located out on Central Street. So obviously that has not happened. It will never happen. There were some other things that we were talking about as far as the amphitheater goes. The amphitheater was really a place where you could have concerts, performances, and so on and what that has evolved into is the Mallory Gray Amphitheater that area which we're basically done with. It's different than what was in the original master plan but it is there. We have accomplished a lot of things. Some of the things are different in scope or scale than what was in the original master plan. We don't have all the buildings restored as the master plan said it would.

Selectman Morin noted we got a pretty good idea that the park has gone way beyond where it was expected and where we got now. So we don't drag this out all night, Mr. Burns can you tell us what the cost is to maintain the park? Kevin Burns said no. I was not prepared for that. I could get you the numbers. I have all the hours but I don't have it available with me this evening. Selectman Morin said we can't give any

direction to the committee and where we're going to go. We have to have an idea of what we're spending on the park and to tell you the truth, I'd like to know what we spent from the beginning to today to see where exactly we're at with all the projects. Considering what you were saying Chairman Luszey that the town has put a huge amount of money into it. We need to see where we're actually at.

Selectman McGrath thought I provided you a copy of this. This is a report that Kathy Carpentier prepared at my request and its inception to date costs. I don't have the date of it. This is several months ago. At that time it was \$1,369,623 that had been spent. That doesn't include some of the activities that have happened since that time. It keeps escalating up. Kevin's time that he's spent on the park in the last few months, that's not included in this report but that's where we were several months ago. You might as well say \$1.4 million. Selectman Morin asked if that included the train station. Selectman McGrath said yes it does.

Just to speak to that a little bit, Jim Barnes said some of those sources of funds like the playground equipment came from recreation impact from developers. So not all of that many has come directly from property taxes. Chairman Luszey agreed. Mr. Barnes said it has been expended and that is correct but not all of that is coming from the taxpayers. Chairman Luszey said part of what people miss is now that the playground is there, there's an obligation on our part to maintain it so when things break we're fixing it. We're expending labor and material time. We just replaced all of the chips there this year. That's the point. We're doing a fantastic job in building out this park but what's being kind of overlooked is there's an ongoing operational aspect of it that we're not talking about.

Jim Barnes asked to read this one paragraph. This is from the original master plan. It says, "One of the most important issues that must be addressed as Benson's project evolves is that a planning and implementing action to expand Hudson's capability to manage and maintain existing and future parks, recreation facilities and open spaces. This action would require establishment of an adequately staffed and equipped Parks and Recreation Department." I think there are two other references to the same topic in this. So it was foreseen 15 years ago that we do need to get to that point. Once we've got this established, now we have to put it into steady state mode.

Chairman Luszey said part of what we're trying to get to tonight is are we there and if we're not there, how much more do we got to do because that will drive us in the budget discussions which start in 60 days with this gentleman.

Selectman Coutu stated one thing I don't like is misinformation. To throw out a number that it's cost \$1 million that is not an accurate depiction of what has taken place. The million dollars is being asserted or certainly implied that that's how much the town has put into Benson Park thus far. A lot of that money including the train station came from federal monies. A lot of the work that Mr. Burns has done in terms of digging trenches for the utilities should have been reimbursed to him from the funds that were approved by the voters. They're the ones who approve the monies. Granted some of the costs were incurred by the town at the direction of the Board of Selectmen but the bulk of the costs were either federally funded or funded through the voters. The voters gave us approval to spend that money. I just don't what the voters to think out there that the Town of Hudson just haphazardly took \$1 million out of our budget which we don't have to dedicate to Benson Park. That's not true and that's not the real picture. Mr. Burns attested this evening that he doesn't have all the facts and figures and numbers. I don't know where that document came from. I never saw that document. You said it came from...

Selectman McGrath noted you certainly did. You got it from Kathy Carpentier.

Selectman Coutu indicated I don't have it. I did not receive it. So you can say what you wish. I know what I get and I know what I don't get. I just don't like the fact that a number is being throw out. There is an audience out there and they're sitting back there thinking we've spent over \$1 million of town resources on Benson Park when in fact half of that money was the train station restoration and that was federal money. I would like to ask if I might a couple of questions based on what I heard this evening. One of the things that we're committed to as it regards to the deed is that certain buildings have been identified as historical in nature and we have an obligation to maintain those buildings at a minimum the level that we acquire them. One of the buildings that's never mention and could be extremely costly at any given time in the near future - I hope not - is the Hazelton Barn. The Hazelton Barn presently has one corner of the building that is about to collapse. It would cost thousands upon thousands of dollars to restore that corner of that building.

There's been no plan for the Hazelton Barn. There are no funds available to return that building to its original state which is an uncollapsed corner. Has the Benson Park Committee given any thought to the possibility of severe stress damage to the Hazelton Barn and if so what are the plans to restore it?

Jim Barnes stated the Benson Park Committee has paid no attention to that building from the beginning. That was specifically taken out of our responsibilities by a previous selectman. Chairman Luszey asked by a selectman or by the Board. Mr. Barnes was assuming it was by the Board. We have not done anything with that building.

Selectman Coutu knew that. It is a historical building and we have an obligation to that building. Everything else is foreshadowing the possibility that we could have an extremely expensive repair to the Hazelton Barn in order to bring it back to its original state which would be its secure but it's about to collapse. That's the way we received it but if it that corner were to collapse and part of the structure were to deteriorate with it, then we're going to have the expense of having to restore that barn unless we can go to Concord and seek relief of some sort.

One of the questions that Selectman Coutu posed almost immediately upon your presentation Mr. Barnes was the office building like you I consider it a pet project. I think there's been a lot of talk about its future use. Then I heard you later in your presentation talk about preferences. You used the terminology "preferences" so I would assume at this point a specific purpose has not been identified. We've talked about using it as a caretaker's home. We've talked about using it as part of the building for allowing nonprofit organizations to come in and sell snacks which would compete with the Friends of Bensons. I would like to avoid that competition if at all possible because I certainly support the avenue which the Friends of Benson's have taken. They've done an outstanding job there. I'll drop the office building because I know there is still work to be done there and that eventually you'll come up with a preference and I'm sure you'll bring it to the Board's attention unless it is something that doesn't require funding from the town. There's no need for us to hear about it.

