

Newton Parks & Recreation Commission
Meeting Minutes-On-line Meeting
7:00 p.m. – Monday, May 15, 2023

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

Meeting began: 7:00pm

1. Meeting Minutes – April 24, 2023 – Approved 8-0

2. St. Mary of Carmen Festival- Public Hearing

- There were no comments or questions.

Ms. Gavis made the motion to approve the special event application as presented. Mr. Feldhusen seconded the motion. Motion passed 8-0

3. Indigenous Peoples Day Ceremonial Celebration-Public Hearing

- Mr. Richardson asked what type of security is in place for this event. Ms. Prasad commented the group has hired private security and the event management company managing the event will be on site.
- Mr. Neville asked if the Newton Police will be on-site. Ms. Prasad commented the first year of the event was the same day as the Boston Marathon, Newton Police were not available. Private security has been used since the first year of the event. Mr. Neville asked if private security can be on a private park. Commissioner Banks commented the application is shared with all departments and this event has been managed this way in the past.

Ms. Gavis made the motion to approve the special event application as presented. Ms. Wilkinson seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0-1

4. Wayfinding Signage proposal for Cold Spring Park – Public Hearing

- Alan Nogee, President of the Friends of Cold Spring Park stated this proposal meets the needs of the users. Mr. Nogee has encountered many people in the park looking for directions. The online reviews of the park are fantastic except for the request for better signage. The simple design was modeled after the Audubon Society. Mr. Nogee commented the Parks, Recreation & Culture Dept do a great job maintaining the park.
- Commissioner Banks commented a name change of the trail is also part of this proposal. Mr. Nogee confirmed the name change to the Cold Spring Park Loop is easier to understand there is a loop.

Mr. Chapman made the motion to approve the proposal as submitted. Ms. Gavis Seconded the motion. Motion passed 8-0.

5. Susan G. Komen 3-day Event – Informational

- Meredith Parker, representative of the Komen 3-Day, commented this event is a 60 mile walk with approximately 800 attendees. The date is earlier this year, August 18. Street closures and traffic mitigation is not required. One difference this year is there will be one lunch stop at City Hall. Last year there was a second stop in Newton Centre Playground.
- Mr. Neville asked the roads used, Ms. Parker replied, Comm Ave, City Hall, past B.C. towards Brighton.
- Ms Parker commented the walkers love coming through Newton.

Ms. Gavis made the motion to move the proposal to a public hearing. Mr. Feldhusen seconded the motion. Motion passed 8-0.

6. Wellington Free Little Library – informational

- Mr. Luis Perez Demorizi, Director of Parks & Open Space, commented Greg Mellett, Associate Director of Parks & Open Space has been working with the Friends of Wellington Park (FoWP) to add a second Little Free Library (LFL) to Wellington Park and has submitted the following notes.
 - 1)The proposed Little Free Library (LFL) will be the second Little Free Library at the park and will contain books for adults.
 - 2)The LFL will be placed immediately adjacent to existing “Little Free Library” at the park and a path near Kilburn Road. The proposed height will be maximized at 48”.
 - 3)The LFL will be provided and installed by the FoWP.
 - 4)The LFL will be managed and monitored by the FoWP.
 - 5)A formal gift letter has been provided by the FoWP to Newton PRC
- Ted Kuklinski, FoWP member commented the children’s LFL has been a success. A wonderful couple maintains the LFL. Their daughter entered a contest and won a LFL including the books, FoWP has had the second LFL for a year and have been waiting to install. The Adult LFL will be higher so there is an obvious difference between the two.
- Ms. Gavis commented the LFL is a great idea.
- M. Chapman asked besides the height difference how will someone know one library is for children and the other is for adults. Mr. Kuklinski commented a label will be added. There is also an email address if anyone has content concerns.
- Chairman Magni requested Mr. Kuklinski have the sign verbiage ready for the public hearing.

