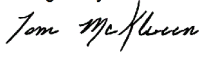




AGENDA REPORT

MEETING DATE:	April 13, 2026	Regular
DEPARTMENT:	Parks & Rec	Tom McKlveen, Parks and Recreation Director
SECTION OF AGENDA:	Reports & Presentations	
AGENDA ITEM TITLE:	Freedom Park Long-Term Vision Discussion	
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:	This item is intended to provide Council with a high-level overview of Freedom Park, its current condition, and the opportunity to consider its future direction. Freedom Park is a small but meaningful public space, and this discussion is meant to help determine whether staff should continue exploring future improvements that better reflect the park's memorial purpose and its role within the evolving Deerfield area. Council input is requested on whether to move forward with a broader public planning process for the park.	
FINANCIAL IMPACT:	None	
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Provide direction on whether staff should continue exploring future improvements to the park through a public planning process	

Signed by:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Freedom Park is an approximately one-acre pocket park that includes armed forces flags, a peace pole, a memorial plaque/monument, a path, and outdoor exercise equipment. While the park has meaningful memorial elements today, recent feedback has raised the question of whether the space could become more intentional in how it honors freedom, military service, veterans, and fallen soldiers, while also becoming more welcoming and usable for a broader range of park users.

The park is located in the Deerfield area, where redevelopment over time is expected to increase traffic, visibility, and activity. The future development of the nearby active athletic park is also expected to contribute to greater movement and use in the area. Because of that, this is a timely opportunity to consider whether Freedom Park should remain in its current condition or whether it should be thoughtfully reimaged as part of the area's evolution.

At this stage, staff is not presenting a final design or project scope. Instead, the purpose of this item is to provide context, share high-level possibilities, and seek Council input on whether staff should continue exploring future improvements through a process that includes PRAB, public outreach, veteran groups, and other stakeholders.



PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND:

Freedom Park includes several patriotic and memorial features, including the flags of the armed forces, a peace pole, and a memorial plaque/monument honoring a past Milton resident. It also includes a walking path and an outdoor exercise equipment circuit.

The park was originally established as a pedestrian-oriented public space and does not include a dedicated parking lot. Its location and original design reflect its function as a smaller civic space rather than a traditional destination park. Even so, the site has an important identity within the community and serves as a place of remembrance and reflection.

As Deerfield continues to evolve over time, staff believe it is appropriate to begin discussing whether Freedom Park should evolve with it. Council has expressed interest in a vision for the park that remains respectful of its memorial purpose while also becoming more intentional, more welcoming, and more multi-generational in nature.

STAFF ANALYSIS:

Freedom Park already contains meaningful elements, but its current layout is somewhat limited in how it functions as a broader community space. Its size, layout, and lack of dedicated parking all suggest that any future improvements should be carefully considered and scaled appropriately to the site.

Freedom Park was originally designed as a pedestrian-oriented pocket park and does not include a dedicated parking lot. As part of any future exploration of park improvements, parking and access will need to be considered, particularly as activity in the Deerfield area continues to grow over time. Staff has had early conversations with neighboring property owners regarding a potential parking partnership, and those discussions have been generally receptive so far.

Staff believes the park may have the potential to become a more intentional civic and memorial space that better reflects Council's stated interests. That could include stronger military and veteran recognition, respectful tribute elements for fallen soldiers, improved seating and shade, enhanced paths, and thoughtful gathering or interpretive features that make the park more welcoming across ages and demographics.

Staff has also taken initial steps to better understand how similar spaces function by visiting and reviewing other comparable parks and memorial-oriented sites in the area. That early research reinforced that even smaller spaces can feel meaningful, welcoming, and well-designed when improvements are intentional and aligned with the purpose of the site.

At this stage, staff is not recommending a final concept. Rather, staff is recommending continued exploration of what the park could become through a public process that allows for broader feedback before any scope is established.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no immediate fiscal impact associated with this presentation or discussion. Any future costs would depend on the scope of improvements Council may wish to pursue.

If Council directs staff to continue exploring the future of the park, staff would return at a later date with more defined concepts, potential cost implications, and any recommended funding considerations.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Staff has identified two broad alternatives for Council's consideration:

- Freedom Park could remain in its current condition with no broader planning effort for future improvements.
- Recreate Freedom Park's purpose and intent to a different program use.

LEGAL AND REGULATORY CONSIDERATIONS:

There are no immediate legal or regulatory actions associated with this discussion item. Any future improvements to Freedom Park would need to follow the City's normal review, procurement, design, and construction processes, as applicable.

Depending on the ultimate scope of any project, additional review may be needed related to accessibility, partnerships, and implementation requirements.

OPERATIONAL IMPACT:

At this time, there is no direct operational impact associated with the presentation itself. However, if Council wishes to continue exploring future improvements, operational considerations would become part of the planning process.

These may include long-term maintenance expectations, landscaping, upkeep of memorial features, pedestrian circulation, and access. Parking would also need to be considered as part of any future vision for the site. Staff has had early conversations with neighboring property owners regarding a potential parking partnership, and those discussions have been encouraging thus far.

COMMUNITY OR STAKEHOLDER IMPACT:

Freedom Park holds value for multiple groups within the community, including veterans, military families, nearby residents, and the broader public. Because of the park's memorial character and future potential, staff believes it is important that any planning process include meaningful outreach and engagement.

If Council wishes to continue exploring future improvements, staff would anticipate involving the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, the general public, veteran groups, nearby stakeholders, and other community partners. This would help ensure that any future concept is shaped thoughtfully and reflects a range of perspectives.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT:

Exploring the future of Freedom Park aligns with the City's broader interest in maintaining high-quality public spaces that reflect community values and enhance the character of Milton. It also supports thoughtful long-range planning in the Deerfield area, where change and redevelopment are expected over time.

Continued exploration of Freedom Park could support Council's interest in creating a space that honors service and sacrifice while also serving as a welcoming and functional civic asset for the community.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends continuing the thoughtful planning process for Freedom Park to better understand what future multi-generational improvements may be appropriate for the site. Any future concept should remain respectful of the park's memorial purpose while also considering its location, scale, access, and role within the evolving Deerfield area.

RECOMMENDED MOTION

No formal motion is required.

REVIEWS & APPROVALS:

Financial Review:

Legal Review:

Concurrent Review: Steven Krokoff, City Manager

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Steven Krokoff
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ATTACHMENTS: