

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8, 2014

Present: Ald. Sangiolo (Chairman), Rice, Baker, Kalis, Blazar, Hess-Mahan, Norton and Leary

PS&T Present: Ald. Ciccone (Chairman), Cote, Lipof, Fuller, Harney, Schwartz and Yates

Also Present: Ald. Danberg, Former Ald. Steve Linsky

Others Present: Robert DeRubeis (Commissioner, Parks & Recreation), Carol Stapleton (Program Manager, Parks & Recreation), Lt. Bruce Apotheker (Newton Police Dept.), Chris Tracey (Citizens Assistance Officer), Danielle Delaney (Committee Clerk), Karyn Dean (Committee Clerk)

Appointment by His Honor the Mayor

#430-13 HATTIE KERWIN DERRICK, 197 Spiers Road, Newton Centre, appointed as a member of the HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION for a term to expire December 4, 2016. (60 days 2/14/14) [12/06/13 @ 9:53 AM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 8-0**

NOTE: Ms. Kerwin Derrick joined the Committee. She is an admissions coordinator for a college in nursing and radiology. She explained that she has a family and has lived in the City for about 10 years, is Chair Emeritus for Newton Community Service Center and is also on the Ward 8 Council. She has been an advisory member of the Human Rights Commission for almost 2 years and has participated in all meetings. She is not, however, a voting member and would like to be able to have more of a say and to be able to vote on the programming that is being done. Her interests are in expanding programming and not just doing the same things as have been done in the past. She would also like to reach out to underserved populations as well and implement more of the plans that have been discussed.

Ald. Kalis moved approval and the Committee voted to approve this appointment unanimously.

REFERRED TO PROG. & SERV. AND PUBLIC SAFETY & TRANS COMMITTEES

#410-13 ALD. JOHNSON, ALBRIGHT AND LINSKY requesting discussion with the Parks & Recreation, Police, Fire and Law Departments regarding options to decrease vandalism at the Albemarle Park (Halloran Recreation Complex) before April, 2014 [11/12/13 @ 4:15 PM]

ACTION: **PS&T VOTED NO ACTION NECESSARY 4-2-0 (Ald. Fuller, Yates opposed; Ald. Harney not voting)**
HELD 8-0

NOTE: The Public Safety and Transportation Committee joined Programs & Services for a joint discussion of this item. Former Alderman, Steve Linsky addressed the Committee. He noted that there was a meeting in November with the ward aldermen, Police, the Parks & Recreation Department and over 20 residents on this issue. This item was generated from that exchange to

address an ongoing series of vandalism events that were persisting at Albemarle Park. It was felt that gathering people from Parks & Recreation, Police, Fire and Law Departments could help generate some ideas to mitigate the problems. Mr. Linsky added that any ideas that came out of this discussion would be useful for all the parks around the City that might be experiencing the same issues. At Albemarle Park, the vandalism has been targeted largely at the little league field and to a smaller extent at the Gath Pool. Mr. Linsky said the idea is to generate a welcome feel for all residents to use the parks and encourage positive youth use but prevent misuse.

Lt. Bruce Apotheker addressed the Committee. He explained that he is with the Community Services Bureau of the Newton Police Department, which deals with civil rights violations such as hate crimes, etc. He is in charge of the domestic violence, elder affairs and school resource officers as well. He has been on the police force since 1983 in Newton and he said there used to be a cruiser assigned to Albemarle Rd. from 11:30pm to 3:30am because the area from Gath Pool to Craft Street used to be filled with carloads of teenagers. That volume of youth activity has drastically decreased over time. He checked police reports from 2012 to present and found that there were not many calls to the area regarding vandalism or disturbances. (See attached report). There are also directed patrols to various areas of the City and between January 2012 to the present, there were 169 directed patrols at Albemarle Rd, which means a patrol car would drive by the area. If they were to see a group hanging around the park they would ask them to move along.

Lt. Apotheker reported that there is a light out near the little league field. He received a call from Chris Tracey, the Citizen's Assistance Officer in the Mayor's office about this as well. There are areas covered by trees that tend to attract the groups that may be bringing alcohol to the park. There was a suggestion to thin out some of that brush but the people from the little league were not fully in favor of that idea. Having more lighting will help keep people from gathering there. In Nonantum, there is a group of residents who started a crime watch. It was suggested that people from the Albemarle area might do the same thing and Lt. Apotheker suggested residents attend Crime Commission meetings, of which he is a member, to work on these problems together. He said the Police Dept. is a willing member and wants to help in these nuisance crimes in any way it can.

