

Agenda Summary
February 26, 2025

Agenda Item B-2

Picnic Tables and Benches Donation Policy

Summary: At their December meeting, the Recreation Commission recommended revising the existing procedures regarding the donations of benches and picnic tables on the Rec Path. The enclosed Selectboard Policy for Rec & Quiet Path Donations permitted the donations of benches and picnic tables for the life of the table or bench. It also stated that no additional benches or tables will be accepted, but when one is in need of replacement, the Town is to contact the original donor to see if they want to pay for a replacement. In the event they don't, the Town is to defer to a waiting list, which currently has 19 people who have expressed interest.

The issues with the current policy include:

1. There are no records of existing donors
2. The policy does not specify what benches or tables are acceptable or who has the authority to make that determination
3. The policy does not specify acceptable locations or who has the authority to determine
4. The policy does not include or address assembly or installation methods or cost
5. The policy does not address plaques including what is acceptable, cost, installation, or approval process

Enclosed is an example from Burlington's bench dedication programs. They offer predetermined options for benches and plaques and the required donation amount includes all associated costs. Some municipalities specify 10-year lifecycles for the donations, while we currently specify for the life of the bench/table. Staff recommend that all benches and tables should be purchased from commercial-grade vendors and be constructed of recycled plastic, composite, and stainless-steel materials.

A draft amendment is enclosed along with the current policy. The draft amendment suggests renaming the policy "Bench and Picnic Table Dedication Program", rather than Rec & Quiet Path Donation Policy as the Town could elect to include other Town properties such as parks for designated locations of tables and chairs eligible for future dedications.

Town Plan & Policy Impact: Replacement of the Rec & Quiet Path Donations Policy with the enclosed Bench and Picnic Table Donation Policy.

Fiscal & Human Resource Impact: N/A

Recommendation: Move to void the Rec & Quiet Path Donations Policy and approve the enclosed Bench and Picnic Table Donation Policy.

NEW PROPOSED POLICY

Selectboard Policy

Bench and Picnic Table Dedication Program Policy

Purpose: To outline the process for the donation of dedicated benches and picnic tables on Town property.

Waiting List: The Parks & Recreation Director or their designee may place a party interested in donating a dedicated bench or picnic table on a waiting list. If the Parks & Recreation Director or their designee determines there is a municipal need for picnic tables or benches, they may process a donation to cover the cost of the bench or picnic table in accordance with this Policy. The donation will be offered to parties on the waiting list in the order in which requests were received.

Dedication Donation: After a location has been determined by the Parks and Recreation Department to be available for a bench or picnic table, the required donation amount will be derived from costs associated with the purchase and installation of the bench, table, or plaque, which include, but may not be limited to, labor, shipping, and installation. Donations for dedication of benches or tables are for the life of the product, as determined by the Parks Superintendent, after which the donated element may be available for renewal at the cost of a new donation, with the first right of refusal given to the donor of the product to be replaced. If the donor of the product to be replaced opts not to renew, the donated element and plaque may be removed or rededicated at any time. The Town of Stowe reserves the right to remove or relocate any element on Town property at any time at its sole discretion.

Dedication Plaque: Each donation will be recognized by a 2" x 10" cast plaque in honor, in memory, or other suitable language approved by the Parks and Recreation Department. The plaque can include verbiage of up to 4 lines of approximately 46 characters and spaces per line. All verbiage will be reviewed and approved by the donor and Parks & Recreation Department.

Picnic Tables & Benches Product Selection: The Parks & Recreation Director or their designee determines the specific product or choice of options (vendor, materials, color, installation method) in accordance with the Town of Stowe Purchasing Policy. All benches and tables will be purchased from commercial-grade vendors constructed of recycled plastic, composite, and stainless-steel materials and comply with ADA standards.

Installation: Assembly and installation will be done by the Parks Department. In some cases, the Parks Superintendent may require outside contractors for site prep, such as installation of concrete bases, which will be included in the required dedication donation amount.