Jim Barnes said one of the options for use of that building would be as an office. If there is town staff in the park on a regular basis maintaining it that could be space for them to be out of the weather, to have some of their work tools or materials there, and things like that. That is an option as well.

To the Friends of Benson's, Selectman Coutu stated you mentioned that the only people at the park on the weekend are the Friends of Benson people. Am I to understand that there are no cleanup projects on weekend anymore and that you are the only people there? John Leone apologized and said no sorry if I stated it that way. That's not what I intended. There are lots of volunteers around but they're off working on different things around the park. We are stationary our volunteers at the barn as you can see in the photo on the screen. The doors are open. There's a flag hanging right next to that door. It says we're open and people can come to that one spot. If Dick is out working on a trail for example to pick on him, they don't even know that Dick is involved except for that he happens to be out walking on a trail and maybe someone asks him a question along the way. Because of the central location of the barn and the fact that we're there with the doors open, I think that was my intent is that like or not we've become sort of the welcome center. Selectman Coutu noted there are other volunteers. To me Dick Empey - I think everybody knows Dick Empey and when he's in the park, he's a natural attraction that people went to him for direction and purpose.

Selectman Coutu stated one of the things I've noticed and was briefly mentioned during the presentation is it all melds together. The Chairman mentioned things about have we reached a point of saturation. He didn't use that term but that's what the express intent was. If so, has the Benson Park Committee given any thought to disallowing the use of the park on weekends - Saturdays and Sundays are the two days I'm specifying for the purpose of private outings. I bring that to you attention is by allowing all of these outings on Saturday and Sunday to occur with our permission which was authorized to the Road Agent to take control, wouldn't it be best that we consider not allowing outings on weekends so that the general public can have access to our park as opposed to preferential groups? Jim Barnes said we haven't really talked about. It's something that we could take a look at and see what you wanted to do. Quite frankly things like weddings that happen in the park and so on, those are typically on weekends anyway I would guess and not during the week. Selectman Coutu noted it takes up space for the general public.

Selectman Coutu indicated this will be my last question. I think what you've been trying to - and when I say "you" I mean the Benson Park Committee. Your objective has been to try to get some clarification from the

Board of Selectmen as to where we want to go. The Board of Selectmen is now asking you where would you like to go. Then together I think we need to reach some sort of a consensus. Yes there is a master plan. I have a copy of the original master plan at home. I'm sorry I didn't bring it this evening. I didn't think we'd get into an extensive discussion about that plan because as I reread it the past couple of weeks I found that it is quite outdated. Cost estimates are not even close. Some of the work that's identified that needed to be done - most of it is done - but like a lot of master plans there is no end goal. I think we need to arrive at an end goal because I think we have reached a saturation because we're restricted in terms of what we can allocate for parking. I think Mr. Burns will tell all of us if we were to ask him directly that there's certain amounts of land adjacent to existing parking lot that we cannot use. They're controlled by the State. They're used for mediation by the State and in the event that they need land to mediate a project somewhere else in the State I'm sure they would like to have access to the land. If we were to hot top it and extend our parking lot come in and tear it up and they'll take it anyway. That's the agreement we reached with them is that they would have land for mediation and unfortunately for us it's at the base of that hill. That's where it begins. I'd like to think that at the end of this that you walk away and we walk away for an angle and then from the end goal we can work backwards to arrive at a new master plan. I think that's what your committee and if I'm mistaken please tell me so, you would like to redesign a new master plan based on what we know today and where we're at today.

Jim Barnes said I didn't know that we necessarily wanted to do that. The request from the Board of Selectmen in June to our committee was to start taking a look at a new master plan. That's certainly something that we can do and it's certainly something that should be feasible. It will take some time but it's certainly something that can be done.

Just briefly to Selectman Morin's question, Kevin Burns said maybe I misunderstood you. You were looking for dollars and cents on how much we spend on a weekly basis, a monthly basis. Selectman Morin said you've got to have an idea what you're spending with your manpower. I apologize for hitting you up. I should have gotten a hold of you but it just came to me here. Mr. Burns said I could give you an accurate figure in an hour tomorrow morning but right now I can't. Going forward, I know this is a big question, if the park stays in its current configuration I don't anticipate the need for additional full time staff. If things change within the park that require more maintenance, then that would require more staff be it seasonal, temporary. If the park were to remain as it currently is today with the recent additions we've made, I don't anticipate asking for full time staff in the next budget.

Chairman Luszey indicated it gets back to Selectman Coutu's comment and I would add to it. It gets right to Mr. Burns and that is a new master plan and what we were talking about at our last Board of Selectmen's meeting is what that end state vision is. In your original master plan it talked about a "parks and recreation division". We are actually starting to wrestle with that. We're beginning to form that but without knowing how big that box is, I really don't know what the resources I need in order to support that box. We just can't do it spontaneously. Our cycles is 18 plus months to get an additional head count and to do things because we have to go to the voters and all that. It really would help us if we knew what that end state was so we can start prepping the voters not only for next year but the few years after that and saying this is what it's going to take to run that part on an ongoing basis at this point.

