

TOWN OF CHATHAM
TOWN BOARD WORKSHOP MEETING
April 7, 2011

On April 7, 2011 a Town of Chatham, Town Board Workshop meeting was held.

PRESENT: Supervisor - Jesse DeGroot, Councilman - Maria Lull,
Councilman - Henry Swartz, Jr., Recreation Director - Shari Franks,
Town Clerk – Beth Anne Rippel and members of the public

ABSENT: Councilman Rohde

Supervisor DeGroot opened the meeting at 6:03 PM. The pledge to the flag was led by Councilman Swartz.

Motion was made at 6:04 PM by Supervisor DeGroot to enter into executive session for the purpose of discussing personnel matters. Councilman Meyn seconded the motion. Motion carried. Motion was made by Supervisor DeGroot to leave executive session at 6:40 PM. Councilman Meyn seconded the motion. Motion carried.

TOPIC – The proposed Discgolf course to be located on Town owned property behind the Town Hall.

Recreation Director, Shari Franks along with members of the DISCAP addressed questions and concerns posed by neighbors and community members. Report as follows;

1.) *How will the plans for disc golf course impact the zoning or adjacent properties?*

Town Board: none

2.) *Is the property being retained by the Town or turned over to DisCap? Will it be part of a long term lease? If so, why has this arrangement been chosen as opposed to affording the group tax abatement incentives to locate and utilize this and/or other vacant property belonging to the Town of Chatham?*

- The property will be retained by the Town
- **Lease? Need to consult with Town Attorney**
- At this time, there is no other “vacant” property owned by the Town that has been considered or is suitable for this project. The property located behind the town hall was deemed suitable for more “passive” types of recreation when the master plan was created for the Town of Chatham Park System.

DISCAP: “The first step in creating a Chatham Disc Golf course is to obtain permission to use the land. If there is other land better suited to a disc golf course we would love to see it.”

3.) *What costs will be incurred by the Town in both construction and upkeep of the course? If the majority of both costs will be covered by DisCap, what is the potential one time and/or annual cost to the Town in terms of supplies, labor, equipment use, etc?*

- A preliminary budget has been provided by DISCAP. In kind support may be needed from the town recreation department for minor work, removal of some fallen limbs or trees/brush.

DISCAP: “The second step will be to hold an introductory tournament as a fund raiser for a local charity. The amount of interest this event generates among which groups of people will help decide the direction of the course.”

4.) *Has the organizational paperwork been researched to determine the short and long term sources of revenue that support DisCap? What guarantee is there to the Town that this*

volunteer organization will be able to continue to maintain the project for the lifetime of the course?

DISCAP: “The third step will be to raise funds. Since DisCap is a 501c3 charity we can accept tax deductible

donations from individuals and businesses. We will also be accepting sponsorships for most of the signs at the course. Not just the sign on every tee, but the other signs & maps at the kiosk that has a map of the course and explains the game.

- We will raise funds in 3 categories: To build the course, for future maintenance, and to establish the Chatham Disc Golf Course as a premium course. If the last category does not get enough funds, it will roll into the annual maintenance fund. If enough money is raised to build the course by this time we will have a good idea of how much interest and who is interested in what kind of disc golf course. Hopefully the benefits of disc golf will be obvious to some existing local organizations like the schools, scouts, 4H, some senior groups, some folks interested in physical activity, and they can help determine the characteristics of the course.
- At that point a SEQR review will be needed and properly undertaken. This will address the issues of about the wetland. Although sharing the name “Golf Course”, a disc golf course can be nothing like a ball golf course. Instead of wide open lawns of golf fairways requiring chemicals, many disc golf courses are heavily wooded “airways” leading up to the “greens” which are small clearings around the basket. They resemble the parks and trails design found at the Chatham Conservancy parks. We will do as little as possible to create the course, seeking naturally occurring airways and greens. The course will be designed to need as little maintenance as possible.”

5.) How have the other courses listed in the organization’s website been maintained financially? What is the current cost per course that is covered by the organization and/or the municipality in which it is located?

DISCAP: “At this time it is proposed that all construction and annual maintenance will be done by DisCap. I have not had time to contact the DisCap Officers to discuss funding history. Here is what we know about each course:

Willow Creek, Bennington VT established 2000. Details unknown. It is in an existing public park.

Hyzer Creek, Providence NY established 2001. Various DisCap members have adopted a hole and do all the maintenance for that hole.

Joralemon Park, Coeymans Hollow, NY established 2006. In an existing town park, no additional costs are incurred by the town. The park has been rescued from off road vehicle abuse and is becoming more of a park again.

Saugerties/Woodstock, KOA, established 2007. Entirely private course created by KOA owners.

Stone Bridge and Caves, established unknown. Entirely private course created by attraction owners.

Central Park, Schenectady, established 2010. In an existing park. So far the city and park patrons have been very happy with the improvements to the park. The city does all maintenance.

Hunter Mountain, established 2011. A public and private combination, there is one 9 hole winter course and 2 18 hole summer courses as part of Hunter Mountain Ski Resort, funded entirely by the ski resort. The Village of Hunter is also building its own 18 hole course to be open year round, funded entirely by the town.

Fortin Park, Oneonta NY plans to open late 2011. Funded by the local Rotary and the Town.

Blatnick Park, Niskayuna, NY proposal accepted by the town. Design and funding under discussion.

Steven Vardin: “As the initiator of this project, I am a very thorough planner. I see lots of possibilities for the course. It will contribute economic benefits to the local businesses. It will save the town money when closing the gravel mine. It could make the town money if the town decides to be part of a local disc golf “store”. It all depends on who will catch disc golf fever,

like I and many others have. We will take our time to make sure the course matches the resources available from the interested public.

I am own and run a unique accounting business that helps people start businesses, fixes bookkeeping systems, does taxes, and business planning. I have much experience leading commercial and charitable projects to success. Stephen Vardin, President Stephen Vardin & Colleague Inc. Bookkeepingwizards.com”

6.) *Is the Town considering this venture to be comparable to a municipal golf course and if so, who will be its manager? Who will be responsible for security at the course, particularly in between dusk and dawn?*

The course will not be as formal and complicated as a municipal golf course. We will not need sprinkler systems, daily maintenance, regular mowing, if any, or a club house. Parking and restroom facilities (ie: portolets) will need to be addressed in overall plan as the project progresses.

Town: Shari Franks, Town of Chatham Recreation Director, will oversee operations of the disc golf course as well as checking on security. Currently, the resident deputies that are patrolling Crellin Park in Chatham on a daily basis, we would expect the same.

7.) *What will be the impact of the construction of the course (tree/brush cutting, soil/sod removal and/or replacement, etc.) and/or any chemical application on the water source/septic systems of nearby homes and/or these wetland areas?*

Town: DISCAP will provide all clearing of brush/trees as needed. Need to consult with Town Attorney to find out any liability issues regarding volunteer labor using chain saws, etc. Precautions will be taken not to cause damage to existing wetlands. There will be no chemical applications for the course site.

Motion was made by Supervisor DeGroodt seconded by Councilman Meyn and carried to adjourn at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,

Beth Anne Rippel
Town Clerk