

# Newton Parks & Recreation Commission

## Meeting Minutes

7:00 p.m. – Monday, Sept 16, 2024

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

Meeting began: 7:02pm

### 1. Meeting Minutes – June 2024

- Approved 8-0

### 2. Project Update – Project information is located on the [PRC web page](#):

*Luis Perez Demorizi, Director of Parks & Open Space*

*Ahron Lerman, Assistant Director Parks & Open Space*

- Farlow Park Pond
  - Pond concrete has been sealed, skim coated, and an epoxy paint has been applied. The pond is no longer leaking.
- Cronin's Cove stairs are complete, waiting on handrails.
  - Ms. Wilkinson asked if the dock will be replaced. Commissioner Banks stated when the temporary dock is installed, there is vandalism, the staff finds the dock floating in the middle of the lake.
- NNHS Turf
  - During installation of the turf, a drainage issue was discovered. The drainage issue was corrected, and the turf has been installed.
- Marty Sender Path Phase II is complete
- Albemarle Playground fields -phase 1
  - Approved by the Conservation Commission
  - Going out to bid, construction has an 18-month timeline
  - The project includes new athletic fields, lighting, pickleball courts, flood mitigation and connected accessible pathways.
- Burr Elementary School - fields
  - Permits were delayed from the state due to the area being used as a habitat for long-eared bats. The permits were approved with the direction to notify State immediately if bats are observed.
- Spears Park – Community Gardens
  - Project is moving forward, raised beds are being installed.
- Walker Park – Off-Leash Area
  - The proposed off-leash area is part of the Washington Street Pilot Project. Mr. Feldhusen commented there are some beautiful Oak trees in Walker Park, will they be affected by the off-leash area development. Mr. Lerman stated the project will not interfere with any of the trees in Walker Park.

### 3. Commissioner's Report

- Welcomed the P & R Commission Applicants, Mary Fitzgerald and Caitlin Cusick. They're appearing before the City Council on Wednesday.
- Staffing:
  - Assistant Special Needs/Program Manager, Miranda Morse started today
  - Forestry Admin position filled internally by Julie Babcock
  - Assistant Director of Cultural Development has been hired and should be starting October 1.
  - Interviewing for the Payroll Supervisor position and Program Manger positions

- A new position has been posted for a Director of Community Programs and Recreation.
- Aquatics:
  - Sean Nickerson, Aquatics Director is pulling together data on the new pool and may present the data at a future meeting.
  - Crystal Lake and Levingston Cove were well used over the summer. There are some areas that have degraded over time and there is less space. A discussion with the community on how to best use the entire Crystal Lake space will help the City on how to continuously improve the area. The docks were left in the water after the swim season closed for repairs, people enjoyed having access to the docks, though the amount of goose waste on the dock became an issue. The Crystal Lake staff must clean the dock daily during the swim season.
- Farmers' Market is open Tuesday & Saturday for five more weeks.
- Paddy's Road Race (10/20) and Harvest Fair (10/19&20).
- Mark Feldhusen commented Channon Ames, PRC Program Manager is great. She helped with the Monarch Butterfly Festival this past weekend, she had games and activities for the kids. Everyone had a great time.

#### 4. Committee Reports

- Community Preservation Committee -*B. Dunker*
  - A few proposals were awarded funding over the summer. Braceland Playground is on the future list.
  - The state awarded \$50K for design of Braceland Playground, is there an expiration date on the money? Commissioner Banks reported there is no immediate expiration date on the \$50K from the state.
  - Ms. Butts asked the status of the Memorial Playground Project. The design was reviewed by the community, input from the meeting is being applied to the design.
- Urban Tree Commission – *B. Wilkinson*
  - The Commission is reviewing the mission statement. This was posted online, and Ms. Wilkinson started receiving phone calls, the main concern was the Forestry Division does not have enough money or staff to take care of the urban forests, the focus is on street trees and play areas.
- Farm Commission – *B. Wilkinson*
  - There was an in-person meeting in August where members were given a farm tour, they are hoping to open the tours to the public.
  - Financials were reviewed.
- Commonwealth Golf Foundation – *Commissioner Banks*
  - The course had a great summer
  - The Foundation Board is working on the Golf Course Management RFP.

#### 5. New Business

*Meeting Adjourned 08:15 pm*

*Respectfully Submitted,*

*Robin McLaughlin, Commission Secretary*