Selectman McGrath had a couple of questions for Mr. Empey. You mentioned you have someone that's willing to do some renovations to the interior of the train station as well as the office building. What would the purpose of that be? If it's not going to be utilized for anything specific, what is the point? Dick Empey said there were a couple of possible usages mentioned in Mr. Barnes' overview of what was going on. The man who was working on this is present tonight. I think that it deserves a fair chance. As I said if it dries up and the funding goes away, it's not going to get built. If we receive the funding through grant money, through donations, whatever, it gets built. It gets used for a museum of the railroad empire that was once in Hudson which is a little meager and something in that neighborhood. There's been mentions of meetings of a model railroad club maybe. There's been other possibilities. This is all being researched. It's being looked into. We don't have the final answers today. If this is free to the town, the least we should do is support the investigation of it and see what we come up with. Nobody has voted to say yes. Nobody has voted to say no. Let's see what this proposal develops into and then we have the opportunity to say this looks great. No we don't want this. The bottom line is we can still put a padlock on the door if the funding goes away.

Selectman McGrath said you talked about the train station but what about the office building. You didn't talk about that. Dick Empey said the office building I myself I don't have a good answer for it. While I have the floor here I'd like to take a minute or two and go over a couple of things we've discussed here. Let's go back to your \$1.4 million. As Mr. Coutu said 425 of that was federal grant money for the train station. That leaves an expense of 975. Take away the playground that leaves us at 875. We got a \$98,000 warrant article for the utility project.

Chairman Luszey said understand what the statement was. It's not what the taxpayers may have appropriated. It's what has been spent in the park. The \$1 million plus is an accurate figure. How and where the monies came from might be subject for a whole different discussion. We spent over \$1 million in that park. Selectman McGrath noted \$1.4 million. Chairman Luszey said all that's meant to say. What that implies is there is now an obligation on the taxpayer to appropriate money to maintain it at the level that we built it to. That's part of the discussion.

Dick Empey said I'm getting that if you allow me to finish here.

Selectman McGrath interrupted and said I had the floor. I seeded to Selectman Coutu because he had his hand up first. I've waited to ask my questions. I asked you too and I have something to say about the inception to date costs before you go on and then you can debate all you like about this. What I've read, what I have with me I brought it and each and member of this Board received this report and it came from Kathy Carpentier our Finance Director. You can shake your head Mr. Coutu but that's...Selectman Coutu stated don't say I got something I didn't get. Selectman McGrath said it was in your packet. In any event through October 13, 2016, that was the inception to date cost that was spent at Benson Park - \$1.4 million. Now that doesn't include as Selectman Luszey has just said any funding that we received. Some of the impact fees are spelled out here but there are other grants that I don't think she included in this. It's what was spent on Benson Park from the very beginning until October of last year. Now from October until this point, we don't have what was spent. She's going to have to update this. This is going to be a living document so that anything that is spent on Benson's Park is going to be included in this so that we'll be able to have a handle on exactly what we're spending for this park. It's a snapshot in time. As of October of last year, that was the amount of money that was spent. She has it all listed on each of the projects that was spent. I'm looking at this as it's a piece of information that everybody should have. Everybody should understand and it's a living document just as the master plan is a living document.

That was a question Jim that Selectman McGrath said I had for you the master plan was that adopted by just the Benson Park Committee? Was it adopted by the Board of Selectmen as well at that time? Jim Barnes explained the original master plan was from 2002. I believe it was adopted by the original Benson's Committee and presented to the Board of Selectmen. My recollection is that it was adopted by the Planning Board as part of the town's master plan. Selectman McGrath didn't remember that but I might not have been there at that time. Jim Barnes indicated I was looking through some of my records and I could not find it. That is my recollection. Somewhere around 2004 it was before the Planning Board. Selectman McGrath said the master plan just like the town's master plan its ideas or goals that you hope to achieve but it doesn't mean that you're going to reach all those goals. Some of them you do. Some of them you change. It's a document that's malleable. It changes. Coming up with a new or revised master plan I think is a good idea for the time that we're looking at now and going forward. Forgetting what you had in the past and what you had in there because obviously whatever it was that you didn't work on or didn't adopt it wasn't important. Mr. Barnes indicated some of it doesn't apply.

Paula Hubert asked on going forward with the new master plan should we incorporate Hazelton Barn in that because that was brought up. Should we incorporate that with our new master plan? Chairman Luszey believed it needs to be addressed then. It's part of the deed, the whole gig. Ms. Hubert noted there's a lot of money involved in that. Chairman Luszey said that's been the debate. That gets to what talking to Mr. Empey about is what does it mean because it says we have to maintain at the current state. If you improve it, you're then obligated to maintain it at that new state. I don't know if anyone from the town has had the conversations with the DOT and the historical group up there that says if we've done something what is our obligation? Now that we've got this train station and the envelope of it is all maintained, my understanding is it's that envelope we now have to maintain. We don't need to go inside but we just need to maintain that outside now.

Paula Hubert asked in our new master plan we should incorporate that. Is that what you're telling us that we should do that? Chairman Luszey believed the master plan should encompass the whole 168 acres.

Selectman McGrath said it's a mandatory obligation on the part of the town. It should be included. Anything that we're obligated to do should be included in your master plan. The master plan is designed, and Jim correct me. You and I worked on I don't know how many master plans over the years. It's kind of like a wish list. You get together and you come up with ideas of what you hoped to include or what you hoped that the park is going to include as amenities. It doesn't mean that it's going to happen as evidenced by the master plan that you're working to now. Its goals that you hope to achieve. Do you agree?

Paula Hubert said I totally agree with Selectman Coutu on the outings on the weekend. My point is or I try to understand how can we implement that because some people just go in there and have birthday parties, baby showers. How do you stop that? Does anyone have any ideas on how to do that?

Selectman Routsis disagreed with it because there are certain things that are done in there for the community like the last cast fishing. That's done on a weekend. If you take that away, that goes away. Paula Hubert said that would be a community. Selectman Routsis said it's not held by the town so it's something that still takes out the space for other people. It's still an outing that's held in the town. Ms. Hubert asked couldn't we have some kind of document stating what could be done there and what couldn't be done there? Every weekend you could have a baby shower this week, a birthday party next weekend. How many times a year do we do the community programs?

