

**Newton Parks & Recreation Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes-Hybrid Meeting**  
**7:00 p.m. – Monday, February 26, 2024**

**Attending:** Arthur Magni, Chair, Byron Dunker, Vice-Chair, Commissioner Banks, Beth Wilkinson, John Rice, Randy Johnson, Sheila Butts, Jack Neville, Mark Feldhusen,

Meeting began: 7:06pm

**1. Meeting Minutes**

- January 22, 2024- approved 8-0

**2. Lions 5K Road race – NSHS- 05/19/24 – Public Hearing- Teri Ginsberg & Lars Dietrich Presenting**

- The Newton South Boosters are raising money for NSHS Athletics. Last year this event raised \$30K. There will be no road closures, Police will be on site, this year the course did change.

*Ms. Butts made the motion to approve the proposal as presented. Mr. Neville seconded the motion. Motion passed 8-0*

**3. Clay Court - tennis fees, hours, rules, & regulations-Stephanie Lapham, Recreation Manager presenting**

- Ms. Lapham summarized the changes to the 2024 fee, rules & regulations:
  - Changed permit holders to members as we do not give permits out anymore.
  - Added link to PRC and court reservation platforms.
  - Hours stay the same as 2023.
  - Membership rates increased by \$20.00.
  - Hourly rates stayed the same.
  - The Contractor will be providing porta-potties.
  - Round Robin events will be scheduled.
  - Cape & Island Court Maintenance Company will be managing start-up and weekly maintenance of the clay courts. Staff will be providing daily maintenance.
  - Membership has been low, and we are hopeful the changes will attract new members.
- Mr. Neville asked why prices are increasing if they are trying to attract new members. Ms. Lapham explained the cost of court maintenance is not covered by the current membership fees. Court maintenance was managed by the department until former Commissioner Towle added the maintenance to the Tennis lesson contract. The revenue brought in from the tennis lessons covers the cost of the clay court maintenance, last season's tennis lesson revenue was ~\$600K. The Department receives 20% of total income.
- Ms. Wilkinson asked if a survey could be sent to previous members to ask why they did not return. Ms. Lapham commented that a lot of members left when the previous contractor was managing the courts, he has the list, the city does not have access to the former membership list.
- Mr. Johnson asked if Pickleball is affecting the numbers. Ms. Lapham commented that Tom Friedman of Friends of Newton Tennis provided a survey that shows there are six-seven thousand tennis players in Newton and one thousand pickleball players.

- Mr. Feldhusen asked about the terms of the contract. Ms. Lapham replied the contract is a one-year contract with a two-year extension.

*Mr. Feldhusen made the motion to approve the proposed 2024 Clay Court tennis fees, rules & regulations as proposed. Ms. Butts seconded the motion. Motion passed 8-0.*

#### **4. Special Events at the Hyde – Informational – Janice Bourque presenting.**

- Taiwan Day- May 4
  - A yearly event since 2006, includes a dragon dance sown Lincoln St and the use of Hyde Playground. Chairman Magni asked if this is a major event for the group. Greer Tan Swiston commented yes this is a significant event for the Community. Many different groups volunteer and come to Newton to participate in the event. Ms. Bourque commented because the event is so important Mr. Rice has been introduced to the Taiwan President.
- Festival of Arts – May 19
  - Last year’s event was a long day, this year the event will be a shorter length of time and the timing of when music is playing will be carefully reviewed.
- Juneteenth – June 15
  - This event has been at the Hyde for the last two years and has been a successful event.
- Mr. Rice commented Police details are requested for all events, the park is cleaned after the event and a noise ordinance waiver request will be submitted for these events.
- Ms. Bourque stated the bandstand was a gift from Commodore Construction, the group never expected the bandstand to be so popular. Chairman Magni commented one of the issues the Commission has received regarding the Hyde Playground events is the noise, this should be addressed at the public hearing.

