

2016

# Keyes Memorial Park Expansion Committee Report



Report to the Milford Board of Selectmen

Prepared by KMPE Committee  
December 2016



## **Acknowledgements**

The process of developing this set of recommendations for the newly expanded Keyes Memorial Park was an intensive one that occurred over a nine-month period.

The Keyes Memorial Park Expansion Committee and the Town of Milford are indebted to Tony DaCosta, Vice President of Operations, and the Turnstone Corporation for their donation of time and talent to this project. Mr. DaCosta and Turnstone Corporation provided professional evaluations of the existing structure at 127 Elm Street and cost estimates for rehabilitation of the building along with estimates of possible new construction. This information was vital to the Committee's work and informed the evaluation process.

The Committee also extends its thanks to the Nashua Regional Planning Commission for their assistance with the implementation of *Keyes Memorial Park Master Plan Expansion and 127 Elm Street Integration* survey.

### **The Keyes Park Expansion Committee**

Arene Berry	Director of Recreation Department
Claudia Lemaire	Recreation Commission member
Hub Seward	Conservation Commission member
Jacob LaFontaine	Planning Board member
Janet Langdell	Planning Board member, Keyes Trust trustee
Jerry Guthrie	Resident
Lincoln Daley	Director of Community Development
Marc Maurais	Director of Milford High School Athletics
Mike Putnam	Board of Selectmen's representative
Pamela Alleyne	Milford Area Seniors member
Paul Bartolomucci	Recreation Commission member
Rick Riendeau	Director of Dept. Public Works
Tim Barr	Resident, MIT Board of Directors member
In addition, Doug Knott, Planning Board member, participated in the initial meetings.	

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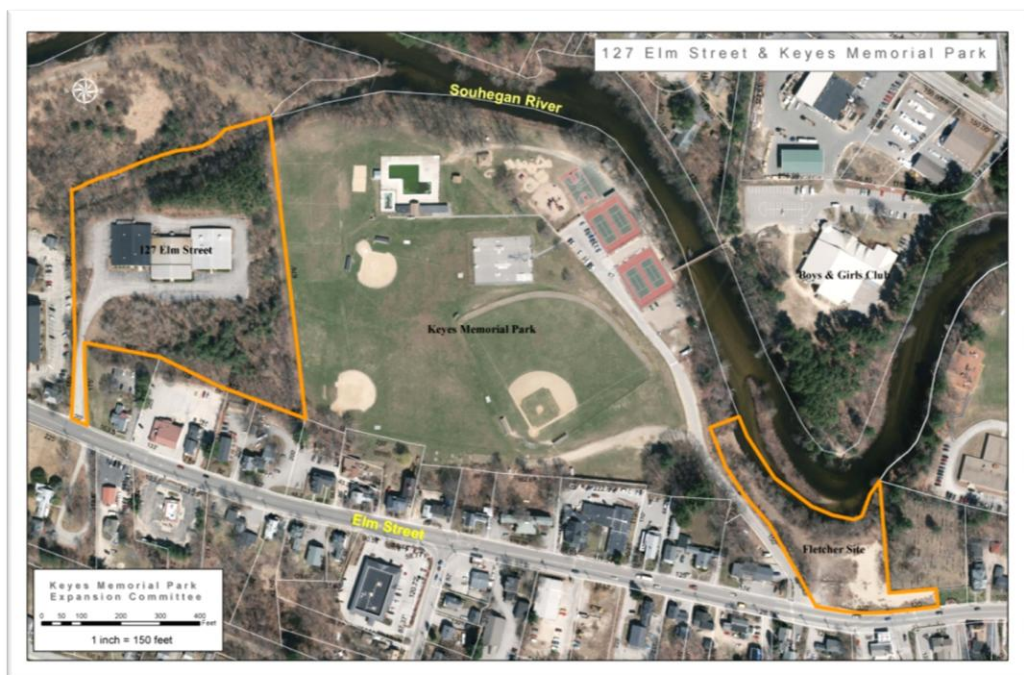
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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Keyes Memorial Park, often referred to as “The Jewel in Downtown Milford”, has provided diverse recreational opportunities to the community for over 50 years. Originally created by a generous donation from the Arthur L. Keyes Memorial Trust, Keyes Memorial Park has developed primarily due to community involvement, commitment, and initiative. Of Milford’s eight municipal recreation venues, Keyes Memorial Park is the most frequently used by the public.

In 2014, the community was presented with a unique opportunity to acquire valuable land in downtown Milford adjacent to Keyes Memorial Park. The proposal was called “The Keyes Park Expansion Project” on the September 9, 2014 ballot for the required special Town election. With forethought, the community voted in favor of authorizing the purchase the land and buildings at 127 Elm Street. This acquisition served two major purposes – providing a second access to Keyes Memorial Park thus, avoiding the multi-year closure of the park during the Fletcher site environmental clean-up and securing additional land to better meet Milford’s current and future recreational needs.



With the 127 Elm Street purchase finalized in December 2015, the Board of Selectmen moved forward with project planning by appointing a committee to evaluate the two properties and make recommendations for the integration of 127 Elm Street and the future of Keyes Memorial Park. Their charge to the Keyes Memorial Park Expansion Committee was extensive and in part, exceeded the time

frame available to the committee. Moreover, during this process, the committee was asked by the Town Administrator to weigh-in on the Fletcher site restoration plan.

This report presents information about the Committee's findings, process, and deliberations that led to a series of recommendations focusing on integration of the parcels, public awareness, public safety, traffic improvements, asset management, and long-term planning. A conceptual master plan for Keyes Memorial Park with phased development is presented.

Proximity to the Souhegan River, the local trail and pedestrian network, the Oval and the downtown business district, all serve to strengthen the rationale for why development of Keyes Memorial Park should be a community priority. The overarching theme throughout is a recommendation to keep the focus on Milford's recreation needs and to integrate all three areas – 127 Elm, Keyes Memorial Park, and eventually, the Fletcher site – into one unique location and community asset for public gatherings and recreational pursuits. By doing so, we can enhance Milford's community character, attractiveness as a destination and the quality of life available to its residents.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

In 2015, the Town of Milford acquired a 5.8 acre parcel of land on Elm Street known as “127 Elm Street” and as “the old Permattach property” (Tax Map 19, Lot 10). To the east, the land abuts the Keyes Memorial Park (Tax Map 25, Lot 133) and includes a 30,000 SF building once used for industrial, office, and sales purposes.

