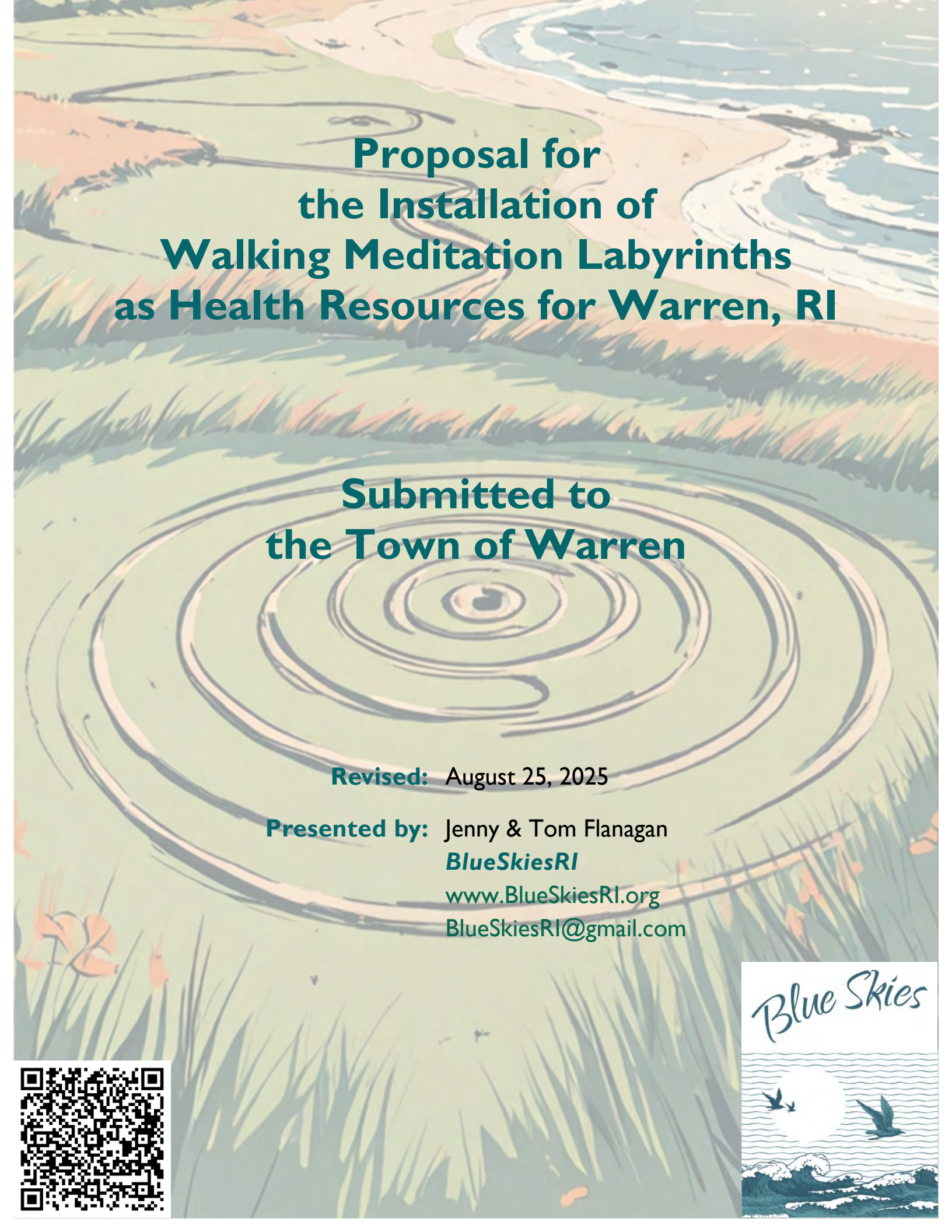




Proposal for the Installation of Walking Meditation Labyrinths as Health Resources for Warren, RI

Submitted to the Town of Warren

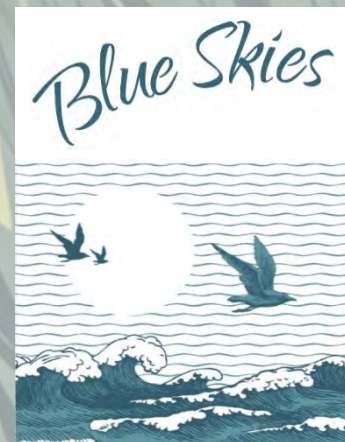
Revised: August 25, 2025

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Date: August 25, 2025

To: Warren Town Council

From: Jenny & Tom Flanagan, Anat Sagi and Thomas Luthi, **BlueSkiesRI**

**RE: Proposal for the Installation of Walking
Meditation Labyrinths**

Introduction

BlueSkiesRI, a non-profit organization dedicated to addressing anxiety in the community, proposes the installation of a labyrinth within the Town of Warren, with plans to add additional labyrinths in the future.