*Ms. Wilkinson made the motion to move the proposed Special Events at the Hyde to a Public Hearing. Mr. Feldhusen seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0. (Mr. Rice is recused from the vote)*

#### **5. Commissioner’s Report**

- Commissioner Banks received a grant for the Reflections Programs at Williams School, the money will be used for swings in the playground.
- Gath Pool construction is moving forward the forms have been poured for both pools.
- Northland Splash pad is in the pre-construction stage, construction will begin early summer. Mr. Rice asked if the city is connecting the site to the Greenway. Commissioner Banks confirmed the connection is being reviewed. Northland is paying for the splashpad construction, the city will pay for the maintenance of the splash pad and connecting the Greenway. Mr. Neville stated there was money put aside for the Greenway that could be used for the connection. Commissioner Banks will check with the Planning department on the available funds. Mr. Rice asked if lifeguards are required at the splash pad, lifeguards are not required, the water will be new water, chemicals will not be required.
- A community meeting is being scheduled to discuss the field project at Albemarle, Grath and Burr School.
- Forte Park field lighting upgrade project is complete.
- A community meeting will be scheduled for the Memorial Park Playground upgrade and improvements to the tennis courts.
- Camps and programs are doing well. Ms. Butts commented PRC ran a program during the teachers strike and asked how the strike affected February vacation programs. Commissioner

Banks commented that the staff did an amazing job. On a Thursday they found out they were running a program for the families affected by the strike and on Friday they had a fun, safe professionally run camp running, the camp ran for two weeks. February vacation programs were cancelled and refunded. The first two weeks of summer programs will be cancelled. The lifeguard courses the department depends on for staffing the pool and lake were rescheduled. Paula Gannon, Cultural Development was able to reschedule the Tanglewood Marionettes performance to the weekend, the performance was well attended.

## 6. Committee Reports

- Community Preservation Committee -*B. Dunker*
  - The Coleman House Project is closed.
  - A group trying to purchase West Newton Cinema has requested \$ 150K.
  - Next month PRC will be in for the Spears Park Garden Bed proposal.
    - Chairman Magni asked if PRC has been cleaning out brush and trees at Spears Park. Commissioner Banks confirmed clean-up work is being done by the Forestry Division
- Urban Tree Commission- *B. Wilkinson*
  - The revised tree ordinance goes into effect on March 1, March Welch, Deputy Commissioner, City Forester is very busy preparing for the new ordinance. The tree Commission is concerned how he will manage, the changes in the ordinance make this a two-person job. The Tree Commission has sent a letter to the Mayor additional money for a second staff person. Commissioner Banks commented she is reviewing the request with the Executive Office.
- Farm Commission – *B. Wilkinson*
  - February 1<sup>st</sup> the 2024 plan was presented. They will be focusing on public education and farm tours. There is a budget deficit of \$400K, they will review the plan and staffing and be using some reserved funds to meet the deficit.
- Off-Leash Area Working Group (OLAWG) – *Commissioner*
  - January 25 Carol Stapleton, Recreation Manager and Ahron Lerman, Assistant Director of Parks & Open Space met with the group. Two new areas were discussed:
    - Walker Park
    - Edmands Park- The neighbors proposed making the entire park be an off-leash area. Further research needs to be done on how this would affect other users and the park.
    - Researching surfacing options for Cabot park drainage issue
- Arts & Culture – *G. Gavris*
  - Mr. Rice reported there were two events in January, Winterfest and the Soup Social.

## 7. New Business

- Ms. Wilkinson commented in the Commission Manual notes the department budget will be presented to the Commission. The Commission can make a recommendation to the Executive office for additional staff for the Forestry Division. Mr. Rice stated in his experience as a City Councilor, once the budget comes out of the Executive Office, very little is changed.
- Ms. Butts asked where the tree permit fees go to, Commissioner Banks stated the funds are deposited to the tree revolving fund. Ms. Wilkinson stated, as Mr. Welch reported, it is difficult to budget from the tree permit fees because it is not consistent how many application/ fees will be received in a year.
- Mr. Feldhusen commented the Commission can make a recommendation it is the responsibility of the Commission to advocate for open space.