With this acquisition, the Milford Board of Selectmen sought public input on the highest and best uses for the “127 Elm Street” land and building. The Board appointed a broad based committee of residents and senior staff members to develop recommendations for the integration of the newly acquired parcel into Keyes Memorial Park and “to evaluate this property and assets and make recommendations to the Board of Selectmen regarding improvements, actions and plans should be undertaken to address both short-term and long-term recreational needs of the community”.

This report will summarize the process undertaken by the Committee to inform its evaluation of the land and building and present the Committee’s recommendations.

## **II. BACKGROUND**

Active community participation and responding to established community recreational needs have been hallmarks of the development of Keyes Memorial Park. In 1957, the Arthur L. Keyes Memorial Trust purchased 19 acres of farmland located along the Souhegan River in downtown Milford from Mr. Henry Laxon. The Keyes Trust in turn presented the land to the Milford School District for an athletic field and playground in order to address identified community needs. By 1963, Milford was faced with growing concern about the safety and adequacy of the Town’s pool then located on South Street behind the “Pumping Station”. A committee, appointed by the Board of Selectmen, evaluated the situation and developed a plan to build a new pool at Keyes Memorial Park. Since that land was “owned” by the school district, the committee proposed a land exchange between the Town of Milford and the Milford School District – Endicott Park behind Jacques School would be given to the School District by the Town in exchange for Keyes Memorial Park. Additionally, the committee arranged for the Keyes Trust to finance the pool’s construction. In 1964, with the Keyes Trust agreeing to reimburse the Town over a period of 13 years, the Town borrowed \$65,000 to build a new swimming pool, wading pool and bathhouse at Keyes Park. Construction began in the summer of 1964 and the new pool facilities were dedicated on June 20, 1965.

Throughout the years, various civic organizations and individuals have contributed to the Town’s efforts to locate needed recreational facilities and programs at Keyes



Memorial Park. For example, in 1967 the Rotch family donated funds to construct the tennis courts in memory of Malcolm E. Rotch and in 2000 the Milford Lion's Club spearheaded the construction of the skate park. Keyes Memorial Park has evolved thanks to many Eagle Scout projects, Milford High School building trades class projects, and the ongoing commitment of area citizens and businesses.

For a number of years, the property at 127 Elm Street was owned by a Massachusetts based company. After unsuccessful attempts to sell the property, the company approached the Town about purchasing the 127 Elm Street parcel and building. Contemporaneously, the Town was planning for the temporary closure of Keyes Drive due to the pending EPA Superfund "Fletcher site" clean-up that was expected to last a minimum of two years. The "Fletcher site" abuts Keyes Park on the east side and the clean-up plan also involved the use of a portion of the park for staging and related work. Keyes Drive was the only Town-owned vehicular entrance to the park and was the main pedestrian entrance. In anticipation of the EPA work, the Town had secured a temporary easement over the 127 Elm Street property for emergency access to the park. Unfortunately, that easement agreement expired and the owner would not extend the contract, which could have encumbered any sale to a third party.



Figure 1: Keyes Park Drive Area - in red depicts the sections of Keyes Park, the entrance drive, and the Fletcher site closed to the public during the EPA Superfund clean-up.

Town leaders deemed continued access to Keyes Memorial Park a high priority so that the park would not have to be closed during the clean-up and residents could continue to have safe, uninterrupted access to its amenities. In April 2014, former Town Administrator, Guy Scaife, Recreation Director, Arene Berry, the Board of Selectmen, and the Recreation Commission embarked on a fundraising campaign to

secure necessary funds to purchase the 127 Elm Street property. The breakdown of that purchase was as follows:

- \$190,000 – Cash payment from the Town (raised through donations)
- \$88,000 – Back taxes and late penalties to be waived by the Town (estimate based on a September 2014 closing date)
- \$220,800 – Contribution to Town from Mayo Group toward the purchase price (subject to adjustment based on the property's independently assessed market value)

As outlined in an April 2, 2014 memo authored by Mr. Scaife (Appendix 1), the purchase of the 127 Elm Street property would serve three primary purposes:

- ***“Urgent critical need*** – We must secure a secondary access and additional parking in anticipation of the Fletcher site cleanup and the closure of Keyes Drive as early as the summer of 2015. There are no other alternatives available to us and if access is not secured Keyes Field will have to be closed. While walking traffic could access the park, without vehicle access for emergency services, the Town could not allow public access for traditional use due to potential liability issues.
- ***Short term need (1 to 6 years)*** – The Town currently has a shortage of ball fields which is restricting sport activity from Spring through Fall as well as a shortage of parking at Keyes during major events such as the Rotary Swim meet, State Swim meet, tournament play, etc. The 5.8 acres is flat and can easily accommodate several fields plus expanded parking.
- ***Long term strategic need (beyond 6 years)*** - if in the future the Town decides to build a Recreation Center, a Senior Center, or a combination facility, the 5.8 acres will accommodate such a project. The Town does not currently own any land close to the center of Town that could accommodate this potential long-term need.”

As per *RSA 41:14-a Acquisition or Sale of Land, Building, or Both*, the Board of Selectmen, Planning Board and Conservation Commission formally supported this acquisition provided that any outstanding environmental issues were resolved prior to the sale being finalized. With considerable effort by the current Town Administrator, Mark Bender, the open New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES) order mandating certain environmental cleanup activities on the site was completed by the owner and a *“Letter of No Further Action Required”* from DES specific to the site was received in 2015 with the sale being completed on December 17, 2015.

With the purchase completed, the Board of Selectmen sought volunteers for a committee to develop short and long term recommendations for the integration of the newly acquired property into the Keyes Memorial Park and to make any additional recommendations about how best to utilize or repurpose the land and buildings.

