

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 29, 2019

Press Release

Schenck's Island/Merwin Meadows Concept Plans Are Presented at Public Meeting

Milone and MacBroom presented preliminary concept plans for Schenck's Island and Merwin Meadows at a public meeting held on Sunday, April 28th. A variety of ideas was presented in the form of two concept plans for each park with the goal of soliciting feedback from meeting attendees. For Schenck's Island, the theme was more educational and cultural with ideas including a performance space built into a hillside, nature play for children, and a low viewing tower where visitors could experience the meadow and wildlife from a new perspective. The ideas for Merwin Meadows were focused on renovating existing amenities such as upgrading the bath house, adding natural water play features, updating the playground, and improving picnic facilities.

Milone and MacBroom will consolidate this latest round of feedback to develop and present a final master plan to the Schenck's Island and Merwin Meadows (SIMM) Committee for their review. If approved, the SIMM Committee would present the plan to the Board of Selectmen for approval. It is anticipated that the master plan would be implemented over 5- 8 years with funding through private donations, not taxpayer dollars, with the Town providing labor similar to the development of The Chess Park.

Some residents have inquired about the potential for a community pool at Merwin Meadows. A pool cannot be constructed at Merwin Meadows, nor at Schenck's Island, as the parks are both located in floodways. A floodway is a designated area that needs to remain free of any impact (e.g., development, grading, etc.) that would otherwise increase the flood elevation or impede the discharge of flood waters. Around 2010-2012, the Town experienced three 100 year floods during which the entire pond at Merwin Meadows filled with water and debris from the Norwalk River and only the bath house and the playground remained above ground. The Town received Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funds to dredge and restore the pond.

Throughout the month of May, the concept plan boards will be available for viewing and commentary at various locations around town including: outside of the Annual Town Meeting Adjourned Vote on Saturday, May 11th (weather permitting), Comstock Community Center, Wilton Town Hall, and the Wilton Library. The boards will also be available on the Town website (www.wiltonct.org) under Schenck's Island/Merwin Meadows Committee (SIMM).

Milone & MacBroom, an Engineering, Planning, Landscape Architecture, and Environmental Science firm, was selected by the SIMM Committee to develop a concept plan for a passive recreation plan for Schenck's Island and a renovation plan for Merwin Meadows.

The Board of Selectmen established the SIMM Committee in 2017. The committee is comprised of members of the Conservation Commission, Parks & Recreation Commission, Planning & Zoning Commission, Economic Development Commission, Trout Unlimited, Wilton Land Trust, and an individual nominated by the Board of Selectmen. In March of 2018, the SIMM Committee issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) requesting submissions from qualified professionals to provide a concept plan for Schenck's Island and Merwin Meadows. Nine professional firms submitted a response to the RFQ. After a comprehensive review process, Milone & MacBroom was selected to lead the project.

Questions and feedback may be directed to Mike Conklin, Director of Environmental Affairs, at (203) 563-0182 or mike.conklin@wiltonct.org or Sarah Gioffre, Coordinator of Community Affairs, at (203) 563-0129 or sarah.gioffre@wiltonct.org.

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