

Newton Parks & Recreation Commission
Meeting Minutes-On-line Meeting
7:00 p.m. – Monday, April 24, 2023

Attending: Arthur Magni, Chair, Byron Dunker, Vice Chair, Commissioner Banks, Beth Wilkinson, John Rice, Midge Connolly, Gloria Gavis, Randy Johnson, Mark Feldhusen, Jack Neville, Ted Chapman, Dr. Michael Richardson

Meeting began: 7:00pm

1. Meeting Minutes – March 20, 2023 – Approved 8-0

2. Commissioner’s Report

- Commissioner Banks reported the passing of former Commission member Richard Tucker. Chairman Magni commented Mr. Tucker was a valuable member of the Commission, he always held the middle ground. He will be missed.
- **Re-occurring Special Event**
 - **St. Mary of Carmen Festival- Informational- Chuck Proia**
 - Mr. Proia reported the festival dates are July 12-July 16.
 - There are no significant changes.
 - Chairman Magni asked if there have been any issues reported. Mr. Proia commented there have been no issues reported.
 - Commissioner Banks reported that Dr. Richardson will be logging in to the meeting a little late and wanted the Commission to know he supports the proposal.
 - **Indigenous Peoples Day Ceremonial Celebration-informational**
 - Commissioner Banks reported this event is scheduled Oct 9 at Albemarle Playground. There are no significant changes.

Chairman Magni stated both re-occurring events will be moved to a public hearing.

- **Projects**

- Commissioner Banks thanked the PRC Maintenance staff for the clean-up work done for the Marathon, and Forestry who hung the banner at Heartbreak Hill.
- Playgrounds
 - Newton Centre resurfacing project should be a six-week project. The material consists of a durable material to deter vandalism.
 - Matting project funded by ARPA funds is scheduled for Davis Playground and Auburndale Cove Playground. Williams Elem. surfacing was completed.
 - CPC approved Gath Pool Project and the Fields Proposal for Albemarle, Burr, and McGrath.
 - Levingston Cove project on schedule, hoping to be complete by July.

- **Programs- Carol Stapleton- Program Manager**

- PRC has started the hiring process for summer camps/aquatics.
- Current programs: Archery, orienteering, golf, badminton, pickleball.
- Newton Serves is scheduled May 7.
- Fun fest is scheduled May 13 & 14 at City Hall.
- Artful Piano project is underway.
- Commissioner Banks commented the department needs more staff.
- Mr. Rice commented without the staff PRC could not do all that they do and asked if the position held by Judy Dore has been filled? Commissioner Banks reported there was

restructuring. An Associate Director was added to the Parks & Open Space Division, and we are currently interviewing for Judy Dore's Recreation Program Manager position.

3. Wayfinding Signage Proposal for Cold Spring Park

- Greg Mellett, PRC Associate Parks & Open Space, and the Friends of Cold Spring Park presented the proposal add nine signs to the main trail (Life course), rename the Life course trail to the Cold Spring Park Loop and update the kiosk. PRC Maintenance Division would dig the holes for the signs. The timeline for the project is Fall 2023.
- Ms. Connolly asked the purpose of changing the trail name. Becky responded the park is sixty acres with different routes, "life Course" does not resonate, the main trail is an intuitive loop. The signs will provide a clear route around the loop.
- Mr. Chapman commented the Parks & Open Space Plan recently approved includes a Trails Commission and signs are a big topic. They would like to develop consistent style, icons, and line type for all signs. Accessibility is an issue; these signs include distances which is important to know for those with mobility issues.
- Commissioner Banks reported PRC staff has reviewed locations, maintenance and sighting of signs.
- Mr. Feldhusen commented the signs look good and asked the material. Mr. Mellett replied the signs are aluminum with an adhesive material.
- Mr. Chapman asked if the first phase of the proposal includes the signs only. Becky replied yes, the kiosk will be updated after the signs are complete.
- Ms. Wilkinson commented the signs are a great design, and do not interfere with seeing nature.
- Mr. Chapman asked if QR Codes will be added to the signs, Becky replied yes, if the city will be the caretaker of the website. Mr. Chapman commented the Newton Conservators have a QR code system. Commissioner Banks commented there are different groups assisting and we want to be consistent.
- Commissioner Banks asked if the loop is the right name, people do not always walk the entire loop, they may only walk to the off-leash area, etc., Ms. Connolly commented she likes the name. Mr. Mellett commented minor details will be worked out.
- Mr. Chapman asked if the multitude of individual signs posted in Cold Spring Park be removed. Mr. Feldhusen suggested the Commission tackle the issue to consolidate signs. Mr. Chapman suggested using icons, for example no biking would be a bike with a line through the image.
- Christian of the Friends group commented, the current proposal is for a directional sign, including icons would be a different type of signage.

*Ms. Wilkinson made the motion to move the proposal to a public hearing. Mr. Chapman seconded the motion.
Motion passed 8-0*

4. Committee Reports

- Community Preservation Committee -*B. Dunker*
 - CPC is Reaching out to the Community, there is money available for proposals.
 - Contacted the Tower company for access by river to connect rail trail.
 - Mr. Rice asked if CPC provides money for the artificial turf surface. Commissioner Banks replied no, the proposal does not include the turf surface or installation.
- Urban Tree Commission – *B. Wilkinson*
 - Spring street tree planting this Saturday.
 - Programs & Services Committee continues to review the tree ordinance proposals.
- Farm Commission – *B. Wilkinson*
 - May: Quarterly meeting, Open House May 6, and Seedling Sale May 20 & 21
- Off-Leash Area Working Group (OLAWG) – *Commissioner*
 - No update
- Arts & Culture – *G. Gavis*
 - Artful Pianos will be moved to the public spaces next month.

- Shine Mural Project is in process. Commissioner Banks stated the artists will be painting the murals during Fun Fest.

5. New Business

- No New Business

Meeting Adjourned 8:16 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Robin McLaughlin

Commission Secretary