### **III. CHARGE TO THE KEYES MEMORIAL PARK EXPANSION COMMITTEE**

#### **Keyes Memorial Park Expansion Committee**

*After significant efforts and financial generosity by many Milford citizens, the Town has secured ownership of a 5.8 acre site adjoining Keyes Memorial Park, the town's premiere recreational gem. This property provides an alternative access point to Keyes, along with additional parking. The site also contains an existing 33,670 square foot industrial building with office space.*

The charge of the Committee will be to evaluate this property and assets and make recommendations to the Board of Selectmen regarding what improvements, actions and plans should be undertaken to address both short term and long term recreational needs of the community. Key issues that should be reviewed and addressed include:

- How should the property best be used? Both short term and long term options should be reviewed.
- Planning should not only include the newly acquired site, but also take into consideration the entire Keyes Park; planning should not be isolated to 127 Elm.
- What recreational priorities exist in the community that could be located on the property? What other town needs can be accommodated with the property?
- Could additional field space be added and if so, what kind (multi-purpose, baseball)?
- Can parking be expanded?
- Relative to the existing structure:
  - o What is the state of the existing structures? Mechanical? Windows? Flooring? Lighting? etc.
  - o What could this structure be used for? Office space, senior center, meeting rooms, permanent space for specific committees, idea incubator/maker space, storage, etc.
  - o Should portions or all of the structure be removed to make room for other uses?
  - o What ongoing costs would be incurred to open these buildings up for future use?
  - o Could portions of the building be rented out to generate income?
  - o Looking at the building as a part of Keyes Park, what are short and long term applications?
- Is there opportunity to allow short term leases of the existing building to private business until such time full use of the building can be determined and adequately funded?

The Committee should complete their report by September 30, 2016 if funding is proposed for the 2017 Operating Budget.

Committee members should include: Selectmen, Planning Board, Recreation Commission and Staff, Planning Staff, MCAA, DPW/Parks, School, Conservation Commission, Resident, Someone with a trades background. The Committee is encouraged to invite other community stakeholders such as abutters, major community donors to the project and others who may have valuable input.

#### **IV. METHODOLOGY**

The Keyes Memorial Park Expansion Committee (“KMPEC” or “Committee”) was established by the Board of Selectmen on March 28, 2016. Over the course of nine months, the Committee engaged in an extensive iterative process of review and evaluation to develop recommendations based on current community needs and viable alternatives for the near-term and long-term. The Committee members including senior municipal staff members participated in the following:

- Regular committee meetings held, generally, on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursdays of the month between late April 2016 and December 2016.
- Multiple committee site visits of the 127 Elm Street property and the Fletcher Site/east entrance to Keyes Memorial Park.
- Consultation and site visits with local construction experts.
- Committee sub-group site visits to area community and senior centers.
- Interviews with various municipal Department heads and leadership.
- Public input gathering through social media from Milford groups.
- Review of relevant State RSAs (i.e. Shoreland Water Quality Protection Act).
- Contacts with Primex concerning questions of risk management.
- Public input session on October, 18, 2016.

Input was requested from the Town Administrator and staff to evaluate facility and space needs of the municipal departments currently housed in the basement of Town Hall (IT, Community Media, and Building Management). Information was shared that the Milford Improvement Team, a nonprofit using office space at Town Hall, the Police Department, and the Department of Public Works might also need additional space. Below is the summary of the information shared by the Town Administrator.

**Town Of Milford – Needs Update for Consideration  
Keyes Memorial Park Expansion Committee**

- Meeting Space
- Conference Rooms
- Office/Work Space for:
  - Recreation Department
  - Granite Town Media
  - Milford Improvement Team
  - Building Department
- Records Retention & Storage
- Equipment Storage – PD, DPW
- Supplies Storage
- Space for Community Groups
- State Temporary Need for DMV/Court Space

Summary of municipal space  
needs provided by Town  
Administrator on May 5, 2016



An additional consideration came to light early in the evaluation process. The Board of Selectmen indicated that they were considering a joint venture with the New Hampshire Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to provide short-term office space for the DMV while the State builds a new combined court and DMV facility on Meadow Brook Drive in Milford. Through the efforts of Selectmen Putnam and Daniels, the Committee received basic design and space needs information from the DMV. After considerable discussion and follow-up with the Board, the general consensus was that any municipally-owned space designed for temporary use by DMV should be easily convertible to meet the Town's future needs and avoid any additional "reconstruction" costs. As of December 2016, there was no specific information available about possible State funding for rental or renovations. Thus, a cost-benefit analysis could not be completed. The Committee suggested that the State might consider using a double-wide portable office unit that could be accommodated at the 127 Elm Street location on a temporary basis.

The Committee conducted a public input survey from early-September to mid-October. The objectives of this survey were to determine how residents currently use Keyes Memorial Park, how they felt it could be improved, what they would like to see as added amenities at the park, and identify funding preferences. This information was used to develop recommendation for the Keyes Memorial Park Master Plan.

During its initial meetings, the Committee identified a two-fold work plan:

- 1) Evaluate the 127 Elm Street building for municipal recreational and other Town facility needs, and
- 2) Evaluate the integration of the 127 Elm Street property into a broader "master plan" for the Keyes Memorial Park.

## **V. 127 ELM STREET BUILDING AND LAND**

### **PROPERTY DESCRIPTION**

Map 19 Lot 10 consists of 5.8 acres and is located in the Commercial Zoning District. To the north, the property is bounded by the Souhegan River and to the east by Keyes Memorial Park. To the east and south, lies a mixture of commercial and residential uses.

### **ACCESS & EGRESS**

Access to the property is by way of the one driveway on Elm Street located on the southeastern portion of the property. The entrance was reconstructed in 1990 as part of



site plan amendment to improve access and turning movements to accommodate larger vehicles. Site distance on Elm Street is adequate. To improve the egress due the volume of traffic on Elm Street, a flashing yellow caution traffic light was installed at the intersection. The light is currently not functional and would need to be reconnected.