Ald. Ciccone said it appears that the group of teenagers that spend time at the park are at the pre-driving stage and are walking around the City then stopping to congregate in the park. Lt. Apotheker said he contacted the Youth Outreach Worker at the YMCA in regard to Washington Park. He asked if she might be able to come down to that park and engage the youth to see what was going on. He stressed that the vast majority of the kids that are at the parks are well behaved and not causing troubles. It's often just a small group of kids that continually cause the problems.

Commissioner DuRubeis of the Parks & Recreation Department said Albemarle is the most used park in the City. It is well lit from Craft Street to the back of the Gath Pool and that's it. There are no lights on the little league field so from that area and beyond, it is dark. He felt the majority of the vandalism was taking place in the back behind the little league field and lighting would be a huge help. The City has been working with NStar to get a malfunctioning pole working again so the light can be utilized. Once or twice a year there will be some graffiti or beer bottles thrown into the pool, but it is not a huge issue. There have also been issues with graffiti at the gazebo and the light is out there as well. He agreed with Lt. Apotheker that the level of

vandalism and the amount of people loitering there at night has gone down drastically over the years. Carol Stapleton noted that she spoke to the group that runs the Little League and they are constantly on the property. They are willing to do a community watch of the area.

Lt. Apotheker suggested some security cameras in the area. He reported that once cameras were installed at the high schools, the rate of theft went down to almost zero. Ald. Rice agreed stating that when cameras were installed at the Hyde Community Center the problems basically disappeared. Lt. Apotheker said word spreads very quickly after someone gets caught and charged with a crime and it is definitely a deterrent. Some committee members were not in favor of security cameras. He stressed that people need to call the police and make the complaint otherwise they cannot be aware of the level of concern in any particular area. He is not aware of any major problems in any area but he understands that these incidents are a nuisance and problematic for the neighbors.

Some members felt that it was not a bad thing to have kids congregating in the park and having a place to be with their friends. It was pointed out that the parks officially close at dusk and people shouldn't be in there, however, people walk their dogs and they are not thought of as "trespassers".

Members of the Committee agreed that more lighting would be a deterrent and help mitigate the problems. The neighborhood, however, doesn't want too many lights on all night as that is a disturbance in itself. There have been numerous conversations with NStar to get the pole in the area repaired but they have not come out to do the work. Commissioner DeRubeis summarized that if all the existing lighting were repaired and returned to functionality it would be a big help. They could perhaps add one pole for lights, but the existing infrastructure could be sufficient. (An additional light may cost approximately \$1500-\$2000).

Chris Tracey, Citizen's Assistance Officer, addressed the Committee. He explained that he does constituent services for the Mayor to tackle quality of life issues in the City and the Mayor takes these issues very seriously. Chris Tracey stated that the Mayor's office will be working with Commissioner DeRubeis to get NStar to fix the lights as quickly as possible.

Mr. Linsky asked that the Committee receive an update on the progress at the second meeting in March relative to NStar. Ald. Fuller would like an update on the types of reports that come into the Police Department in the interim.

The Public Safety and Transportation Committee felt they were adequately updated and that the Police Department and Parks & Recreation were working on the problems. They voted No Action Necessary on this item. Programs & Services voted to hold this item and receive an update in March.

REFERRED TO PROGRAMS & SERVICES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#254-12 ALD. HESS-MAHAN, SANGIOLO, DANBERG, KALIS, CROSSLEY
proposing an ordinance relating to plastic bag reduction that would add a fee to single-use plastic and paper bags that are not at least 40% post-consumer recycled content, at certain retail establishments in Newton [07/18/12 @4:34 PM]