Selectman Morin disagreed with cutting back on the weekends too. This is a park. We're thinking this is some huge I don't know what to call it. It is a park. Nashua has Greeley Park. They don't have these problems. Some of these problems we're making on our own here. We really are. It's kind of crazy. If we do regulate what goes on, that means we're going to have to hire people to enforce that. So there's going to be a cost. I don't understand. We just need to take this as a park, get a plan, and move forward, and be done with it, and move forward with what we all decided on to do. This is a park people and not a Taj Mahal or something. I get it. The community is very proud of the park and this committee and other committees have done an outstanding job to bring it where it's at. It is still a park. We just need to decide how much of a park we're going to make it. All this banter around, we're not getting anywhere. We just need to make a decision where the committees need to go, and have them come back to the board, and let the board make a decision and move on.

John Leone commented on the suggestion on the groups on the weekend. For the Friends of Benson Park from our standpoint, we've hosted a number of events. I call them events not private functions because they're private functions. We're trying to do something for the community. Some of the examples I showed concerts and so on. While we as a private entity are arranging it and sponsoring it, it's open to the public. Anyone can come and enjoy it. Same thing with Last Cast Fishing absolutely. That's not a private function. It's open to anyone. Selectman Routsis noted they cap it so it's private. There's only a certain amount of kids available because they only have a certain amount of funding. Mr. Leone said I haven't seen them turn anyone away yet but sure. I guess that could happen.

A couple of things. Dick Empey stated on your comment that if we upgrade these building we must maintain them. That is absolutely not true. I have the deed right here and it says an inspection was made on the day that we bought this park of the condition of those buildings. It says in the deed that we are obligated to maintain those buildings at the same level that they were at on the day that we bought the park. So if we improve a building, we are not increasing our obligation to maintain to the highest state.

Chairman Luszey differed from a couple of people that I talked to in Concord. That's why we're having these conversations because the intentions are good but I think we need to dot the Is and cross the Ts to make sure. You talk about it's free. If it's totally free to upgrade the inside, my understanding is you're going to have to hire an engineer to be on site when you're making those changes. You're have to have an archeologist on site while you're doing the changes. Are you including the cost of those because the town incurred those costs? Mr. Empey noted that was not entirely true. We discussed this with DHR yesterday. We don't necessarily have to have an engineer on site. Chairman Luszey said this is down in the quagmires of what we're trying to get to. We're almost out of time here. That's part of the master plan type of document what we want to do. It should be in there. It should be approved by the committees and then it should be adopted by the Board of Selectmen. It shouldn't just happen because someone found a grant somewhere. It could be exposed in the town with some liabilities. Whether you and I agree or disagree to that, that's another point. I believe there's a process that needs to take place to make sure the committees, and the

board, and more importantly the taxpayers are on board as to what we're doing. That's the purpose of this meeting to make sure that we produce a document that will get out there and will be debated during the budgeting process so that the folks that are flipping the bill ultimately are okay with it. That's what I'm trying to get to.

Chairman Luszey said there was a statement that you made about the being quasi unofficial face to the park and one stop shopping. I don't think that's a bad thing because there does need to be some place somebody goes to and we've talked about what it would take to put a person in the park full time and all that. It sounds almost like we're 90 percent there. If you're agreeable, I'd like to see some type of an agreement within the master plan on how that works out. How that doesn't become the quasi but maybe the official entry point if you will for visitors that if they got a question. Part of some of the conversations that we've had at the Board of Selectmen is how does this guy get his marching orders. Who can request the services of Kevin and it can't be everybody. Part of that master plan should start talking about how that department of parks and recreation maybe organized but more importantly operationalize without necessarily having 100 people it in if you get my point. How do we build those relationships and work that so that there is a cross functional communications and we know how that works so that we're not stepping on each other when we're trying to get things done. I don't know how the rest of the board feels about that one.

John Leone had a response back to the comment on being the official visitor center. No objection from my standpoint except for folks to be aware that because we're volunteer driven organization, we aren't open all the hours the park is open. Not 90 percent, not 50 percent, not probably 20 or 30 percent. I think we'd general be willing to continue to provide that service if you will to the town and to the visitors we can't commit people to that because they're volunteers. We can't extend the hours to the point where we're open all the hours the park is open. So I want to make sure that's clear.

Chairman Luszey noted I got that but when you're thinking about the master plan how do you go from all of this part time big sections of time that volunteers are missing to how do you set up a possible volunteer schedule between all the different parties so that there is somebody there during the waking of the park to be that official interface for the town. I work for many volunteer organizations so we sign up for time slots to make sure someone is at a desk. Again that's my point about we're at a point where we need to operationalize a parks and recreation division but we can't afford to go and hire a bunch of full time staff to do that. So how do we do that?

Jim Barnes said you're asking for some way of organizing a group of volunteers to be in the park on a regular basis 8 to 5, 9 to 5, whatever when the park is open to be available for answering questions...Chairman Luszey stated more importantly within that plan I think there needs to be some collaboration between these three departments right now on how that happens. The end result of it is someone is going to make a request that that is going to get to Kevin's desk and he's going to need to go and deploy somebody to go do something. Hopefully it comes from a central point. It can't come from 100 different people because that is an issue right now. We have many chiefs running around the park asking for Kevin to do things and we need to fix that. I think during the master planning process we can help with that.

Selectman McGrath suggested maybe there could be a sign posted on the door if there's not going to be anyone utilizing the building. For any kind of lost and found items, things of that nature that you could post a number that if you've lost an item you can call this item and we'll endeavor to get back to you and let you know whether or not we've found it. That way you're not tied to having somebody there all the time but at least there's a point of contact and it's posted. It might be just a poster of some sort. I don't know. It's an idea.