This will be a **walking meditation labyrinth**.

The labyrinth will foster recreation, enhance community engagement, and support the personal well-being of our residents.

Crucially, the labyrinth will be installed at no cost to the Town of Warren and will incur no additional maintenance costs for the Town.

A. Background

Over the past 18 months Blue Skies RI has been discussing introducing public walking meditation labyrinths to the Town of Warren. The visibility of public labyrinths raises community awareness and provides new opportunities for citizens to manage silent emotional struggles, such as anxiety, grief, and feelings of disconnection. Our town's commitment to installing a public labyrinth will enhance our image as a caring and supportive community.

With the goal of cultivating broad community support, BlueSkiesRI has discussed plans with local organizations whose collective efforts align existing art and wellness initiatives, including:

- @ The Warren Prevention Coalition
- @ The East Bay Community Action Program
- @ The East Bay Recovery Center
- @ Thrive Behavioral Health
- @ Warren HEZ
- @ Thrive Outside

- @ The George Hail Free Library
- @ Discover Warren
- @ The Warren Arts and Cultural Commission
- @ The Collaborative
- @ Imago Foundation for the Arts
- @ The Warren Land Trust

We have tested our concept with three temporary pop-up painted labyrinths;

- @ A pop-up labyrinth was painted in the parking lot at Thrive Behavioral Health on Railroad Avenue, across from the East Bay Bike Path.
- @ Another pop-up labyrinth was temporarily painted at the Warren Town Beach as part of World Labyrinth Day on May 3, 2025.
- @ A third temporary pop-up labyrinth was created at the Kick-Off to Summer event on June 21, 2025, at Burr's Hill Park.

These temporary installations have provided experiential understandings of our proposal. Positive feedback reinforces our belief in the potential benefits of permanent structures.

B. Benefits

We live in a time when everyday anxiety, stress, and loneliness are rising. It is timely to introduce free and openly accessible resources to enhance well-being. While traditional clinical approaches continue to serve important roles, a labyrinth offers a complementary, non-clinical path for addressing our growing anxiety.

Unlike confusing mazes, a labyrinth features a single, winding path that leads to a center and then back out again. This clear, predictable journey promotes a sense of ease and of security for individuals who walk labyrinths. Those who use walking meditation labyrinths report:

- @ Increased calmness and reduced anxiety
- @ Renewed energy and a sense of playfulness

- @ Enhanced mindfulness and meditative states
- @ Opportunities for deep reflection and processing difficult emotions
- @ A sense of peace or spiritual connection

The combination of being in a natural setting, feeling the rhythmic motion of walking, and focusing attention on the path provides a “mini break” for the brain, offering a temporary escape from worries and fostering new perspectives.

Moreover, the proposed labyrinth will not be solely for serious introspection; it can also be a joyful space for all ages. Children often engage playfully with labyrinths. The specific designs proposed here are to accommodate large group use and active exploration.

C. The Proposal

At this time, BlueSkiesRI initially proposes to construct its first public walking meditation labyrinth at the Warren Town Beach, with two additional locations under discussion. These locations offer diverse experiences and accessibility for various community members.

The proposed locations, designs, and materials are open to modification and refinement through public input and consultation with Town officials.

The location initially proposed is:

1. THE WARREN TOWN BEACH

In future phases of this project, additional locations will be evaluated for a second and a possible third labyrinth:

2. **JAMIEL’S PARK** - a more central location in town
3. **A: HERITAGE PARK (WOJICK’S FARM)**
B: THE MEADOWS (BRITO FIELD)
- more natural settings

I. Warren Town Beach



PROPOSED LOCATION. The north grassy field between the playground and the water, at the site of the successful World Labyrinth Day pop-up labyrinth.



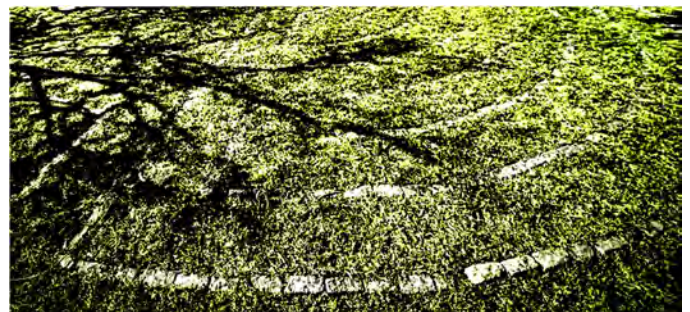
BENEFITS:

- @ Stunning views of the Warren River
- @ Easy access from the playground, the beach, and Burr's Hill Park
- @ A natural connection to Warren's vibrant shoreline

PROPOSED DESIGN. A *Processional Style labyrinth*, featuring one path to the center and a separate path for exiting. This design is ideal for family settings, allowing for playful use without congestion.



