

Newton Parks & Recreation Commission

Meeting Minutes

7:00 p.m. – Monday, May 20, 2024

Attending: Arthur Magni, Chair, Byron Dunker, Vice-Chair, Commissioner Banks, Beth Wilkinson, Randy Johnson, Sheila Butts, Jack Neville, Mark Feldhusen, Gloria Gavis, Midge Connolly, Ted Chapman

Meeting began: 7:00pm

1. Meeting Minutes – April 2024

- Approved 8-0

2. Outdoor Special Events– Public Hearing

- Indigenous Peoples Day – 10/14/24- 11am-5pm, Albemarle Playground-Dr. Flores
 - The Commission received the following request:
 - “Wondering if the event could alternate between different Newton parks so that Albemarle Park abutters are not impacted every year. My concern has to do with the noise.”
 - Ms. Flores stated the music is part of the celebration, there are other activities and speakers, there are breaks from the music during the day.
 - Ms. Connolly asked if the event could be moved to the opposite end of Albemarle Playground. Ms. Gavis commented the orientation of the event is driven by the location of the electricity, like the 4th of July event at Albemarle Playground.
 - Commissioner Banks stated the department is working closely with the event organizers, the fields will begin construction this fall and will be fenced off.
 - Noone from the public attending wished to comment.

Mr. Dunker made the motion to approve the event. Ms. Butts seconded the motion. Motion passed 8-0.

- Susan G. Komen- 3-Day Walk- 08/23/24-City Hall Grounds
 - The applicants had a last-minute conflict and are unable to attend this meeting.
 - Chairman Magni commented there are no changes and no comments submitted for this event. There were no public comments from anyone in attendance.

Ms. Butts made the motion to approve the event. Ms. Connolly seconded the event. Motion passed 8-0.

3. Commissioner’s Report

- City Council is reviewing the PRC Budget at the Council meeting tonight and reported she may need to step away to respond to any questions from the Council.
- Jonah Temple, Deputy City Solicitor is present, Mr. Temple will be providing information for the Executive Session.
- Family Fun Fest was well attended this past weekend. There was a complaint about the high prices at the carnival. The funds received from this event support free events and programs throughout the year. There is also a scholarship program through HHS & The Cultural Development division. Mr. Feldhusen asked if the carnival revenue is in the operating budget. Commissioner Banks reported the carnival revenue goes to a revolving fund. Ms. Gavis asked if the carnival operator receives any money. Commissioner Banks reported the operator

receives a percentage of revenue. Mr. Chapman asked how people are made aware of the scholarship fund. Commissioner Banks reported HHS work closely with families in need.

- Gath Pool: Concrete is scheduled to be poured over the next few weeks. Management is preparing for staff training of staff on operating the new facility. Ms. Connolly asked if the pool is still on schedule. Commissioner Banks reported the pool is on schedule, the extra time is needed for set-up, training and the delayed preseason start time is due to the later release date of the schools. Ms. Butts asked if there have been any delays on supplies needed for the pool. Commissioner Banks reported the supplies needed for opening the pool are on schedule. Some of the deck furniture and picnic tables could be 4-6 weeks out.
- Earmark funds expire June 30th. The department is working on several projects to meet the deadline. Ms. Wilkinson asked if the stairs that lead to the green space, at Cronin's Cove is one to of the projects. The stairs are a safety hazard. Commissioner Banks confirmed currently a plan is being put together. Chairman Magni asked if the plan will be presented to the Commission. Commissioner Banks replied no, it is solely a replacement of stairs.

4. Committee Reports

- Community Preservation Committee -*B. Dunker*
 - Quiet month for the CPC
- Urban Tree Commission – *B. Wilkinson*
 - Presentation from Peter Barrer listing all the gas leaks in the city and the coincidence of gas leaks and damaged trees.
- Farm Commission – *B. Wilkinson*
 - Successful seedling sale this past weekend
- Off-Leash Area Working Group (OLAWG) – *Commissioner Banks*
 - There is no meeting this month.
 - A site visit for Walker Park is being scheduled.
 - Acknowledged there are people present to discuss Edmands Park. All information, comments and questions should go through the department at parks@newtonma.gov. Chairman Magni stated when a proposal is ready for Edmands Park the department will bring the proposal forward for a public hearing.
- Arts & Culture – *G. Gavris*
 - It is springtime and the city is coming alive with culture; the artful pianos are back out, SHINE project murals are around the city, and summer concerts are scheduled for July & August.

5. New Business

- No new business

6. Executive Session

Mr. Dunker made the motion to move to Executive Session. Ms Butts seconded the motion. Motion passed 8-0.

- Open Meeting Law Complaint – Motion and vote to meet in executive session pursuant to Mass. General Laws Chapter 30A, Section 21(a) for purpose (1) to discuss complaints or charges brought against a public officer, employee, staff member or individual, specifically a complaint received alleging violation of the Open Meeting Law by the Newton Parks & Recreation Commission concerning the Off Leash Area Working Group.
- The Commission will not reconvene in Open Session.

Open Meeting Adjourned 07:45pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Robin McLaughlin, Commission Secretary