Selectman Coutu said one of the things that I'm sure you've discovered you and I speak to the committees and the committee as a whole. Is there a lot of resources out there and finding them is the problem. I'm going to give you a suggestion only because our park is considered at the same level as any State park in the State of New Hampshire. As such, you are entitled to a host. Those of you who go camping, I having been a former police officer and having done weekend details on State owned land for rentals for campers, there is always a host on site. The host is allowed to bring in a trailer on State land and park it. Now that we're going to have utilities, that would make that possible. The host is usually a couple. We have a couple working at Sam's Club who travel all over the country in the summertime. They go to different State Parks.

The volunteer their time so that they get that spot there. What they do is if there's functions, they check the people in. They make sure that it is quiet at night. They make sure that facilities are taken care of. They're volunteers. All they're looking for is a camp site for the summer. So we may qualify for that. So there's an avenue for us to explore and I just wanted to throw that out there. There's all kinds of these grants and things that are available to the parks. We can also apply through the State of New Hampshire for federal monies that are available for State Parks. Where we have been designated a State Park, we come under the same rules as a State Park even though it is town owned. We qualify for a lot of that money. I've had people ask me why we're not applying for the money. Dick as you know cuz we worked on it, we were able to pick up trail grant monies. That is all contingent upon how much the federal government allocates to the State and they try to designate certain communities equally proportionately. We did pretty well the first couple of years. We haven't applied for anymore because you didn't feel there was a need and that's fine. We still can apply for more and there's been somewhat of a drying out of some of that money. There are a lot of federal grants that come down through the State that we can apply for that no one is researching or looking into and we should. I wish I had the time to do it. I'd gladly do it. There's lots of money out there. We just have to go get it and have somebody that can put a grant together, send it in. It's not difficult. Usually those agencies as you know Dick that provide this money are more than willing to sit down and help you write the grant themselves. The State helped us on the trails grant. We picked up \$20,000 - \$10,000 twice.

Dick Empey stated \$31,000 and of that \$31,000 we had a 20 or 25 percent match from the town which they allowed us to use labor hours. I actually worked with Gary Webster on that. In kind contribution was considered...Dick Empey said the Trails Committee hours met the town's obligation for their portion of that \$31,000 grant.

Selectman Coutu said there are fund available and we can start looking at that. I know Benson Park Committee doesn't have a professional grant writer nor the time any more than the rest of us do. We're all volunteers - well we're not really but we're elected and paid but we're really not volunteers. I wouldn't expect that any one of you should write grants but the Engineering Department and I'm sure people in house would assist with researching that kind of - we're looking for monies that are readily available. If we don't get it, some other community is going to get it. We have a beautiful park and we should maintain it as best we can.

Jeremy Griffus said I can only speak for myself and not the committee but I was expecting coming here tonight to get some guidance and direction. I don't know if I feel any better now than when I did at the beginning of the meeting. One thing that's consistently being not said, I'm not going to quote anybody, but we don't want to spend more money. Take advantage of the volunteers. One thing I think that's most people on this committee can attest to is that the volunteers have reached their max. It's come to the point where the town does need to maintain the park and be proud of the park that exists in the town. Invest in the park. This is not a Greeley Park. You won't find Greeley Park in the top 5, the top 10 of New Hampshire. You will certainly find Benson Park. The guidance and direction that I was expecting to find, and again this is just me, is do you support public restrooms? Do you not? Do we continue with the port-a-potties? We've discussed buildings and I understand master plan is important. Again it's just a guideline and those can be modified and changed. There's been many master plans and nothing set in stone. In order for the Benson Park Committee to come up with a master plan, I think we need some guidance.

Chairman Luszey thought you got the guidance. That's where we're struggling. You talk about the permanent restrooms. What's that going to cost? How much money do you want the Board of Selectmen to put on a warrant article to ask the voters to create permanent restrooms including the first year operation? You answer that and you'll get your answer.

Selectman Morin said the same thing as Chairman Luszey. If you guys want us to give you direction tonight, we can pretty much answer a lot of your questions and why we have a committee if we're going to make all the decisions. One of my questions at the end was to make sure that the committee understands where we're going with this because we talked about a lot. If the committee doesn't feel we support them, I don't think we ever said we don't support you. We just don't know where you want to go and that's why we want you to redo a master plan. That's where I'm going. If you want us to make a decision, I'm sure we could pretty quick and you may not like what we make until we get some information. That's why we're asking for it because you people are the ones that know the park a lot better than us. A comment was made to me the other day that the Selectmen don't know what's going on in the park. They don't spend a lot of time in

there. Well I do but I understand why the comment was said. We have you two committees to bring us that information so we do understand what's going on in the park. We got to make sure you understand what you want before we can make a decision.

Dick Empey told Mr. Luszey let's get down to the nitty gritty here. The Board of Selectmen said that they want the cost of construction of the restrooms. You want the cost of utilities to the restroom. They want the cost of first year operation, and they want the cost of supplies, and they want the cost of staffing. Chairman Luszey said yes. No different than any other proposal that anybody would go to any approving organizational department head to say this is what I would like to do boss do you approve it?

Mr. Empey said you know where I'm going to go with this because I talked to you. Chairman Luszey agreed and like I told you Mr. Empey is you can talk to people and get estimates on what that is because that's what it is. It's an estimate. You don't need to be granting easements to anything or anywhere. That's not part of that. The cost of laying a piece of pipe is. The cost of putting people there to maintain it is. The cost running water, and sewer, and renovating the building is. That's what we're looking for. Give us that total cost just like we did the senior center where we had to include the first year's operational costs. There was an estimate and that's what got approved and that's where you start.

The cost of maintenance. Dick Empey indicated it's going to require a town employee. Chairman Luszey said it may or may not. See you're into an area I'm not going to discuss because I don't know what that is. You tell us what it is and the Board will take that and churn it up and put it in the budget and go in front of the voters. Mr. Empey asked how else would you maintain it if it wasn't a town employee? Chairman Luszey said we may have employees and that's a discussion that's not here. Mr. Empey's point is you sat here and you said you don't want us going to town employees and obligating them to come up with facts and figures for us. If I have to have a town employee to maintain this restroom and yet I don't have somebody in the town that I can go to and say what is it going to cost to provide this employee, how do I come up with an estimate? If I don't know...Chairman Luszey thought seriously you and I should have a conversation off line because there is ways one estimates the costs of labor and materials for any project. That's where that will stop.