### **BUILDING DESCRIPTION**

This is a two-story industrial manufacturing and office structure covering approximately 34,110 total square feet. The structure is comprised of three interconnected buildings built in two separate phases (1984 and 1989). In 1984, the Permattach Diamond Tool Corporation built the twenty-two foot tall, 2-story office building (Center Building), each floor totaling 3,200 square feet, and a 10,200 square foot light manufacturing area with a 5,400 mezzanine storage area (West Building). The foundation is comprised of reinforced concrete and the buildings are supported by steel framing. The butler style roof for each building is made up of the Butler Manufacturing MR-24, standing seam (steel) roof systems. The building façades were constructed of brick face and steel panel treatment. In 1989, the Permattach Diamond Tool Corporation built an additional 10,000 square foot industrial building (East Building) similar to the West Building.





### **UTILITIES, MECHANICALS, PLUMBING**

The site is serviced by municipal water and sewer. The buildings and systems were designed to accommodate industrial manufacturing and general office uses and would meet the needs of the Town. However, given the age of the HVAC, plumbing, and electrical systems, said systems will need to be replaced. The buildings contain a fire suppression system entering through the West Building. Of note, removal of that building would require a complete redesign of the fire suppression system for the remaining two structures.

### **PARKING**

The parking areas and property drive lanes are paved with asphaltic concrete paving. The total number of parking spaces associated with the buildings is 89 spaces. In 2016, the Department of Public Works constructed an additional 30-40 parking spaces along the eastern and southern portions of the 127 Elm Street property.



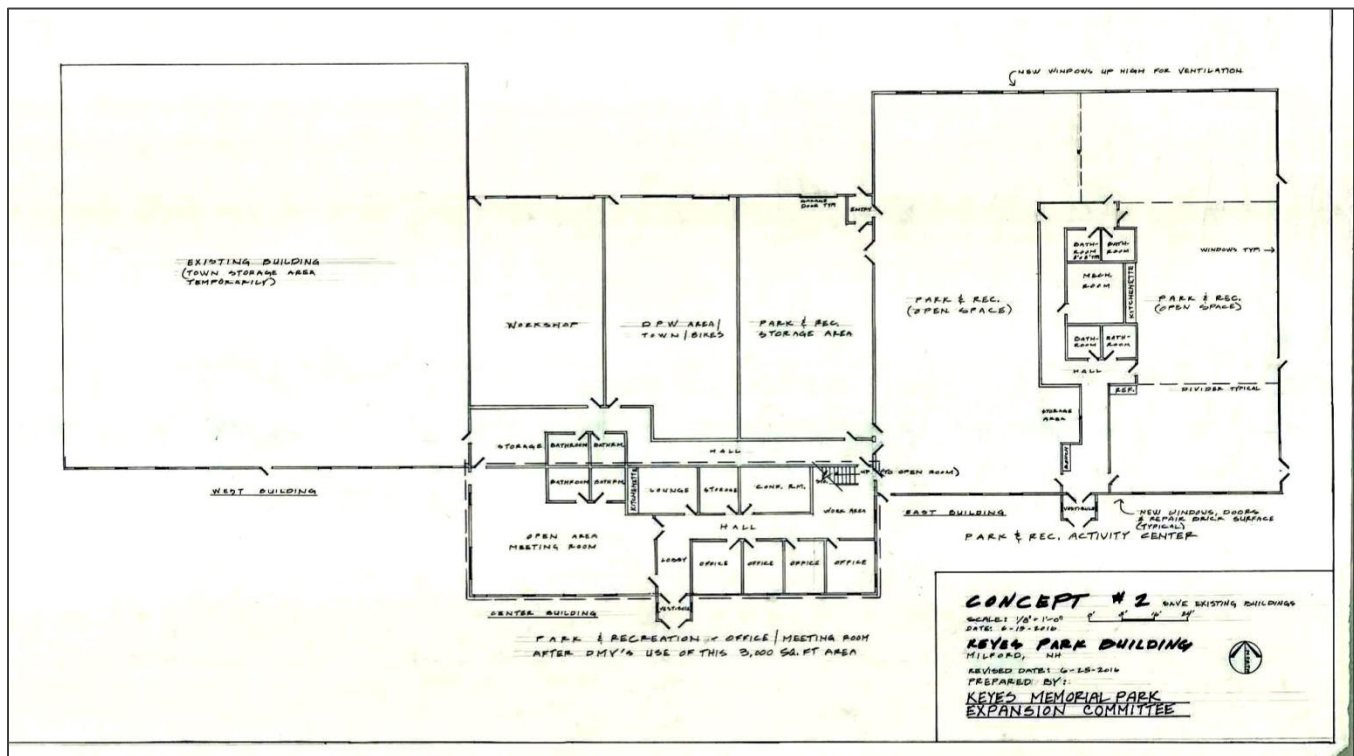
### **ANALYSIS**

The majority of the Committee felt that an objective professional evaluation of the three buildings was required in order to fully inform the Committee's recommendations. Committee members contacted the Turnstone Corporation for an estimate of the charge to perform a building assessment, to develop cost estimates for rehabilitation of the buildings, and to develop cost estimates to build a new building.

Turnstone Corporation offered their services at no cost to the Town demonstrating their strong commitment as a community partner.

The Committee spent numerous meetings reviewing the projected space needs of the Recreation Department and the Milford Area Seniors, a nonprofit organization that meets weekly at Town Hall and the Wadleigh Memorial Library. Working together, the Recreation Department and the Milford Area Seniors provide a variety of programs geared toward our local senior community. The Committee gave significant consideration to the current and future needs of our older residents given the aging of our population. Various materials from the New Hampshire Center for Public Policy (<http://www.nhpolicy.org/visual-aids/presentations>) were consulted along with relevant portions of the Nashua Regional Plan (2014) as prepared by the Nashua Regional Planning Commission (<http://www.granitestatefuture.org/regions/nashua-region/documents/>). It was noted that by relocating the Recreation Department and the related groups and activities to Keyes Memorial Park, space would become available for other departments currently located in Town Hall.

Below is the concept design developed by the Committee and used as the basis for Turnstone’s estimating. A full-page version of this diagram can be found in Appendix 2.





The proposed renovations identified a 14,000 square foot area within the front part of the Center Building and entire East Building for the Recreation Department and seniors dedicated to offices, meeting space, and areas to conduct programs and events. The remaining 6,000 square feet located in the rear of the Center Building would be used as work and storage space for DPW-building management and Police Department equipment. The remaining 10,000 square feet (West Building) was identified as temporary storage area if needed.