ACTION: **NO ACTION NECESSARY 8-0**

NOTE: Ald. Hess-Mahan reported that a group went to look at Wegman's recycling operations in Northborough. Present at that meeting were a lobbyist for Mass Food Association as well as representatives from Wegmans and several aldermen. Ald. Leary explained that the Mass Food Association is against any increase in the bottle bill. They worked with the state to reduce the amount of plastic bags by encouraging baggers to give out fewer bags, encouraging shoppers to bring their own bags and having recycling in stores. She felt these were not adequate measures. The manager of Wegman's told Ald. Leary that they would work on a fee for plastic bags, but were opposed to a ban. Ald. Hess-Mahan explained that fees have been effective in other areas including many places in California. The fee is to cover the cost to the stores to administer the fee, and the rest goes for clean-up of plastic bags in the community. This is not a fee that would be going to the City. Several studies have been done showing a reduction in use of plastic bags when a fee is introduced. In Washington DC the fee has been very effective with a 90% reduction in the number of plastic bags used with fewer showing up in the rivers. They are also seeing the revenue from the fee going down, which is the desired effect. This is not about raising money, but about trying to change behavior. A plastic bag used for a few moments ends up in the environment for thousands of years.

Ald. Danberg felt the recycling system at Wegman's was extremely efficient and useful. They collect all they generate from their own store (plastic, Styrofoam, packing materials, etc.) they also allow anyone from the outside to bring their material in. The Wegman's store coming to Chestnut Hill will be using the same system. Ald. Danberg stated with City recycling, the hope is to break even and not lose money. Wegman's actually makes about \$500K in the region on this process. Ald. Leary noted that most supermarkets do the same sort of programs and do a very good job. Wegman's did have easy access for consumers to sort their recyclables, however. Ald. Danberg said they would be visiting the state facilities to see how their recycling facilities work.

Some Committee members wondered why the City would not establish a ban and would instead institute a fee. Ald. Leary said she felt a fee had a better chance of approval than a ban. The stores would keep the fee charged and that would be a plus for them. This would help get them on board and be supportive, which in turn, makes approval more likely. The sentiment from most of the Committee was that a ban was a more useful way to go at this point. A fee does reduce the number of bags used, however, a ban would reduce them to almost zero in the City. The Town of Brookline has established a ban with certain "compostable" plastic bags allowed. As it turns out, there is no "compostable" plastic bag. They just break down into smaller particles more quickly but they never truly disintegrate. Those particles make their way into the water supply and into some of the food supply. It was noted that paper bags are not great for the environment either. They may be compostable but the production process is environmentally damaging. Even plastic bag bans have certain exemptions for uses (wrapping fish, for example). Mr. Linsky felt that Newton is a community that is ready for a more proactive step in reducing the problems caused by plastic bag production, use and disposal and would be open to making these relatively small changes to help accomplish that.

Several Committee members felt voting No Action Necessary on this item and docketing an item to ban the plastic bags would be more effective. Since the goal is to get consumers to change behavior and bring their own re-usable bags, banning plastic bags but having paper bags readily available would not encourage that. The plastic bags are littering the landscape and causing problems in the waste stream in the City. It seemed more urgent to deal with that issue first, then consider the paper bag issue separately. Because Newton borders Brookline, it was also felt that being fairly consistent with their model would be less confusing.

The Committee decided to docket a parens(2) for a ban on plastic bags and a parens(3) for discussing a fee for the use of paper bags. These items would come from the Programs & Services Committee. Ald. Baker and Blazar abstained on voting for the parens(3) item.

The Committee voted No Action Necessary for this item and to docket the other two items as described.

REFERRED TO PROGRAMS & SERV. AND PUBLIC FACILITIES COMMITTEES

#315-12 ALD. FULLER, RICE AND GENTILE of the Angier School Building Committee providing updates and discussion on the Angier School Building project as it develops through the site plan approval process.

ACTION: NO ACTION NECESSARY 8-0

NOTE: Because the Angier School Building project has completed the site plan approval phase, this item is no longer necessary. An update item on the progress of the continuing school project is docketed in the Public Facilities Committee. The Committee unanimously voted No Action Necessary on this item.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amy Mah Sangiolo

As Of 02/07/2012 03:04:27

Narrative

ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2012 AT APPROXIMATELY 0225 HRS WHILE ASSIGNED TO CRUISER 492 I WAS PATROLLING THE AREA OF 250 ALBEMARLE RD, THE ALBEMARLE PLAYGROUND WHEN I OBSERVED A BROWN COLORED TOYOTA COROLLA, WHICH WAS UNOCCUPIED AND PARKED IN FRONT OF THE AREA CLOSEST TO THE GAZEBO. THE VEHICLE WAS STOLEN OUT OF WALTHAM.

