

Marion Betts

From: Sharon Harkay <sharkay@thetfordvt.gov> on behalf of Sharon Harkay
Sent: Wednesday, March 8, 2023 3:42 PM
To: Marion Betts
Subject: Fwd: thoughts on the charge for a standing Treasure Island committee
Attachments: Treasure Island Master Plan and Mission Statement—final version.pdf

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Please put the relevant email and attachment in our SB packet again for Monday, March 13th.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Douglas Tiffit <dtiffit.redwing@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Feb 2, 2023 at 11:00 AM
Subject: thoughts on the charge for a standing Treasure Island committee
To: Sharon Harkay <sharkay@thetfordvt.gov>
Cc: David Roth <dmr@thewakayagroup.com>

Sharon:

You had asked for our recommendations on potential charges to be included in a motion at next Monday's Thetford Selectboard meeting to form a standing committee for Treasure Island matters. We asked our members to send their ideas to me by now. So far, I only have a couple. Here they are:

- expand year-round recreational opportunities at Treasure Island (AJ Kemon)
- allow for fund-raising/fiduciary responsibilities for implementing and paying for enhancements (David Roth)

I know there are surely more thoughts that simply haven't been stated. I would suggest revisiting the enclosed "vision statement" our committee submitted to the Selectboard in December 2021. Potential charges and objectives evident in this document include:

- implement varied, year-round uses (as AJ noted), including expanded recreational functions (e.g. pickleball), annual activities, educational ventures, entertainment venue (e.g. movies on the beach, musical groups)

- encourage greater use and buy-in from surrounding communities and existing organizations (e.g. LFA, Aloha Camps)
- craft a long-range master plan informed by the stewardship plan, Lake Wise recommendations, wetlands survey, and natural inventories (e.g. wildlife cams)
- assess existing infrastructure (e.g. buildings, roads, parking areas, docks, picnicking facilities), recommend improvements, and implement with fund-raising strategies
- explore new ventures for both public and private enjoyment (e.g. boat rentals, concessions, facilities rental for private functions)
- consider new administrative options for running Treasure Island, including reconsideration of the previous resident caretaker model
- develop a vision for Treasure Island as an entry point for public appreciation and conservation of the area wetland environment and for the health of Lake Fairlee and its watershed

I realize that a series of "charges" will not explicitly state all of this. But perhaps the Selectboard can consider the intentions embodied here when framing and empowering the new standing committee.

One very important question: can a standing committee of the town include members who are not residents?

I hope these thoughts help you and the other selectboard members see the possibilities for a newly cast Treasure Island committee. I have copied David Roth so that he can fill in what I may have missed and correct what I may have misstated.

All the best,

Doug Tifft
 Tifft Book Production
 2665 VT Route 244
 Fairlee, VT 05045

Treasure Island Vision Statement

The extensive waterfront of Treasure Island should be made available for varied year-round recreational uses by the residents of Thetford and surrounding communities at a reasonable cost. Its inherent natural qualities should be protected and integrated with the unique wildlife habitat of adjoining wetlands on this end of Lake Fairlee. While owned and maintained by the Town of Thetford, Treasure Island should aspire to greater public use and broader financial support from all constituencies. Organizations such as the LFA and the Aloha Camps as well as the surrounding towns should be engaged to take part in its management and long-term welfare.

What Do We Want from a Treasure Island Master Plan?

A master plan for Treasure Island should serve as a touchstone as both short-term and long-term changes maintain and improve this regional asset. The master plan should begin with a graphic representation of natural and built features, frontage on the water and along the roadway, key access points, terrain, and its location on the lake relative to other sites of interest. Potential projects should each be enumerated by purpose, constituency, priority, likely cost, and funding sources. Plans should cite similar enterprises that may serve as instructive models. As proposed below, the master plan should be implemented in phases that build on existing strengths while exploring new options to extend the variety and seasons for a wider range of public activities and community interests.

PHASE ONE — “the same, only better”

Treasure Island serves first and foremost as a summer swimming and picnicking resource for Thetford and surrounding towns that abut Lake Fairlee. It should immediately restore and build on those assets and public expectations with: solid management and hiring of qualified personnel; maintenance and improvements to beach facilities and equipment; and core services such as swim lessons and boat rentals. Based on survey results where residents indicated they want Treasure Island to be “the same, only better,” the town should add to its solid reputation as a community-centered summer destination with new ventures such as: food concessions; improved bath and shower facilities; more beach options such as deep-water floats for swimming in lanes; expanded playground and sports resources; more outdoor programming such as hosting musical groups and educational speakers; and improved parking areas and a lightning shelter. This must be done while protecting and restoring the inherent natural assets of the waterfront and woodland following LakeWise guidelines specifically noted on the master planning site map. Only by maximizing its recognized value as a public summertime venue can it begin to address questions of cost.

PHASE TWO — “more than just a beach”

While shoring up its core value as a swimming and picnicking destination, Treasure Island should simultaneously begin to explore other ways to share its extensive waterfront with the public. It has considerable value as a nature area for visitor enjoyment and as a site for addressing the health of Lake Fairlee. There should be a plan for restoration and protection of the woodland and rustic

waterfront at its northern end. This should include: a modest trail system; viewing spots with benches and a birdwatching platform in the northern marshland; restoration of the “Art Shack” for nature study; and a simple fishing dock for launching canoe/kayak tours of this “quiet end” of the lake. Along the southern end, the shoreline facing the cove offers another natural retreat that should be part of the trails network. Recreational uses of the open field on this end, accessible by an existing gated drive, might be used for a playing field, events parking, or tenting.

PHASE THREE — “four seasons, three towns”

Multi-season uses for Treasure Island should be investigated and encouraged as part of a long-range plan for expanding the public value and constituency of the site. Surveys indicate interest in activities such as ice skating, ice fishing, winter programs, and beach parties. As the public begins to recognize the greater potential for Treasure Island, efforts should be made to involve the towns of West Fairlee and Fairlee in its financial support and governance. This might take the form of a multi-town advisory committee coupled with annual contributions toward its upkeep. This could be modeled on the way the Cross-Rivendell Trail is supported by annual appropriations from the towns, coupled with individual donations through Rivendell Trail Association membership and fundraisers.

PHASE FOUR — “open to everyone at reasonable hours and times of the year”

With broader financing, residents of the participating towns and visitors with annual memberships could be offered significantly reduced admission to the beach in summer. Refurbishing the existing house for a resident caretaker could make possible free off-season daytime access through a designated area for “at your own risk” swimming and boating. Improvements to the house could also include a year-round meeting facility for educational programming on conservation and the health of the Lake Fairlee watershed as well as private functions, similar to the multiple uses of the Hulbert Center on Lake Morey.