

TOWN PARK POLICY UP TO THE 21ST.CENTURY

April 5, 1983

Shortened (a lot) & approved, May, 1983

It's my intent in this document to set forth a plan for future park development in the Town of Guilderland. This proposal I believe will satisfy the recreational needs of our citizens up to and beyond the beginning of the twenty-first century. This design is composed of immediate objectives and suggests other actions to be taken in the future.

The Town of Guilderland has grown in population substantially over the past two decades. All indications are that it will continue to grow at a fast pace. We need to take action now to provide for the needs of future generations.

It is felt that the time has come to circulate this proposed "Park Policy" to the Town Board, to the Planning Board and to the Recreation and Park Commission for their comments. It would be wise to form a blueprint of a "Park Policy" so that our residents and prospective residents have an idea of what to expect from the town in the future. Development of the town would benefit from the establishment of such a policy.

The following are therefore proposed as park development plans:

1. The Town of Guilderland presently has the opportunity to purchase over seven acres of land from the Samal Construction Co! This land is located south of the rear property lines of the residences on Oak Drive in McKownville. It is east of Schoolhouse Road, west of Dr. Campione's property which borders McKown Road and north of land to remain in the hands of Samal Construction Co.

It is my feeling that unless some single moderately size tract of land is now saved in McKownville, the opportunity to do so will soon evaporate. This land would be graded, seeded and improved with utilities in the future. There is enough land for the creation of a baseball/softball field, a soccer field and a small area for a million and swings. There is a possibility of expanding the land eastward at a time

when the Campione property is developed.

This area of the Town had this type of facility, in the past at various places.

These sites included the present site of the Tom Sawyer Motor Inn, McKown's Grove, an area near the McKownville Water Tank, and an area behind the McKownville Methodist Church. As time passed and development occurred all of these areas were lost, to that development. It is time to reintroduce this type of recreation area in this highly developed part of town before the opportunity to do so is lost forever as a result of further residential and/or commercial development.

2. The Town park plan up to 1981 centered around a "One Park Policy". This park, recently named Carl J. Walter's Tawasentha Park, was generally to be the center of all recreational activities sponsored by the Town. The "One Park Policy" was deviated from in December 1981 with the purchase by the town of 35 acres of land on Nott Road. This land is to be used for soccer and softball fields beginning this year. The Carl J. Walters Park is beautiful. It has one fault; it is fast becoming in need of enlargement. This is particularly true if we intend to meet the needs of our citizens by the year 2000. The Parks and Recreation Commission is exploring this avenue. If it becomes possible in the future to expand the park I would recommend this.

3. At the present time the town is extending the Guilderland Water District* to an area of the town not too geographically distant from the Fort Hunter Water District. Once the extension is completed in 1984 the town should explore the idea of merging that district with the Guilderland Water District* If a merger occurs the town would look to developing the area presently used by the Fort Hunter Water District for its pumps, wells and tank as park land. This would provide another recreational area in the northern part of town.

4. The town has participated with the State of New York and the City of Albany in purchase of over 300 acres of land in the Pine Bush. The Town should continue efforts to find funding sources for the purchase of additional lands in the Pine Bush. The

Town could work further with the State of New York Environmental Conservation Department and the City of Albany toward this end.

5. The land purchased at Nott Road should continue to be developed. Large in-roads were made in this direction last year when, through the cooperation of our Parks department and Highway department, a large area of land was graded. It was then seeded, water was installed and an area large enough for at least two softball and/or soccer fields materialized. This area should continue to be developed for playing fields. It is estimated that up to 8 to 10 fields could eventually exist on the site. In addition to this there is a large wooded area south of the playing field area. This wooded area is presently in a somewhat pre-historic state. It borders the Normanskill. It could possibly be developed into a beautiful picnic area with clearing, cutting, brush removal and the eventual setting of picnic tables and one or two pavilions. (The pavilions at the Carl J. Walters Park are already overbooked. It is difficult to line one of these up without booking them 3 months in advance.)

I would suggest that the following immediate steps be taken to implement this policy.

1. The Town Board should approve a resolution applying to the New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal for funding the purchase of the park land in McKownville referred to above.
2. The Town Board should transfer \$12,000 from its 1983 contingency fund in the budget into the Parks budget. This funding would be used to hire four senior citizens and seven youths to work for the parks department this spring and summer. This additional summer help would be used at the Nott Road park site to construct additional playing fields, to clear the bush and debris in the wooded area and to maintain the fields that presently exist. The additional help would also be used to upgrade maintenance at C.J. W. Tawasentha Park. They could assist in the grading and seeding of the McKown Park in the event the land is purchased. Attached is a detailed breakdown of the jobs and work schedule.

If we move now toward the ends referred to above the Town would have recreational areas spread out geographically throughout the populated areas. These town parklands are supplemented by other publicly owned lands as referred to below:

1. Proposed park in McKownville - softball/soccer fields - Town
2. SUNY land, playing fields and tennis courts when available - SUNY
3. Middleschool soccer and softball fields - Guilderland School District
4. Guilderland Community Center - ball fields - Guilderland School District
5. Nott Road - soccer and softball fields, picnic area and pavilions, fishing and hiking.
6. CJW Tawasentha Park as expanded, picnic area, swimming, town summer and winter recreation programs, tennis, P.A.C., little league, Babe Ruth, hiking, fishing platform tennis.
7. 300 acres in the Pine Bush for hiking, sightseeing and educational tours.
8. Small Park in Fort Hunter - softball, soccer, basketball and tennis.
9. Lynnwood School - ballfields - Guilderland School District

These publicly owned areas provide green space and recreational areas. In addition to these the town has within its borders privately owned recreational areas composed of four golf courses, one par three golf course and two racketball and tennis clubs.

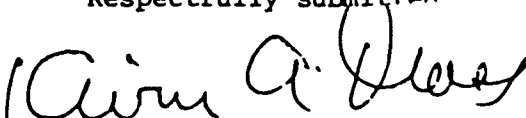
There is no question that the policy set forth above will have monetary implications. It is anticipated that more summer help would have to be hired to maintain the additional parkland. This will be a gradually increasing phenomena. It is also anticipated that an additional full time year round employee may have to be hired in 1985 to assist the existing park staff to control and maintain all park lands.

It is a commonly occurring thing to have parkland turn into an eyesore if it is not properly and consistently maintained. Recreational areas which are not kept up

cease to be recreational areas and turn into albatrosses slung around the neck of a community. If we are to endorse these proposals we should do so with the understanding that the funding will be available to make and keep the town areas as clean, beautiful and attractive as the Walters Park. Neighborhood residents should be assured of this or what is meant to be a very positive proposal may fall on very negative ears. The increased expenditures are justified, we need these improvements to continue to improve the life-styles of our residents. I would submit that such additional parklands would make Guilderland an even more attractive place within which to live. This presumably would attract new residents and businesses to the town, thereby increasing our tax base, and thus off-setting possibly all the additional costs experienced.

Finally I would appreciate your support with this policy. I will be happy to discuss this with members of the various Boards at any time.

Respectfully submitted


Kevin A. Moss

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