Jim Barnes asked to clarify something here. Let's stay on the restroom facility. If it is there existing in the park, the question is what is the cost for servicing and cleaning it on a daily basis. If it takes two hours of some grade level is the assumption, we've got wages and benefits and that would be the cost for that. Chairman Luszey said that would be the estimated cost to do that and use X number of rolls of toilet paper, paper towels, and hand cleaner, and all of that stuff, and lights and electricity.

One of the things Jim Barnes said we have to do is get the utilities to the building. So for water and sewer is it okay if we ask Kevin for an estimate on what it would take to extend those lines? Chairman Luszey said no. You're estimate should be if we have to contract all of those services. We cannot say Kevin you're going to stop paving two roads next year to do that work. We can't commit to that. We don't know what the weather is going to bring to us. The true cost of that project is what it takes for us the town to go out and contract. It's no different than the fire station. It's all contracted services to build a fire station. So how much is it going to cost us to hire a general contractor to come in, lay the lines, hook them up, and renovate a building? Once you get that, then we can have the discussions about how we might reduce costs if we're serious about doing it. That gives us the Board of Selectman and the voters a true picture of what it would cost to do that work.

Selectman McGrath asked to jump in and maybe I can give you a little bit of guidance. I used to do proposals for - I worked for BAE for a number of years and I worked in the Finance Department and did proposals for not laying pipe, not doing any of what we're talking about here but it was something similar where you'd find out for a job like putting bathrooms in. You know that you have to upgrade the facility, the interior of the building so you need toilets - how many, sinks, and all of that. You lay out an outline of what's going to be needed to create that building. How many have contacted a contractor to determine how many feet of pipes are going to need to be brought in? What's going to be needed to hook it up? Somebody outside of Kevin - and outside contractor. Have them so you write it all out so that you've got an outline of what the job actually is and what's going to be needed to create this area. Then you can get a loaded cost of having one person maintain it. You get an estimate of what the labor is. You figure out if its two hours a day, five days a week, that's 10 hours times whatever the labor cost is that would include benefits, wages, and that gets added to your proposal. A contractor can help you design that and then you can put out a bid request to

get estimates for costs. You can contact a number of contractors saying this is what we're looking at to do. Can you give us an estimate and spell out what your estimate is, what it contains. Then you can go and you can look at it and says well this guy gave me a cost of \$10,000 to do it. This guy gave me a cost of \$20,000. What's the difference between the two bids is it labor cost, is it material cost, is it just they've loaded their prices because they really don't want the job or they're hoping that you're going to hire them at the higher cost. It's getting information like that and you can get it from different contractors. They'll be able to spell out to you exactly what you're going to need. That can help you determine some costs that you can bring to the Selectmen and then they can go out to bid. We can go out to bid and get true estimates of what it's going to cost and whether or not the voters would want to go with that.

From listening to this, Dick Empey said apparently the Board of Selectmen doesn't realize what we've already done. The restroom facility itself we have gone to contractors, told them what our needs are, and they've come back with an estimate - not a contract - but an estimate of what it will cost us. We've gone several different ways. We've talked to three different contractors to get this number. This is why the question is where does the Board of Selectmen want to go because we've done that preliminary work on the building. Now our question to you is do you have a taste for continuing with this? We realize...

Chairman Luszey asked Mr. Empey to hold on. We've seen that presentation and it isn't fully baked. We asked Mr. Barnes to go off and finish it. What it was was to renovate the gorilla cage, put a new building up, and...Mr. Barnes indicated there was a standalone prefab building that would be coming in. Chairman Luszey said those were the only costs. There was nothing about what it takes to maintain it. There was nothing about what it's going to take to pull the lines, and the water, and all that. So it's not a full baked plan Sir. So that's what we're asking. That's all.

Jim Barnes asked to jump in. What we had asked at that point is should we go ahead with this, we know there is more work that needs to be done. If we could go ahead with this, it's going to require an investment from the town for staffing and maintenance. If the town has no desire to do this, then there's no point in completing the exercise of getting the total costs. I think that's the quandary we're in right now.

Selectman McGrath said you also need to do a comparison if we went ahead and put in bathrooms and then we had to have maintenance. What that cost is in comparison to having the port-o-potties that are there now and they're maintained by the company that provides them. Which cost is higher? Is it the cost of the port-o-potties that we don't have to hire people to maintain? We're paying a fixed fee for those or does it cost less in the end run to have our own and have our own staffing. So it's doing a cost comparison of those two things. It's frustrating but that's what the voters would expect. They'd expect us to look at what the cost comparisons are and what makes sense to them. Once they go in, that's a fixed cost that they're going to have to do from now until the end of time.

Selectman Morin didn't think anybody here tonight has said we're against it or for it. Dick Empey said that's the problem. Selectman Morin asked to finish. If a department head comes in and I'm going to take the fire station because I know about that the most. The Fire Chief came in with a full plan like the Chairman is asking you guys to do. When he comes in with that, he has no idea if we're going to accept it or we're going to reject it. He has no idea if the townspeople are going to reject it which they have three times or they're going to accept it. He still came in with a full plan because that's what we need to make the correct decision either for or against it. Whether we tell you we're for it now or against it now, it's not going to help you either way. If we were against it, I would hope you would still submit the plan because we can say we're against it and vote 5 to zero but it's still going to go on the warrant or however that works. It's not that we're for or against it, we need the information just like any other budget item for any other department in this has to do. It's no different.

