

Special Meeting
The Future of Austin Pavilion – Community Visioning Session
June 12, 2021
10:00 a.m.

Present: Supervisor Aaron, Councilor Tucker, Councilor McCormack, Councilor Alexander, Councilor Legg.

Presenters: Chad Rogers, Tim Johnson, and Bill Murphy

Also, Present: Bridgett Winkelman, Karen Barkdull, Sue Murphy, Pete Buehler, Pat Carroll, Jean Miles, Eric Sell, Dede Washington, Andrew Stevens, Angela Stevens, Deb Williams.

Supervisor Aaron spoke of the history surrounding Austin Park and the Austin Pavilion:

“It was said that Clarence Austin didn’t like children playing in his fields, and he used to chase them away. So when his will was read in 1927, and he had donated his land to the Village of Skaneateles for a park, where children could play all day, many people were surprised.

Clarence was the only child of Franklin Austin and this is exactly how the Village got Austin Park and it wasn’t until 1958 when Austin Park began to take shape. Volunteers donated plans, material and labor for baseball diamonds and basketball and tennis courts. There was also a microd track.

Sedge Smith was called the “Father of Hockey” in Skaneateles coaching teams from 1920 to the 1950’s and two “kids” that he coached were Mayo Snyder and Bill Allyn. In 1967 at the request of the Austin Park Committee, Mayo initiated the revival of skating in Skaneateles by getting a group of fathers together known as the Austin Park Boy’s Hockey Association. Many a long night was spent by these men throughout the winter, shoveling snow and flooding the rink but even with their diligence the amount of ice time was extremely limited due to unfavorable weather conditions.

Two years later “Bill” Allyn who became known as W. G. Allyn offered to pay half the cost of a new rink, the other to be provided with funding from NYS. The cost for an uncovered rink was \$192,000. But it was strongly recommended to look at a pavilion type cover. This raised the cost to \$440,000. Mr. Allyn raised his original offer of \$96,000 to \$150,00, Dwight Winkelman pledged \$15,000, Mr. Wikstrom, \$3,000 and the Austin Park Development Fund \$5,000 and the State paid \$220,000 with the balance paid by small donations from the community.

In 2018 Austin Park was transferred to the Town from the Village. Because of our ownership the Town now could legally invest in capital improvements. Last year we replaced the old bathroom building known as the Sims Building with a new one, and this year we are looking for your comments and suggestions for what you would like to see happen here keeping in mind that we need to still continue the community events that count on this Pavilion, the Fireman’s Labor Day, Rotary’s Father’s Days Pancake Breakfast, the Antique Show, and the Symphoria. Thank you all for being here.”

Supervisor Aaron introduced Design Professionals; Chad Rogers, Tim Johnson, and Bill Murphy. They are working with their respective companies and heading up this project of what could be done with the Austin Pavilion to contribute to the community. They are here today to get ideas and comments from the public. There are 2 more Community Visioning Sessions scheduled; June 22nd

at 7:00 also at the Austin Pavilion and June 23rd hosted on zoom for those who do not want to attend in person.

Chad Rogers reviewed the Park and the Austin Pavilion's current uses and asked for any comments.

Deb Williams: Ms. Williams asked the design professionals and the Town Board to consider adding Pickle Ball courts. Pickle Ball has become very popular, especial with older members of the community and they do not have enough space in the Park to accommodate all that want to participate.

Kevin McCormack: Councilor McCormack asked about the condition of the roof of the Pavilion. Chad Rogers stated this is an area of the structure that will be evaluated.

Courtney Alexander: Councilor Alexander stated she had feedback from the community. People had asked about the possibility of making the facility an indoor/outdoor use facility. And, could there be a walking track for year-round walking for residents or turf installed for different sports events and practices.

Councilor Alexander currently stated the Parks Department uses some of the Pavilion for storage and office space. She reviewed the buildings on Fennell Street and stated these buildings also store parks equipment and this storage would be moved to the 1 East Austin location.

Chad Rogers stated storage and office space would be configured into the design. This would be designed in balance with community uses.

Mr. Rogers asked what the neighbors' concerns are. Neighbors had expressed their concerns regarding equipment storage and trucks. The neighbors spoke of their concerns on the aesthetics of the building.

Councilor Alexander stated the neighbors expressed their concerns regarding the building being an eyesore in the community.

Supervisor Aaron: Supervisor Aaron stated, currently the Skaneateles Nursery School rented the front space of the Austin Pavilion and they will be moving. This front space would be used for office space for the Parks Department and possible community meeting rooms.

Dede Washington: Ms. Washington stated her concerns about the use of the Pavilion for the annual Methodist Church Antique Show. In the past there were issues regarding the electricity and the tarps on the building. The tarps do not protect the inside of the building from weather. There should install solid walls to allow the building to be used year-round and the electricity should be updated.

Jean Miles: Ms. Miles, 14 East Austin Street, a neighbor expressed her concerns over increased traffic with large events, and commercial use of the property. Trucks entering and existing in the neighborhood setting.

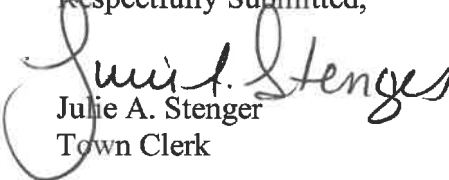
Supervisor Aaron stated the Town wanted the Pavilion to be used by the residents, not a commercial usage.

Ms. Miles expressed the concerns of the neighbors regarding parking, but are happy to see improvements being proposed to the building.

Chad Rogers reviewed the timeline of the project. He stated the first phase would be to study the property, which included feedback from the community. The second phase would be the design and cost phase. Third phase would be the funding phase and the final phase would be the actual construction. He anticipated this would all take at least a couple of years.

Supervisor Aaron thanked the Board, the design professionals, and the community for attending this meeting and sharing their thoughts. There are two more Visionary Sessions scheduled; June 22nd at the Austin Pavilion and June 23rd by Zoom.

Respectfully Submitted,


Julie A. Stenger
Town Clerk