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

NEWTON PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURE  
NEWTON CENTRE CLAY TENNIS COURTS  
RULES AND REGULATIONS  
2024 (PROPOSED)

**RESERVE COURT PLAY:**

- All players must purchase a season membership or pay an hourly fee to play on the Newton Centre Clay Courts. Permits may be purchased using PRC registration platform: [www.newtonma.myrec.com](http://www.newtonma.myrec.com)
- MEMBERS who bring a guest, (non-member players) are responsible and must pay the attendant before stepping onto the court.
- MEMBERS may reserve a court online at [www.yourcourts.com](http://www.yourcourts.com) , no earlier than 6 days in advance. After completion of the reservation a new reservation can be placed no earlier than 6 days in advance. Non-members may not reserve courts.
- MEMBERS may only have one court reservation on the books at a time. Members must complete the reservation on the books before booking another.
- A maximum of (1) hour may be booked for singles. One member's name is required to book the court. A maximum of (1.5) hours may be booked for doubles play. Two members' names are required for booking doubles.
- Players are not allowed to use (1.5) hours booking of doubles for singles play. If only 2 players show up for a doubles booking, they must forfeit the extra half hour.
- Any member who intentionally or repeatedly makes (1.5) hour doubles booking for the purpose of playing singles will have booking privileges suspended until further review.
- If at least one player is not present at the start of the hour for which a court is booked, the court is immediately given to waiting players. By five minutes past the hour two players must be on the court or booking is forfeited and the court is given to waiting players.
- All players are required to sweep the court and brush the lines after use in a manner that is approved by the court attendant. When finished place sweepers and brushes in the appropriate area.
- When courts are locked, no play is permitted, and no player is allowed entry onto the courts.
- All players are required to wear a shirt and proper sneakers on the court.
- All players are expected to interact with the court attendant and other players in a courteous and considerate manner. Yelling and use of profanity could result in termination of membership.
- All Players are required to abide by any decision taken or direction given by the court monitor.

**In case of inclement weather, members will be notified via email through the, your courts system indicating closures.**

**PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURE  
NEWTON CENTRE CLAY COURTS  
DATES & TIMES OF OPERATION  
2024(PROPSED)**

All hours are subject to change. Members may reserve times:

Pre-season: May 1 – May 31	Mon. – Fri.	9:00 – Dusk (weather permitting)
	Sat. & Sun.	9:00 - 6:00PM

Regular season: June1 – September 2	Mon. – Fri.	9:00 –Dusk
	Sat. & Sun.	9:00– 6:00PM

Post season: September 3 – October 20	Mon. – Fri.	9:00 – Dusk
	Sat. & Sun.	9:00 – 6:00PM

**Clay Courts closed from Noon to 3:00pm for maintenance.**

SPECIAL EVENTS AND CLINIC TIMES WILL BE POSTED AT THE COURTS  
Pre-bookings for clinics and special events will be posted.

NON-RESERVED COURT PLAY: is on a strict first-come-first-served basis. The court changeover will be on the hour.

**PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURE  
NEWTON CENTRE CLAY TENNIS COURTS  
FEE STRUCTURE - 2024 (PROPOSED)**

**MEMBERSHIP RATES**

SEASON MEMBERSHIP FEES ARE NON-REFUNDABLE

Resident Adult	\$320.00
Resident Student (under 18)	\$180.00
Non-Resident Adult	\$370.00
Non-Resident Student	\$230.00

Non-members may play at an hourly rate if courts are available.

**HOURLY RATES\***

Resident Adult	\$ 15.00
Resident Student (under 18)	\$ 10.00
Non-Resident Adult	\$ 20.00