PROPOSED MATERIALS. *Bricks or granite cobbles* artfully set flush with the ground to mark the paths, with the areas between paths remaining as grassy lawn. This material choice allows for easy mowing over the labyrinth, ensuring minimal disruption to existing maintenance routines.



2. Jamiel's Park



PROPOSED LOCATION – CENTRALLY IN TOWN. The rear of Jamiel's Park, off Market Street, on the small hill at the far end.



BENEFITS

- Ⓢ Scenic views of Belcher Cove seasonally
- Ⓢ High accessibility for a majority of Warren's residents
- Ⓢ An open location that is visible and integrates with the existing park

PROPOSED DESIGN. A Classical 7-circuit labyrinth. This design has been found globally for more than 3,500 years. It offers an alternative, traditional labyrinth experience for community use.



PROPOSED MATERIALS. River stones (rounded field stones) lining the paths, with grass within the paths.



MAINTENANCE CONSIDERATIONS. While this design would require mowing and trimming between and around the river stones, BlueSkiesRI will recruit volunteers to perform the maintenance tasks.

LANDFILL ACKNOWLEDGMENT &

MITIGATION. We recognize that this location is situated atop a closed (but uncapped) former landfill. We understand that the Town of Warren is securing funding for the capping of this landfill, anticipated between 2025 and 2027. The selection of river stones for the labyrinth material is proposed to allow for relatively easy

removal and storage of the labyrinth components during the capping project, followed by their reinstallation once the landfill is capped and the site is ready. This approach ensures the labyrinth's long-term viability at this location while accommodating an essential Town infrastructure project.

3. A: Heritage Park

PROPOSED LOCATION – IN A QUIET, NATURAL

SETTING. Off School House Road, east of Kinnicut Road. This location can accommodate a 75' wide labyrinth.



4. B: The Meadows

PROPOSED LOCATION – IN A QUIET, NATURAL

SETTING. Off the Warren Bike Path, near the “Broken Bridge,” behind Veterans Field at the Kickemuit Middle School. This location can accommodate a larger, 100' wide labyrinth.



We plan to discuss these two alternative proposed labyrinths with the Conservation Commission at their meeting on September 15th.

PROPOSED DESIGN. A Chakra-vyuha style labyrinth. This ancient spiral-based pattern reflects natural forms and offers fewer directional changes than classical labyrinths making them easy to navigate.



PROPOSED MATERIALS. Woodchips for the paths, with the areas between paths left as grassy field. This material facilitates easy mowing of the field while allowing the grass to remain tall, contributing to the natural aesthetic.



Alternatively, this labyrinth could simply be a periodically mowed path, with higher grass between the lanes, without woodchips.

D. Other elements

Each labyrinth will be accompanied by informative signage. This signage will include directional cues, suggestions for using the labyrinth, and acknowledgments of project sponsors. The design, content, specifications, and installation of these signs will be fully coordinated with and approved by relevant Town officials to ensure consistency with Town standards and aesthetics.

E. Costs

BlueSkiesRI is committed to finding sponsors to fully fund materials for all three labyrinths and associated signage. This will involve dedicated fundraising efforts with individuals and the business community. Installation will be performed by local volunteers to maximize the sense of community ownership in the labyrinths.

There will be no direct construction, installation, signage or material costs to the Town of Warren for any of the proposed labyrinths.

Regarding ongoing costs, the initially proposed location at the Town Beach is already subject to regular mowing by the Town. We do not anticipate any additional maintenance by the Town. The Jamiel's Park labyrinth (with river stones) will require modified mowing and trimming, and BlueSkiesRI will recruit and coordinate volunteers to support this project. For the more natural locations under consideration, these are hayed by local farmers. The type of materials and construction will be determined after consultation with the farmers who hay here, to ensure continued ease of maintenance.

3.5 If for any reason the Town elects to abandon one or more labyrinth, Blue Skies RI will oversee disassembly and return to the site's original condition.

Regarding safety and security, Lt. Marc Ferreira indicated that both the Town Beach and Jamiel's Park already have regular patrols. If either Heritage Park or the Meadows have specific events or become a concern, patrols could be increased there without added cost.

Regarding maintenance, Brian Wheeler, DPW Director, indicated that his department has very little capacity for additional maintenance costs. Therefore, he tentatively supports the concept, so long the DPW can use its existing maintenance procedures.

F. Conclusion

The distinct locations and styles of labyrinths within this proposal will provide varied opportunities for residents to experience these calming and beneficial resources, allowing them to find a style and location that best suits their individual needs at any given moment.

We are grateful for the enthusiastic support received so far from a wide range of community members and organizations, some of whom are named here. We do anticipate comments and feedback from both the community and Town officials as we move forward with this exciting proposal. We have received no negative feedback to date.

At this time, we request permission to begin work to install the first labyrinth described in this proposal.

We are available to answer any questions you may have and look forward to the opportunity to discuss the evolution of this project.



Respectfully submitted – Jenny & Tom Flanagan
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