Selectman Coutu thought that this has been somewhat discouraging to me as well as to a lot of you. I've watched your heads weave and bob. It is confusing. You're not getting the direction that I think you expected we would give you. It's discouraging when money is always thrown out there. This is going to cost. This is going to cost. This is going to cost and then you have one Selectman said in the past I'm not going to vote to allocate one more dime to Benson. That's discouraging. I think there's an underlying message and I don't want you to leave here without knowing what the underlying message is. I think that we would all agree and I think that what brought it to mind was just the comments that were just made by Selectman Morin. Obviously we would like to support a direction that you wish to go into. We just want you to do a little more homework to get us there. No one has no abandon the bathroom project. No one has

said we're not going to support a warrant article. I've heard this message loud and clear even though it's been an undertone of the message that they're saying is that we want - I think I'd like to support this just let me know what the hell the total cost package then we can put it out to the voters and let the voters decide.

What do I hear in the field? Selectman Coutu hears in the field from almost everybody that is a regular visitor of Bensons and the bulk of them are citizens of Hudson. When are you going to put permanent bathrooms at Benson Park? I don't think there's going to be a problem with the ballot question. I don't care what the cost is. I think they want permanent toilets. I don't like going into a portable toilet. I expect it when I go to some of the shows on fairgrounds but I don't expect it when I go to a permanent park. I expect there should be bathroom facilities. I think that the direction that this Board should give you is probably a little clearer than what's been presented here this evening. I'd like to see you come up with some sort of a master plan with a direction, where the end game is going to take us, what's it going to cost from point A to point B to get there, and how long is the project going to be? As far as our immediate needs, I think our immediate needs are to continue the utility project and to put restrooms in the park. I support it 100 percent. That's where I stand. I don't think I can make myself any clearer. I would just like to have the final numbers and I'd be a happy camper. I don't care if it comes in at half a million or \$200,000. Let the voters decide but let's have the accurate numbers so we can prepare a ballot question. We have until December for you to come in on a ballot question. We can get that I'm sure before December and let's go with it.

If you have any other side projects, Selectman Coutu noted this gentleman I'm sure he's sitting here and expects to make a presentation. I don't expect him to make a presentation here this evening. That's not what this is all about. The presentation should be made to the Benson Park Committee. The Benson Park Committee should either agree that this is something that should be considered and the Benson Park Committee should come to the Board of Selectmen and say hey we have a great idea. This guy is going to do this, that, and the other thing and he's going to do all the work for nothing. If we don't like it, just padlock it. I agree with you. If we don't like it, we'll just padlock it in the end. I would hope that if he's going to invest a lot of time, effort, and money into redoing the train station that we will find a use for it. You'll come up with a plan for its usage. I don't want him to feel that we've neglected him. I just don't think it's appropriate to add to this conversation at this time. Your conversation should be held with the Benson Park Committee. They are our recommending authority.

Just to clarify that last point, Jim Barnes said we invited him to come in and observe. There was not intent to have a presentation tonight. Selectman Coutu apologized. Mr. Barnes said he's listening and observing. Selectman Coutu welcomed you listening to him and making a recommendation to us. Jim Barnes said if we had any specific questions, he would be able to answer them. He wasn't preparing anything for tonight.

Selectman Coutu said at least I clarify where I stand. If the other members of the Board want to say where they stand, fine. I just say give us the numbers, let's put it on the ballot, and let the voters decide. The voters overwhelmingly decided last year even though it was not mandatory that they don't want us to charge a fee and I've heard a lot of people tell me they were glad that that passed. They speak loud and clear when it comes to Benson Park. I have no fear about putting any ballot question relative to Benson Park on the ballot.

Selectman Morin said I'll support the bathrooms too. I went over to Nashua to see how they're operating what again. I don't know but I thought in June we were pretty clear of what we expected the committee to do and come back. I know we've had discussion in the Benson Committee meetings what we were supposed to be doing. It was pretty clear tonight. There's a process that we have to follow and it has to be done. As Selectman Coutu, I will support it from the beginning but we just got to do it the right way. We can't make the decision.

Chairman Luszey found it interesting we went from talking about a master plan to bathrooms. I really do. To me this is not a bathroom discussion. It's a master plan. Part of the master plan is the bathrooms.

Correct me if I'm wrong. Selectman Morin said in June we told the committee and this is how the committee understood it to move forward with the bathrooms so they're looking for clarification. I understand where they're coming from. They are working on a master plan.

Chairman Luszey wasn't sure how clearer we can get and that is we want a total cost of the total project. Selectman Morin thought they understand that now. Chairman Luszey wasn't sure we can add much more. There's other members. If you want to add anything to the conversation.

Selectman Morin asked do we understand what we're looking for. Seriously. Paula Hubert believed we do. They want the cost of what it's going to cost us for the building itself. You want what it's going to cost us to maintain it and what it's going to cost to bring the sewerage in. So we need to get all that together and present that to you. Am I correct? Chairman Luszey said just one element of a master plan. Ms. Hubert agreed but that's just to get the bathrooms going. We need to present that now and then we need to make the master plan which has to involve the Hazelton Barn which it doesn't at the moment. Am I correct on that too? Chairman Luszey believed it needs to include the Hazelton Barn, it needs to include a partnership with the Friends of Benson and also close collaboration with the Highway Department on how the operational maintenance of Benson takes place. Right now, there's a lot of chiefs out there requesting services from Kevin. Paula Hubert said and anything else that we would like to put for the future into the park if that's what we wanted to do. We present that too, correct? Chairman Luszey agreed.

Dick Empey told Ted you've made a comment twice tonight and you just made it. There's a lot of chiefs going to Kevin asking him and telling him what to do things. I'd like to know what the gist of that is because I'll tell you there's only two people I know of that talk to Kevin. If one of them is...Chairman Luszey said Dick let's not go down the rat hole because you keep dragging us down there. Mr. Empey noted you're the one that brought it up twice okay and if there's a problem, I want to know about it because I'm one of the two. Chairman Luszey was telling Mr. Empey what this man tells me all right. We're not going to go down there. What I'm saying is that we need to clarify that. That's all I'm asking for to happen.