The West Building was included in the design since removing it would lead to major added expenses for reinstallation of the fire suppression system. The front section of the Center Building was designed to potentially accommodate N.H. Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) on a temporary basis should a lease agreement be pursued by the Board of Selectmen. DMV representatives provided the Committee a 3,000 square foot general floor plan that had been used in another community for a temporary DMV location. (See Appendix 3).

In September 2016, Turnstone Corporation provided the following estimates (see Appendix 4 and Appendix 5 for the detailed reports).

1.	Renovation of the existing 30,000 SF building	\$2,856,306.00
2.	Demolition of the existing building and construction of a new 30,000 SF building with an unfinished second floor	\$3,797,502.00

After considerable discussion, evaluation of the various alternatives, and cost estimates, the Committee felt that attempts to rehabilitate the existing buildings would not be a cost effective solution. Renovation of existing space to meet current and future needs is often an exercise in “fitting the square peg in a round hole”. The Town would face substantial challenges and limitations given the design, location, and orientation of the buildings. The current site layout is prohibitive and does not offer opportunities to fully maximize the 5.8 acres for program/field development, parking, and integration with Keyes Memorial Park. The Committee would like to incorporate more effective use of the Souhegan River views in the long-term planning efforts and initiatives for the park. Relocation of the proposed recreation center from the current 127 Elm St. building envelope opens the door to many more possibilities and better utilization of the available land. Further, the internal layout of the buildings create additional physical challenges and are not conducive for meeting program needs of either the Recreation Department or area seniors.


In examining the cost estimates provided by Turnstone, the project would require a substantial reinvestment by the Town. For example, given the age of existing

systems, the existing electrical, HVAC, and plumbing within the buildings will all need to be replaced at an estimated cost of \$854,000. Other substantive costs involve the replacement of the damaged and aging windows and drywall estimated to be approximately \$94,000 and \$154,000 respectfully.

The \$3.8 million “new building” cost estimate was based on replacing the entire existing 30,000 square foot structure with a similar sized building. After further discussion, the Committee concluded that the existing space exceeded current or future spatial and program needs, and that a future building area would most likely be substantially less than the existing structure and result in a comparable reduction in estimated cost. The spatial requirements and design of a new structure will require additional study and evaluation by the Town. Please refer, as well, to the *Milford Master Plan, Chapter 8 Recreation, Goal3* (p. 117-118) which speaks to this topic.

## **VI. KEYES MEMORIAL PARK - PUBLIC INPUT SURVEY & OPEN HOUSE**

In an effort to gather further information directly from Milford residents and individuals who currently use Keyes Memorial Park, the Committee developed a 16 item survey. The objectives of this survey were to determine how residents currently use Keyes Memorial Park, how they felt it could be improved, what they would like to see as added amenities at the park, and identify funding preferences. Additionally, the Committee sponsored a public input session or “Open House” on October 18<sup>th</sup> at Town Hall.

 <p>Public Input Survey Keyes Memorial Park Master Plan &amp; Integration of 127 Elm Street</p> <p>In March, the Board of Selectmen appointed a group of citizens to study and make recommendations about the long term use of 127 Elm St and Keyes Memorial Park.</p> <p>We need your help and input!</p> <p>Please take the online survey at <a href="https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MIL_Keyes_PubInput">https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MIL_Keyes_PubInput</a></p> 	 <p><b>OPEN HOUSE for Public Input</b> Keyes Memorial Park Master Plan &amp; Integration of 127 Elm Street</p> <p><b>Tuesday 10/18 from 7-9 pm</b> <b>Town Hall Banquet Room (3rd floor)</b></p> <p>The Keyes Park Expansion Committee needs your input!</p> <p>Also there is an online survey at <a href="https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MIL_Keyes_PubInput">https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MIL_Keyes_PubInput</a></p> 
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The Committee used social media, the Town’s website, the Recreation Department’s electronic newsletter, and the local newspaper to inform the public and invite them to complete the survey and attend the open house. With the assistance of the Nashua Regional Planning Commission, the survey was made available online from September 9, 2016 through October 20, 2016. Hardcopies of the survey were

available in the Town Hall lobby and at the Wadleigh Memorial Library. Additionally, surveys and survey reminder cards were distributed at the Town's September 13, 2016 election voting site.