As Of 03/14/2012 15:35:22

Narrative

ON MARCH 14, 2012 I WAS DISPATCHED TO ALBEMARLE FIELD FOR A COMPLAINT OF AN ICE CREAM TRUCK PARKED WITHIN 500 FEET OF A SCHOOL ZONE VIOLATING THE CITY ORDINANCE.

As Of 04/26/2012 20:30:32

Narrative

On the above date and time, I responded to the area of Albemarle Field for a violation of a city ordinance involving an ice cream truck. citation for parking too close to a playground.

As Of 05/12/2012 18:22:38

Narrative

On the above date and his daughter came into the front desk to report an incident that occurred last evening at 2300 hours. stated that her and a friend parked in front of the pool house on Albermarle Rd while they were deciding what to do. While sitting there 4 males dressed in dark clothing covering and hoods covering their faces ran out from behind the pool house and began to egg her vehicle..... Was able to see one of the suspect's faces and believes it may have been someone from one of her classes at Newton North

As Of 06/10/2012 13:50:38

Narrative

ON 6-10-12 AT APPROX. 1200HRS. WHILE WORKING N492 I TOOK A REPORT FOR VANDALISM. UPON ARRIVAL AT 250 ALBERMARLE RD. I MET THE COMPLAINANT STATES THAT SOMETIME BETWEEN 6-9-12: 1900HRS. AND 6-10-12: 1200HRS. SOMEONE HAD SPRAY PAINTED THE WORD " KAOS " ON THE SNACK SHACK AT THE FIELD AND ONCE ON THE DUGOUT WALL. COMP. WAS IN THE PROCESS OF REMOVING THE GRAFFITI UPON MY ARRIVAL. COMP. HAS NO IDEA WHO DID THE DAMAGE.

As Of 06/19/2012 16:33:30

Narrative

On the above date and time, I responded to the area of Albemarle Field for a City Ordinance violation involving an ice cream truck. I Issued City Ordinance citation for being too close to a school or playground.

As Of 11/02/2012 22:32:51

Narrative

On Friday November 2, 2012 were dispatched to the baseball field dugout area on Albemarle Road (it is the first field on the right as you travel Northbound on Albemarle road from Watertown Street towards Crafts Street). Dispatch stated

the reporting party stated that there were a group of kids in the area and may have caused damaged to the dugout area. Upon arrival there was no one visible in the area. I was able to see a bunch of beer cans dispersed throughout the dugout and part of the fence in front of the dugout was torn off. canvassed the area and had negative results.

As Of 11/10/2012 10:35:13

Narrative

ON 11-10-12 AT APPROX. 0900HRS. WHILE WORKING N492 I TOOK A REPORT FOR VANDALISM. STATES THAT STB. 0030-0830HRS. SOMEONE DESTROYED THE DUGOUT FENCE ON MURPHY FIELD BY KICKING IN THE FENCE. COMP. FURTHER STATES SOMEONE HAD WRITTEN MARKINGS ON A PICNIC TABLE.

As Of 07/31/2013 13:17:32

Narrative

RP states that he was at the field last night. When he returned today he noticed that the dugout screen on the third base side had been ripped off. RP states that kids frequently gather in the dugout during the summer

As Of 08/13/2013 00:05:39

Narrative

On 8/12/13 at approximately 2345 I was dispatched the Albemarle Field, for a report of city grass being damaged. I was able to find two clear tire tracks on the city lawn between the Gath pool and Murphy baseball field. It appears as though a vehicle drove onto the lawn and performed a donut maneuver in the vehicle tearing up the grass. The tire tracks then lead back to the sidewalk and back out onto the street.

As Of 08/21/2013 00:00:30

Narrative

On 08/21/2013 at 1700hrs I responded to the Albermarle Field House near the Little League Field for a report of Vandalism to City Property. I observed the storage container to have a large letters spray painted on it. The word "Pickle" was tagged in large letters covering the entire container.

As Of 06/28/2011 08:14:21

Narrative

AT ABOVE TIME AND DATE I RESPONDED TO THE GATH POOL FOR A REPORT OF MALICIOUS DAMAGE. HE STATED SOME TIME LAST NIGHT AFTER THEY CLOSED (5:00 PM) SOMEONE ENTERED THE POOL AREA AND THREW THREE BENCHES IN THE DEEP END AND ONE IN THE SHALLOW END.

