

Town of Somers
Camp Ayapo Ad Hoc Committee Minutes
Thursday, January 30, 2014
7:00pm - Kibbe Fuller

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Brad Pellissier at 7:00pm. Members present were: Barbara Capuano, Patrice Carson, Lucas Cherry, Ken Coelho, Ed Giza, Walter Nielowocki, Brad Pellissier, and Dominic Wilson. Members absent were: Steve Squillace. Others present: Barbara Anderson, Michelle Young, Michael Bollio and his wife; later in the meeting Keith Allard and Sgt. Jose Claudio joined the meeting.

2. Review of Minutes

Since a representative from the Fire Department was present, Chairman Pellissier decided the AHCommittee would take the minutes out of order after the safety discussion.

3. Discussion, Safety/Security Issues

Chairman Pellissier had asked for representatives from the Police and Fire Departments to meet with the AHCommittee to discuss their concerns if the Camp were put into use again. Keith Allard, a representative from the Fire Department discussed with the AHCommittee the concerns/issues the Fire Department might have with use of Camp AyaPo.

Mr. Allard explained that a boat ramp was installed into the lake from Camp Road so the Fire Department can get it's boats in the water. The ramp is made of trap rock and was supposed to be for Fire Department use only. The ramp needs to be kept cleared and the area in front of it cannot be used for parking as cars parked there block access to the ramp.

There is also a dry hydrant on Camp Road that was installed some time ago which also needs to be kept clear since it is the only source of water to put out a fire in that part of town. Chairman Pellissier stated that he assumed there is a fire/safety response plan for the Camp property, and asked what would need to be done to make the buildings secure. Mr. Allard said he would defer to the Fire Marshal any questions regarding the public use of the buildings and what fire codes might need to be met.

Mr. Allard said the Fire Department typically has access to the beach. They practice a water drill annually at the Camp. He also thought a fire truck could be driven on the paved walkway along the buildings. A truck would need to be able to get about 100 feet from a building for access.

E. Giza asked if there was any equipment needed to service the trails. Mr. Allard replied that a Utility Terrain Vehicle (UTV) which can be equipped with a skid are used for trails. The town does not have a UTV, but they do have a 14-foot inflatable boat.

E. Giza asked about installing any kind of monitor alarm and Mr. Allard replied that the Fire Department would recommend a centrally-monitored alarm.

Mr. Allard noted that there should be no parking on the street because parked cars make fire service difficult. Shutting Camp Road for security purposes would also make fire service difficult for the entire area because the water source is on Camp Road and having to open a gate would slow response time.

B. Capuano asked if the buildings would need to have sprinklers and Mr. Allard deferred that question to the Fire Marshal.

K. Coelho asked if it would be beneficial to have a water storage source, maybe an underground tank for the buildings at the top of the area. Mr. Allard responded that having more water is always better and maybe a second dry hydrant location on the building-side of the lake would work. It would need to be 12 feet from the lake for a fire truck to access it.

E. Giza wanted to know the cost of a UTV that could carry some water. The price ranges from \$13,000-\$50,000.

Sgt. Jose Claudio of the Police Department joined the conversation. Chairman Pellissier explained that the use of the Camp was unsure since the AHCommittee was still in the information gathering phase, however, the use would probably be intermittent and used by civic groups, day camp, and hiking trails, but there probably wouldn't be any real constant presence.

Sgt. Claudio was concerned about the amount of vandalism at the Camp and it has been constant because of the remote location. He would be concerned about protecting anything of value that was erected on the site. The Police conduct regular patrol checks of the Camp. Locating a caretaker on the property as the Camp had years before would be a significant deterrent. There are several places Sgt. Claudio knows that have such an arrangement and he offered to provide a list of those to the AHCommittee.

E. Giza asked about a central station alarm or installing cameras. Sgt. Claudio stated it would be difficult to alarm the whole Camp. Soapstone has a gated area that is alarmed and that works, but it's a much smaller area.

B. Capuano asked about whether the Police might like to use the Camp for training of Police dogs. Signs could be posted, police cars would be there more often and visible, and maybe knowing the police used the facility might be a deterrent, and Sgt. Claudio agreed stating there were a lot of canine officers in Somers and the area that would use such a place.

D. Wilson asked about the security of the buildings and if that was a bigger problem and Sgt. Claudio confirmed. Vandalism occurs mostly at night. When the Camp was

operational in its peak season there were never any vandalism problems. Lighting improvements at the Rec Park on Field Road helped curb vandalism and maybe some lighting might help at the Camp.

K. Coelho asked about other ways to enforce the area, i.e., post no-parking signs. Sgt. Claudio answered that no-parking signs may not solve the problem. K. Coelho thought that if the road were posted people might be deterred from parking there if they knew they could get towed.

D. Wilson suggested that putting signs up that said road closed at dusk or maybe making Camp Road a one-way road could be considered.

E. Giza suggested getting DEEP to stock the lake, that way DEEP would come by more often, again creating an enforcement presence.

Chairman Pellissier stated that all the vandalism and fire problems probably won't be solved, but the AHCommittee was looking for ways to make it better.

The Audience suggested that some controlled night-time uses might be allowed to keep more "eyes" on the site.

B. Capuano asked if Sgt. Claudio could check if other troopers know of other areas like the Camp and how they handle it. Maybe they do something that hasn't been thought of during this discussion.

W. Neiliwocki mentioned that Hubline Tower has a caretaker and that might be a good idea for the Camp again.

Chairman Pellissier thanked Mr. Allard and Sgt. Claudio for their input. There were some great ideas offered and the AHCommittee discussed further the ideas that were brought up.

K. Coelho relayed a conversation he had with J. Bord who had recommended all the buildings should be removed because of liability and insurance. This was not K. Coelho's position who thought some of the buildings should be kept. Chairman Pellissier didn't think the buildings were part of the open space but if there were good/legitimate uses for the buildings then he wasn't opposed to keeping them. It was noted that the Town budget is tight overall. After the AHCommittee makes recommendations then implementation should be looked at.

There was further discussion between the AHCommittee and the Audience about uses of the property and it's maintenance.

The next meeting of the AHCommittee is Thursday, February 6, beginning at 7:00pm in the Kibbe Fuller Building at which there will be a Public Forum.

2. Review of Minutes

There was discussion about the first motion made by S. Squillace in the minutes of January 23, 2014. The secretary had recorded it as taken in her notes and S. Squillace was not present at this meeting. **Motion by** E. Giza to table action on the January 23, 2014 Minutes to the next meeting S. Squillace is present at for clarification of his motion. **Seconded by** P. Carson - 3 in favor, 0 opposed, 3 abstentions.

4. Adjournment

Motion by P. Carson to adjourn the Camp Ayapo Ad Hoc Committee meeting at 9:00pm. **Seconded by** L. Cherry - Unanimously voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Patrice L. Carson
Committee Secretary