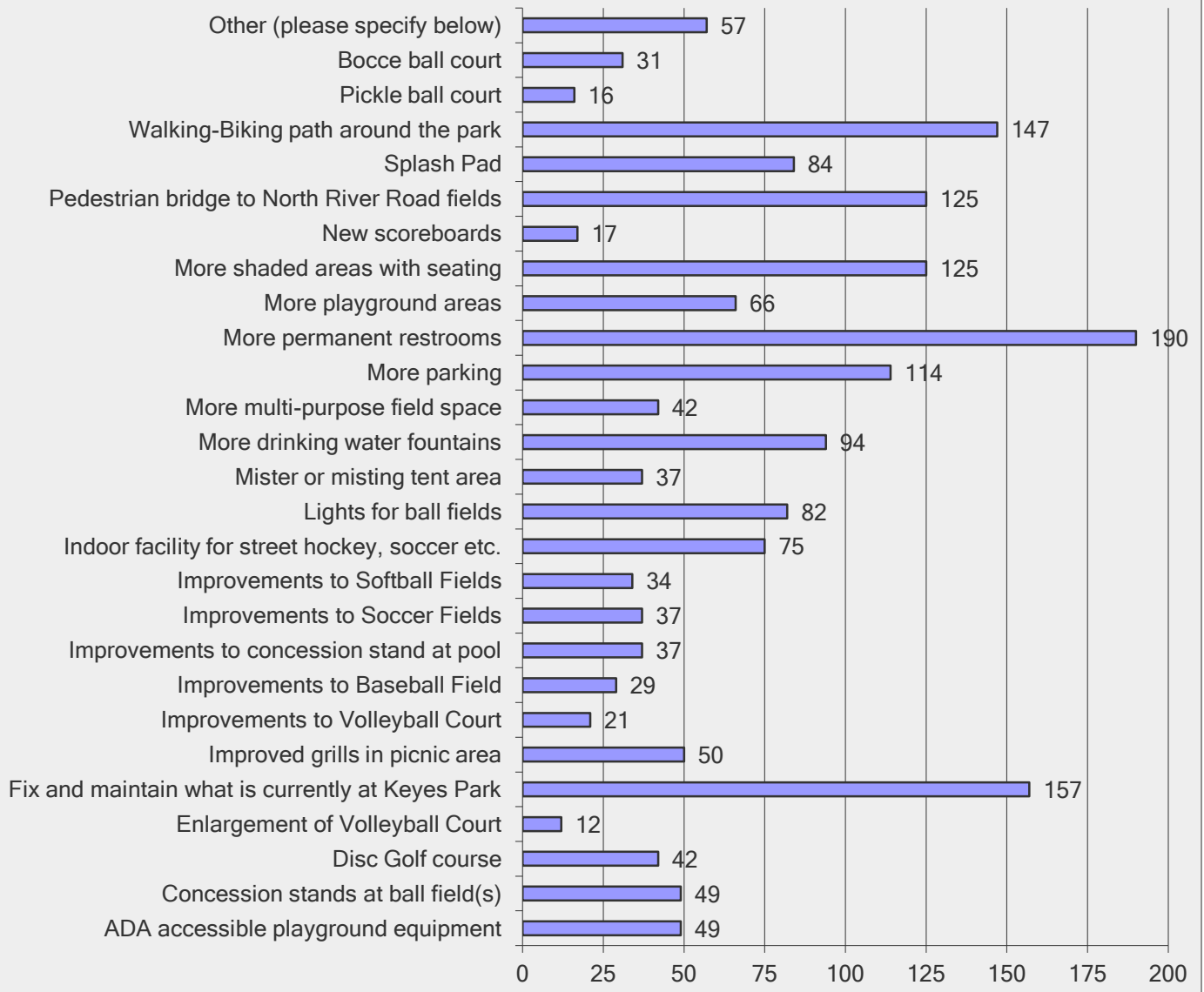
Three hundred and eight (308) surveys were completed. A copy of the survey tool and dataset is included in Appendix 6. It is well known in our community that the ball fields and multi-purpose field at Keyes are heavily and regularly used by the school teams, Milford Community Athletic Association (MCAA) teams and the American Legion teams. As seen in Table 1, among respondents who answered the question, the most frequently selected recreational facilities used at the park were: Playground, Special Events, General areas for walking, Trail along the river, Picnic Areas and the Pool.

<b>Table 1:</b>		
<b>Question 8 - Which recreational facilities at Keyes Park do you use? Check all that apply.</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Baseball Field	12.6%	36
Basketball Court	21.1%	60
Horseshoe Pit	2.5%	7
Pavilion/Pergola	29.8%	85
Picnic Area	44.2%	126
Playground	56.8%	162
Pool	42.8%	122
Skate Park	21.8%	62
Soccer Field	17.9%	51
Softball Field	13.3%	38
Special events (i.e. July 4th, Kids' Carnival etc.)	51.6%	147
Tennis Courts	18.9%	54
Trail along river	44.9%	128
Volleyball Court	5.6%	16
General area for walking	47.7%	136
General field space for other activities	23.2%	66
Other (please specify below)	6.0%	17
<b>Answered question</b>		<b>285</b>
<b>Skipped question</b>		<b>23</b>

This information suggested that the Committee was able to engage a broader segment of our community beyond the typical organized sports team participants.

The top six items that respondents would like to see improved or addressed at Keyes Memorial Park were: more permanent restrooms, fix & maintain what is currently at Keyes, walking-biking path around the park, more shaded areas, a pedestrian bridge to North River Road fields, and more parking. The results of this question are displayed below in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Question 9 - What improvements or additional facilities would you like to see at Keyes Park?**  
Check all that apply.



In a subsequent question, respondents were asked to prioritize the top three items they would like to see improved or added to the facilities at Keyes Memorial Park. As seen in Table 2, the results were consistent with the responses to Question 8 (Table 1) - Fix and maintain what is currently at Keyes Park, More permanent restrooms, and a Walking-Biking path around the park were the top three responses.

The survey asked how respondents would prioritize budget resources for recreational facilities at Keyes Memorial Park. Table 2 summarizes this data and suggests that repairing and maintaining current facilities is of greatest importance. Following that priority, respondents were interested in a walking-biking path, improving areas for picnicking and sitting, and improving views of the Souhegan River. This last point is

consistent with a goal from *Chapter 1 Community Character* of the *Milford Master Plan* that speaks to “integrating the Souhegan River and its tributaries into the public realm.”

**Table 2:**

**Question 12 - Please rank the following on how you would allocate Milford’s budget resources for recreational facilities at Keyes Park. Number 1 being the most important to you and number 8 being the least important to you. If Other, please list your preferences.**

Answer Options	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Response Count
Fix and maintain what is currently available at Keyes Park	126	42	31	21	18	5	2	1	246
Improve baseball and softball fields (quality of fields, concession areas, lighting)	21	22	22	30	28	43	32	14	212
Improve multi-purpose field space	2	31	20	39	48	41	26	12	219
Improve areas for activities such as picnicking and sitting	17	34	51	41	38	29	10	8	228
Create a walking-biking path around Keyes Park that connects with Milford's sidewalk and trail system	54	63	43	27	21	19	13	3	243
Improve and expand use and views of the Souhegan River	8	24	38	48	30	35	31	10	224
Expand facilities for indoor sports	26	17	20	15	25	29	59	39	230
Other: please specify below	12	7	6	4	3	0	3	28	63
Other (please specify)									58
<b>Answered question</b>									<b>281</b>
<b>Skipped question</b>									<b>27</b>

As the Committee mined the data, discussion evolved around the following points:

- Keyes Memorial Park is used to a large degree for more “general” activities.
- Consider increasing promotion of the park for special events and possibly for rental by outside groups.
- Consider ways to enhance public awareness of Keyes as a recreational resource offering diverse options for many age groups.
- Consider options for use in winter – winter biking (fat tires), snowshoeing, cross country skiing etc. some of which might be done along the proposed walk-bike path.
- Vigilance needed to maintain public safety and security at the park.
- Signage needed to inform the public about park rules and regulations.
- Consider centralizing the Recreation Department and its activities at Keyes Memorial Park to provide a more accessible venue (parking and stairs issues), to free-up space at Town Hall, and to more appropriately use the available space at Town Hall.