Mr. Neville made the motion to move the proposal to a public hearing. Mr. Chapman second the motion. Motion passed 8-0

7. Overnight commercial vehicle parking

- Commissioner Banks commented recently there have been two issues regarding vehicle parking in municipal lots:
 1. Commercial vehicles parking overnight.
 2. Helping residents find a place to park in snow emergencies.
- Commissioner Banks has been meeting with other City Departments, NPD, Traffic and DPW to discuss and possibly implement a pilot program.
- Mr. Neville stated Braceland Playground is always used and abused, there are trucks parked there for days. We need a policy especially for no parking. Commissioner Banks commented Braceland, and Forte were mentioned in the complaints.
- Mr. Feldhusen asked the current policy for parking in the lots. Commissioner Banks commented there is an ordinance, there is the winter parking ban but the policy for the regular season is unclear.

- Ms. Wilkinson commented someone saw this item on the agenda and thought it was being allowed and protested allowing overnight parking. The parks close at dusk, if parking is allowed overnight, it will be difficult to know if someone is in the park. Commissioner Banks replied she is meeting with staff and looking at what other communities are doing, snow removal makes it tricky. Ms. Wilkinson asked how we will keep the people on the paved areas and off the grass.
- Mr. Johnson commented he is not sure how this would work; he has friends in downtown Boston pay a fee to park in garages during snow emergencies.
- Commissioner asked for thoughts on allowing commercial vehicles in parks. Mr. Feldhusen replied do not allow commercial vehicles in parks. Mr. Perez Demorizi commented the Commission to consider the language PRC does have contractors working in the parks.

8. Commissioner's Report

- The Spring season has been busy with events:
 - Caterpillar dedication ceremony in Waban Common
 - Eagle Scouts completed the Bocce court project at Cabot Park
 - Newton Serves was held on May 7
 - Bike Safety Course Program
 - Family Fun Fest
 - Murals/Shine project is preparing for installation in different areas around the city.
 - Artful Piano project is also ready for placement around the city.
 - June 3rd is the grand opening ceremony for the Cabot Pavilion. The Ceremony will take place during the Cabot PTO Spring Fair.

9. Committee Reports

- Community Preservation Committee -*B. Dunker*
 - Warren House has submitted a proposal to replace 248 windows.
- Urban Tree Commission – *B. Wilkinson*
 - No report
- Farm Commission – *B. Wilkinson*
 - Seedling sale this weekend
 - Solar installed but there was a broken part, part has been ordered.
 - Damage to greenhouse from a blast by contractors working across the street.
- Off-Leash Area Working Group (OLAWG) – *Commissioner*
 - Last meeting was on April 28 and there was a site visit to view the new fence at Claflin Playground
 - NPD part time Animal Control Officer has started for the summer.
 - Mr. Chapman asked about the two dog waste receptacles placed at LFCC. Commissioner Banks replied PRC keeps a list to be added or changed and right now we are maxed out on units. Dog waste receptacles in a park does not mean it is an off-leash site.
 - Mr. Perez Demorizi commented Hunnewell off-leash area is getting quite a bit of use since the renovations.
 - Mr. Chapman asked about the community gardens proposed at Spears Park. Mr. Perez Demorizi replied the project has been on hold due to the other projects, Gath Pool, Levingston Cove and Athletic Fields
- Arts & Culture – *G. Gavis*
 - Public Art is being installed around the city, Artful Pianos and the mural/Shine project.
 - There are over 30 Outdoor Special events this spring/summer. The process has been working well. Mr. Feldhusen asked if there were summer concerts scheduled. Ms. Gavis replied there are 6 concerts planned.

- Ms Wilkinson commented the Newton Centre Pavilion was noted in the budget book, and asked if the pavilion has been approved. Commissioner Banks commented the budget book reflect the feasibility study for the pavilion. This summer the concerts will be set up in three different locations to see which direction works best.
- Ms. Gavis asked if generators will be required, Commissioner Banks replied yes.

10. New Business

- Ms Gavis asked for the plan in September regarding the meeting format, zoom, in-person or hybrid. Commissioner Banks replied, the state has extended virtual meetings, the city would like to maintain the electronic version, meeting attendance has increased due to the availability of meetings online. Commissioner Banks suggested Chairman Magni and Ms. McLaughlin will have to do a practice run on managing a hybrid meeting. Chairman Magni commented the members will take a vote next month.
- Commissioner Banks notified the commission the outdoor special event process is moving to an on-line process in Open Gov, the city's permitting system.

Meeting Adjourned 8:25 pm
Respectfully submitted,
Robin McLaughlin
Commission Secretary