

# THE RECORDER

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## Does town want to revive Highland Park?

By ANITA FRITZ

Recorder Staff

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GREENFIELD — If the town is going to revive Highland Park and its pond, returning it to the busy park it once was with skating, fishing and other recreational activities, it is going to take a lot of work that will have to be done in phases, according to the task force assigned to look into it.

The task force, which has met twice since Mayor William Martin charged it with studying the needs of the park and its pond in the Parkway Street and Highland Avenue area, said the first phase can most likely be done quickly and with little expense.

The first phase would include adding dog “poop” stations, more trash cans and signs throughout the park. It would also include maintenance of some of the trails and the path around the pond.

The second phase would be much more expensive, though estimated costs have not yet been determined, according to the task force.

That phase would include dredging the pond if that’s what the task force and town decide is feasible and desired and the town and state allow it.

Mayor William Martin decided late last year that he wanted two task forces to review two “underutilized” areas in town.

Highland Park and its pond is one of them and the other is Veterans Memorial Field on Silver Street, said Martin.

“I would like to see both of them become recreational centers once again,” he said.

The task force will take comments from the public over time to find out what residents want.

It will also hear from abutters and other interested parties, said Martin.

Eventually, the task force will report to Martin with its recommendations and estimated costs.

Task force member Philip Elmer-DeWitt said he would like to see a public education campaign started, which he thinks would cut down significantly on the bacteria in the pond because people would start to pay attention to how they might be contributing.

Elmer-DeWitt said he would like to make the area around the pond “poop-free” and one way to do that is to target dog walkers.

Member Terri Kerner suggested the town engage local schools and universities to help determine what needs to be done there, especially if the town is going to resurrect the pond.

“Would an elementary school or tech school take on the dog waste station creations or signage?” said Kerner. “Would a local college’s environmental classes want to be part of designing the way runoff is channeled there?”

She said maybe university students would test water and soil in the area for their classes.

Other members suggested enlisting the help of volunteers for some of the projects.

Task force member and Precinct 5 Town Councilor Penny Ricketts, Maureen Pollock, the town’s assistant planner, and Christy Moore, the town’s recreation director, said they will begin researching grants for all phases of cleanup and restoration.



Recorder file photo/Micky Bedell  
Joe Pellegrino of Charlemont scores a goal against Diana Hardina of Shelburne Falls despite a valiant effort and interference from his dog Cooper at Highland Pond in Greenfield in this January file photo.



Recorder file photo/Micky Bedell  
Brooke Smith, 7, laughs as her 5-month-old German Shepherd Malakai enjoys his first adventure into Highland Pond in this June 2014 file photo.

The group would also like to see the park accessible to all throughout the year.

“People want it used during all four seasons,” said Ricketts.

In 1999, the town was told it would cost about \$284,000 to dredge the pond and in 2009, the estimated had climbed to \$580,000. Members of the group said they are bracing themselves for an even larger estimate as they continue their research.

The task force said it will work with the Franklin Regional Council of Governments and state Department of Environmental Protection as it proceeds.

The task force will meet next on March 18 at 4 p.m. in 114 Main St. The meeting is open to the public.

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