- Development and implementation of plans for Keyes Memorial Park must be done within the context of overall, prioritized plan(s) for the maintenance and development of town-wide recreational and park facilities.
- Given concerns about budgets and funding, repair, ongoing maintenance and “low hanging fruit” projects (i.e. minimal cost, broad impact) should become a higher priority.
- Multiple departments share responsibilities for Milford’s parks and recreation venues and programs. Multiple organizations participate, to varying degrees, in maintaining our playing fields. Multiple boards and commissions are involved in decision making about these facilities and what is offered by way of programming. For those reasons, it is clear that collaborative planning among primary stakeholders including Milford’s general citizenry will be needed for longer-term planning and for the larger, more expensive projects.

## **VII. KEYES MEMORIAL PARK – INTEGRATION AND MASTER PLAN**

Keyes Memorial Park currently offers a variety of passive and active recreational facilities. The table below summarizes the current status of those facilities.

<b>Table 3: Summary of current status of Keyes Memorial Park facilities</b>	
Swimming Pool	Water leak in need of repair, interior pool surface due for restoration, deck in need of repair
Wading Pool	Water leak
Concession stand	Lack of ventilation especially an issue during the summer months.
Playground	Significant work done by DPW in 2015-2016 to improve and restore area and equipment.
Pavilion and Pergola	A work in progress thanks to the Recreation Commission and Jerry Guthrie. Significant strides made in 2016 to complete pergola, patio and landscaping.
Picnic area and grills	Limited areas for grilling and the charcoal units (in the treed area) are ancient. Consideration needed to review grilling policy.
Stage	With recent addition of railing, stage is in good shape.
Parking	Additional parking with adequate lighting needed on east side of the park. Significant spaces added to west side in 2016 but lighting is inadequate. Parking area south of the baseball diamond has significant drainage problems.
Skate Park	Surface areas painted and patched as needed in



	2015-2016. Larger structural issues may exist; further evaluation and input by DPW needed.
Tennis courts	Need to be resurfaced
Basketball court	Needs to be resurfaced
Baseball field	Surface area needs repair/restoration; additional lights have been requested.
Softball fields (2)	Surface area needs repair/restoration; lighting has been requested
Multi-purpose field	Surface area needs significant repair/restoration
Volleyball court	Adequate for present time and amount of use. If tournaments in the future are desired, expansion would be needed.
Horseshoe pits	Adequate for the present.
Bathrooms	Multiple toilets available. Insufficient number and location of permanent toilets.

Taking all of this information into consideration, the Committee developed the following long-term conceptual plan and phased development plan. Strategic among its recommendations is the integration of the current Keyes Memorial Park parcel with the newly acquired 127 Elm Street parcel – in name and in use of the land. A larger version of the plan is included in Appendix 7.



**Phase 1** – 6 months to 1 year

1. ADA compliant walking /biking path around Keyes Memorial Park
2. Move softball fields and create multi-purpose field
3. Revise parking and add lighting on east side of park
4. Add lighting on west side of park
5. Add signage for the park entrances and park rules
6. Construct an interconnected road between the east and west sides of the park
7. Install (10) exercise stations along the walking/biking path, possibly on the river side of the path
8. Create shaded areas with seating
9. Development of a town-wide parks and recreation maintenance plan including fields
10. Initiate improved security measures (to be an ongoing action item throughout each phase of development)

**Phase 2** – 2 to 5 years

1. Smaller new building for a community center with space to accommodate future expansion
2. Construct new street hockey/basketball courts
3. Remove Pump House
4. Remove existing 127 Elm building
5. Remove current basketball court and create picnic area
6. Construct new multi-purpose field and parking

**Phase 3** – 8 to 10 years

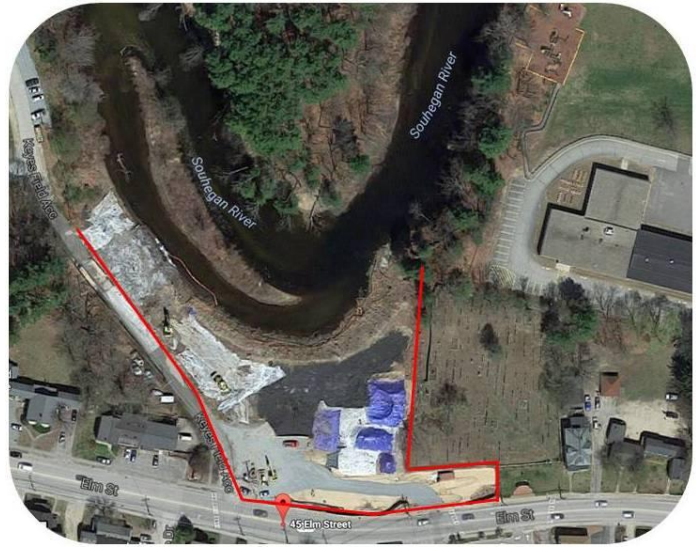
1. Complete landscaping
2. Install final lighting elements
3. Complete walkways throughout the park
4. Move forward with planning for a pedestrian/access bridge to the North River Road fields

The Committee recognizes that these recommended timeframes are aggressive and are subject to change depending upon the needs and available resources of the community. Although referred to as Milford's "premier park", the Committee acknowledges that Keyes Memorial Park is one of eight municipal recreation areas in Milford. Given its downtown location, diversity of facilities and extensive use, the Committee believes priority should be given to the ongoing maintenance and development of Keyes Memorial Park.



## **VIII. THE FLETCHER SITE – KEYES MEMORIAL PARK EAST ENTRANCE**

At the Public Input Open House on October 18, 2016, the Committee was asked to weigh-in on the Fletcher Site restoration plan by the Town Administrator. This approximately 2 acre area located between Elm Street the Souhegan River is adjacent to the park's east entrance and has been undergoing a major environmental clean-up due to significant contamination. This environmental clean-up has been decades in coming but now is nearing completion. The aerial photographs below depict, on the left, a view of the original buildings and, on the right, the site, bounded in red, in the midst of clean-up.