Restricted Donations: Any restricted donations beyond a bench or picnic table may be offered to the Stowe Selectboard for their consideration. Offers of restricted donations must be directed in writing to the Town Manager for distribution to the Selectboard for their consideration at a duly warned meeting. Restricted donations means that the money is being offered on the condition that it be used for a specific purpose.

CURRENT POLICY

Selectboard Policy Rec & Quiet Path Donations

Purpose: To outline the process for donating to the Stowe Rec Path or Quiet Path.

Picnic Tables & Benches: The Town of Stowe historically has taken donations for picnic tables and benches. However, the Town currently has a sufficient number and is not accepting further donations at this time. If for some reason a picnic table or bench is not able to be reasonably repairable in the judgement of the Parks Superintendent, he will work with the Town Manager's Executive Assistant to contact the original sponsor to see if they want to pay for a replacement. If they are not able to contact the original sponsor or they are not willing to pay for a replacement, the Town Manager's Executive Assistant may seek a new sponsor from a waiting list to buy a bench or picnic table as a replacement. Any donation is with the understanding that it is only for the life of the picnic table or bench.

General Donations: The Town Manager's Office may receive general unrestricted donations at any time in support of the Stowe Recreation Path which will be deposited in the Parks Operating Budget to offset the cost of maintaining the Rec Path.

Restricted Donations: Any restricted donations beyond a bench or picnic table may be offered to the Stowe Selectboard in writing for their consideration. Restricted donations means that the money is being offered with the condition that it be used for a specific purpose.

Recognition Park Bench Donation Policy

Option 1: Recognition plaque applied to existing bench

- Selected bench must be an existing standard, black powder-coated, steel bench
- Cost of plaque fabrication and installation: \$750
- The donation (bench location, plaque wording, etc.) must be approved by the Department of Parks, Recreation & Waterfront.

Option 2: New standard bench with recognition plaque

- Installation of a new standard, black powder-coated, steel bench with recognition plaque
- Cost of bench, recognition plaque and installation: \$3000
- The donation (bench location, plaque wording, etc.) must be approved by the Department of Parks, Recreation & Waterfront.

Option 3: Artisan recognition bench

- Development and installation of a new, custom artisan bench in a proposed location
- Cost of bench proposed by applicant; an additional administrative fee of \$750 will apply.
- Any associated permits must be completed by the applicant; permitting fees may apply.
- Dependent on the materials utilized, an additional annual maintenance fee may apply.
- The bench design must be developed by the applicant and comply with ADA standard requirements.
- The bench design and donation must be approved by the Department of Parks, Recreation & Waterfront, and the Parks & Recreation Commission.



*Standard
recognition plaque*



*New standard bench with
recognition plaque*



*Example of an
artisan recognition bench*

Please complete and submit the following Park Bench Donation Form.

For more information, call (802) 540-2544 or email Deryk Roach at droach@burlingtonvt.gov.



Park Bench Donation Form

Thank you for supporting Burlington parks through your donation! The City of Burlington Department of Parks, Recreation & Waterfront provides this opportunity as a meaningful way for people to remember loved ones, while enhancing our parks for the enjoyment of all.

Donor's Name _____

In Honor of _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Donor Signature _____ Date _____

Your signature on this form indicates you understand that the selected bench and the language on the recognition plaque are subject to approval by the Department of Parks, Recreation & Waterfront. You understand that, as a tax-deductible donation, the bench is the property of the City of Burlington Department of Parks, Recreation & Waterfront and will be maintained according to Department policy and procedures.

Donation Request

Park Name/Preferred Location _____

Bench Option (please check) ☐ Recognition plaque
 ☐ New standard bench with recognition plaque
 ☐ Artisan recognition bench

Estimated cost _____

Recognition Plaque

A standard, stainless steel plaque with laser-etched wording is included in both options 1 & 2. Messages should be simple statements recalling the person recognized or memorialized and cannot include birth or death dates. Wording is subject to approval. Your proposed plaque wording:

Please return this completed form to the address below. For options 1 & 2, please include a check for the total cost, payable to the City of Burlington Department of Parks, Recreation & Waterfront.