

JEL Chess Park Committee Minutes

Thursday May 15, 2025

Present: Joe Diaz (zoom), Bernadette Meade, Meg Mitchell, Margaret Morrissey

1) April minutes were reviewed and approved

2) Updates

- a) Welcome to Meg Mitchell, Bernadette's neighbor, who is interested in helping the committee. Her son plays in the Charlton Middle School Chess Club.
- b) Friends' 501 c update: notification from IRS requested more information to complete application. This was sent and should hear back within 42 days
- c) Bernadette talked with Mr. Coan. The construction documents are completed. He believes that since we are raising all the funds it may not have to go out to bidding. We will meet with the town manager/council to discuss. Updated budget was requested. Mr. Coan stressed we need to raise the monies before proceeding any further.
- d) School Chess Clubs – no new information

3) Fund Raising

- a) Ben and Joe are working on the presentation documents. They also suggested the establishment of a Go Fund Me Account for the project. The group discussed how are we going to collect the donations since currently the town will only accept cash and checks. Meg suggested the need to be able to use Venmo. Can we use the town website? Margaret contacting the town manager / finance manager for clarification.
- b) Despite multiple reach outs to the endorsement list, there has been no response. Bernadette will write letters and mail to the organizations.
- c) The silent donor list was reviewed again. Need to begin approaching them in June.
- d) Bernadette presented an updated addition list of Southbridge donors. Since Sturbridge library is ok with approaching their town businesses there will be a list generated to include them

4) PR

- a) Chess Park Presentation deck was presented to the JEL Board of Trustees. Dick Whitney, a board member discussed the park with the AO Museum Director Debbie Schiro (also a member of the SBC). Bernadette met with her and did the presentation. She thought the project had good merit and a positive for the Southbridge community. Ms. Schiro raised important questions, namely, how do we compete with the other fund-raising campaigns in the community and what if we do not reach our goal monies?

5) Next Steps

- a) Complete the presentation materials, including marketing pieces for the community awareness
- b) Finalize the silent donor list and the other donor lists
- c) Schedule silent donor meetings
- d) Define the process of collecting donations to include more options than cash or check

6) Next Meeting: due to the closure of the library on June 19th – next meeting THURSDAY JUNE 26, 2025