Restoration of the land should be consistent with efforts to maintain the community character of Downtown Milford and with the planning underway for Keyes Memorial Park. To that end, the Committee investigated previous work done by the Fletcher Cap Committee and the requirements of the current environmental remedial plans. Site visits were completed with representatives from the on-site sub-contractor.

Below is a conceptual plan for an amphitheater-styled area that includes gathering spaces, performance space with lighting, seating, pathways, decorative lighting, security cameras and other amenities. The stage and walkways would be ADA compliant. The Committee recommends honoring Milford's heritage as the "Granite Town" by incorporating granite benches and posts throughout this area of the park. A more complete summary prepared by the Community Development Director is included in Appendix 8.



At the time of this report, the Fletcher site clean-up continues and discussions are ongoing regarding the finalization of this project. The outcome of those discussions will define further future action at the east entrance to Keyes Memorial Park.

## IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Keyes Memorial Park Expansion Committee, as appointed by the Milford Board of Selectmen in April 2016, has completed its work and makes the following recommendations concerning the integration of 127 Elm Street and the future of Keyes Memorial Park.

- **Integration & Public Awareness** - Moving forward referring to the two parcels as one unit and eliminating references to “127 Elm Street” or “the old Permattach property” would promote the integration of the newly acquired property into Keyes Memorial Park. Similarly, once the Fletcher site clean-up is completed, integration of this land as part of the east or main entrance to Keyes Memorial Park would be furthered by renaming the site.

- **Integration & Public Awareness** - Integration also could be promoted by a lot line adjustment to merge the two parcels thus reflecting the blending together of the two parcels. The same action could be considered, eventually, for the former Fletcher Paintworks site.
- **Safety/Traffic Improvements** – Installation of lighting in the west parking area is needed for public safety. Currently, no lighting exists in that parking lot.
- **Safety/Traffic Improvements** - The Committee recommends that the main park entrance remain at 45 Elm Street for pedestrian and traffic safety reasons and that the west entrance be considered a secondary access point.
- **Safety/Traffic Improvements** – Public safety would be enhanced by the reactivation of the yellow blinking light on Elm Street at the west entrance to Keyes Memorial Park for use during high volume events.
- **Safety/Traffic Improvements** - A gravel connector road built on the south side of the park connecting the east and west parking areas would improve internal circulation of traffic between the two parking areas and reduce volume and potential congestion on Elm Street.
- **Asset Management** - For the short-term and until next-step decisions are made, it is recommended that the Town secure the existing building and add additional lighting to prevent further vandalism and further deterioration of the building.
- **Asset Management** - Although sections of the building could be used for temporary Public Works and/or Police “cold storage” or for temporary “cold storage” rental by a non-municipal entity, the long-term recommendation is for this land and its assets to be used for recreational purposes consistent with the original intention for purchasing the 127 Elm Street property.
- **Asset Management** - As supported by the survey data, repair and maintenance of the current facilities at Keyes Memorial Park is highly valued by Milford residents. The Recreation Department, Recreation Commission and Department of Public Works will collaborate on developing a prioritized plan within the next year to address all of the major repairs that need to be done to effectively maintain the current facilities at Keyes Memorial Park. The Committee anticipates that this

planning will be done within the context of a plan for the ongoing maintenance of town-wide parks and recreation facilities.

- **Asset Management** - Centralization of Milford's recreational services and programming at Keyes Memorial Park would promote more efficient use of staff time, relieve some parking issues around The Oval, and increase the accessibility of Town programs to more residents. This centralization could be accomplished by constructing a new multi-purpose multi-generational community recreation center at Keyes Memorial Park.
- **Longer-term Planning** - The Committee asks that the Board of Selectmen support establishing a capital reserve fund specifically for the design, development and construction of improvements to Keyes Memorial Park. The Committee recommends inclusion of any required warrant articles on the March 2017 ballot and asking the voters to initially approve and appropriate \$25,000 towards this fund.
- **Longer-term Planning** - The Board of Selectmen in collaboration with the Recreation Commission and Department will appoint a broad based committee to spearhead the development of a strategic plan to design and fund the construction of a new community recreation center building at Keyes Memorial Park and include coordinated renovations of the Keyes Pool bathhouse and concession stand. The new facility should be designed to reasonably accommodate expansion that may be indicated based on the future needs of our community.
- **Longer-term Planning** - As part of the Town's long-term community planning, a feasibility study of creating a pedestrian connection directly between Keyes Memorial Park and the North River Road recreational fields would strongly enhance Milford's endeavors to improve pedestrian and cycling connectivity throughout the Town. As evidenced in the survey, residents are very interested in this type of connection between the two recreation locations and interconnection to Milford's trail system.

Keyes Memorial Park is a valuable resource for our community both as a vibrant recreational center in downtown Milford for residents and as a potential drawing point for visitors to our community. Vigilant maintenance and continued enhancements of Keyes Memorial Park will serve to strengthen the quality of life in Milford and are consistent with the Town of Milford Master Plan.

APPENDIX 1 – 127 ELM STREET ACQUISITION PLAN – MEMO APRIL 2, 2014  
AND SPECIAL 2014 TOWN MEETING MATERIAL

APPENDIX 2 – 127 ELM STREET BUILDING CONCEPT #2 DIAGRAM

APPENDIX 3 – NH DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES CONCEPT PLAN

APPENDIX 4 – TURNSTONE BUILDING RENOVATION ESTIMATE

APPENDIX 5 – TURNSTONE NEW BUILDING CONSTRUCTION ESTIMATE

APPENDIX 6 – KEYES MEMORIAL PARK SURVEY TOOL AND DATA

APPENDIX 7 – KEYES MEMORIAL PARK MASTER PLAN

APPENDIX 8 – KEYES MEMORIAL PARK ENTRANCE PLAN DOCUMENT

APPENDIX 9 – KMPE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Note – in the Electronic version of this document, the Appendices are located in a separate PDF file due to the volume of information. Please see the file KMPEC Report Dec 2016 Appendices.PDF