Mr. Empey asked for clarification. I'd like to have it clarified right now. Is there a problem? Yes or no? Chairman Luszey said there is a perceived problem. Dick asked a perceived problem by who? Chairman Luszey said Highway. Right up front, Mr. Empey asked Kevin am I a problem to you yes or no? Kevin Burns said no. Mr. Empey said okay so who's the problem. Chairman Luszey said there is. Mr. Empey said maybe we should do this off camera at a later date. I want that rectified because that comment has been made again, and again, and again. Chairman Luszey said you're not the only one that asks him to do things. Mr. Empey wants it cleared up. I want to know where the problem lies and let's correct the problem.

Selectman McGrath asked to make a point please. This discussion should take place upstairs in the office and talk to Kevin and whoever else needs to be there. This is a personnel issue and it really shouldn't be discussed in a public forum. Dick Empey said to let's make an appointment and get it done then. Selectman McGrath indicated you don't need to include me in that.

Selectman Routsis thought and could be wrong. I think the intent of what he was saying though was let's try to find one point person for Kevin. Whether it's you, or you, and it wouldn't be me, have one point person for Kevin so there is not - say there's two of you or say there's three of you, so he's not getting direction from three different people. There is just one person. So the two people would go to you let's say and say hey we see this, this, and this and then you'd be that one sole voice that goes to Kevin. Dick Empey said yes what you're saying is correct. I just think there's a lot of an open window here that isn't clarified to the people that's involved and I'd like it clarified.

Chairman Luszey wasn't innuending anyone here but I have been told that our Highway person is being pulled multiple places from multiple people when it comes to Benson. That's all I'm stating. Who it is, I don't know if it's anyone at this table quite frankly. Mr. Empey asked to solve the problem. Chairman Luszey was trying to do that right and that is to have the three main occupants that have to operate and maintain that part work that out. That's what I'm asking. I don't know...Dick Empey said you seem to be the complainant. Chairman Luszey noted I'm the complainant because I'm running the meeting.

Selectman Routsis asked to move past this.

My name is Jack Madden and I live at 23 Weymouth Court in the Town of Hudson. My question is as a member of the Friends of Benson Park, although not on its governing board, can I ask a question. Chairman Luszey said yes. What's the procedure by which I would request of the town permission to pay \$500 to a third party contractor to have an asbestos survey done in the interior of the train station? Chairman Luszey said off the top of my head, I would say you'd have to work with the Town Engineer. Selectman Coutu thought that was already done. I believe the State did an asbestos...As per the Town Engineer and per Peter Michaud who is the point of contact in the Division of Historic Resources, Mr. Madden said there has not been an asbestos survey done in the interior of the train station. Therefore we could not present to you our

proposed Phase I for selective demolition of the interior. The 1980 apartment walls that were put in. Again as per Peter Michaud, we can't do that until we have a determination if there's any asbestos in the building. I have not dealt with the New Hampshire type of town government so I don't know. I'll go to the Town Engineer. We were going to try to go through the Friends of Benson Park and have them hire the contractor to do it and we pay for it. I did not realize that they have no authority in the inside of the station building like they do in the barn.

Chairman Luszey noted that would actually be you. Jim Barnes said we'll work through the Benson Park Committee. We'll figure it out.

Selectman Morin indicated I'm going to ask the question again to the two Chairmen. Do you understand where we want you to go? Jim Barnes said master plan. John Leone said I want to clarify a point putting on my hat as a Benson Park Committee member and none of the other things that we've had in flight should proceed until that's happened. I think the due diligence a master plan would require is going to take many months. There were a number of things that Mr. Barnes talked about. There were things POs are ready to be signed. There are things that are right on the cusp of being executed that were in flight.

Selectman Morin thought that was clarified in June too. Any of the projects that were ongoing that they were working on you could finish. That was cleared in June. Mr. Leone apologized. I wasn't aware of that. Selectman Routsis believed getting us the information for the bathrooms.

Selectman Morin asked do we understand where we're going and what we need. Chairman Luszey hoped so. To me it's real simple. It is a master plan that outlines what your final vision of that 160 some odd acres which includes the Friends of Benson and the relationship between the two committees and the Highway Department and how that all works so that we're not bumping into each other all the time.

Selectman Routsis thanked everyone for coming and participating for as much or as little as someone else spoke. Hopefully we don't do it again - next week, next month. It was meeting some of you because some of your faces I don't know. I look forward to seeing the new master plan because honestly I haven't looked it through.

Selectman Coutu thought that regardless of what was said this evening, I think that generally speaking the Board of Selectmen in total appreciate all of the hard work and dedication and the commitment that you've made to Benson Park. You have made it a jewel for our town. I'm very proud and I know the Board is also very proud to be able to show off Benson Park. It is a jewel and it's thanks to the volunteers. It's not about the money. It's about the hard labor that was donated to this town by a lot of unselfish people who had a vision and that vision was a park that represents the beauty of Hudson. It takes us back many years a lot of us who grew up going to Benson Park. A lot of us who grew up in the town of Hudson. There's a lot of pleasant memories that are associated with Benson Park. We're not recreating Benson's Wild Animal Farm but we will have a memorable experience when we go to the barn in the future when you finish it. The people will see the beauty of the land and what we can do to conserve that land. That's what this committee has done. That's what the volunteers have done. I say kudos to all of you. Heartfelt gratitude for all that you've done, the commitment that you've made to that park, and please keep up the good work. Thank you.

Chairman Luszey thanked everyone. Have a good night.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Luszey adjourned the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

Recorded by HCTV and transcribed by Donna Graham, Recorder.

Thaddeus Luszey, Chairman

Marilyn McGrath, Vice-Chairman

Roger E. Coutu, Selectman

Angela Routsis, Selectman

David S. Morin, Selectman