As Of 07/12/2011 18:27:47

Narrative

On July 12, 2011, at approximately 4:54 p.m., I, was dispatch to Gath Memorial Pool to help the city inspector with a violation. Spoke with the city inspector ... drives an ice cream truck and was in violation of a city ordinance.

As Of 08/01/2011 08:37:11

Narrative

ON MONDAY AUGUST 1, 2011 AT APPROX. 08:37 I WAS DISPATCHED TO THE GATH POOL FOR A REPORT OF DAMAGED CITY TREES. UPON ARRIVAL, I SPOKE WITH THE REPORTING PERSON HE REPORTS THAT THIS MORNING AT APPROX. 06:00 HE NOTED THAT FOUR CITY TREES WHICH WERE LOCATED AT THE POOLS ENTRANCE, ON THE CITY SIDEWALK HAD BEEN BROKEN IN HALF.

As Of 08/19/2011 12:51:14

Narrative

AT ABOVE TIME AND DATE I RESPONDED TO THE GATH POOL FOR A REPORT OF MALICIOUS DAMAGE TO THE BUILDING. STATED SOME TIME LAST NIGHT SOME ONE HAD SPRAY PAINTED GRAFFITI ON THE REAR OF THE CLUBHOUSE AND ON LEFT SIDE OF THE CHILDREN S POOL AREA. THERE WERE 5 CANS OF SPRAY PAINT LEFT ON THE SHELF JUST BELOW THE GRAFFITI. THIS GRAFFITI IS SIMILAR TO THE TAGGING AT 100 WALNUT ST THAT OCCURRED LAST NIGHT. THE WORD TAB WAS WRITTEN AT BOTH OF THESE LOCATIONS.

As Of 08/20/2011 17:52:15

Narrative

On August 20, 2011, at approximately 4:52 p.m., I was dispatched to North St. for a report of a larceny of a purse... Stated she had gone to the Gath Pool at at 3:30 p.m. She stated she parked her motor vehicle, near the basketball courts and was unsure if she locked her vehicle, but said she did leave the passenger window open a little with the purse on the passenger front seat. She stated she returned to her vehicle, around 4:45 p.m. and discovered her purse had been stolen.

UPDATE REPORTS THAT SHE GOT A CALL FROM BANK OF AMERICA REPORTING THAT SOMEONE HAD CASHED CHECKS AT A TELLER WINDOW IN NEW HAMPSHIRE.....THE VICTIM WAS ALSO TOLD THAT AN UNKNOWN FEMALE WENT TO BANK OF AMERICA BRANCH ALSO IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

As Of 08/07/2012 08:33:18

Narrative

(RP) P states that last night someone went swimming in the pool and left beer bottles and Burger King trash. It is believed access was gained by climbing the fence.

As Of 07/01/2013 08:43:53

Narrative

ON 7-1-13 AT APPROX. 0730HRS. I TOOK A REPORT FOR VANDALISM TO CITY PROPERTY. THE GATH POOL STATES WHEN SHE ARRIVED TO WORK THIS MORNING SHE NOTICED GRAFFITI THAT WAS SPRAY PAINTED ON THE NORTH SIDE WALL OF THE CHILDREN'S POOL. COULD NOT READ THE GRAFFITI BECAUSE IT CONTAINED NO VISIBLE LETTERS OR NUMBERS.

Of 07/03/2013 07:11:43

Narrative

ON 07/03/13 AT APPROXIMATELY 06:40 I RESPONDED TO THE GATH POOL FOR A REPORT OF TAGGING. FOUND THE TAGGING AT 06:15. STATED THE POOL CLOSED LAST NIGHT AT 20:00 AND THE TAGGING WAS NOT THERE. I SPOKE WITH OFFICER WHO WAS ON SCENE AND STATED HE PATROLLED THE POOL AROUND 01:00 AND THE TAGGING WAS THERE. THE TAGGING WAS DONE WITH LIGHT BLUE SPRAY PAINT AND CONTAINED THE WORDS "RERST" ? OVER "SPK" AND HAD A CROWN DRAWN ON TOP. THIS WAS SPRAYED ON THE FRONT WHITE ENTRANCE DOOR OF ALBEMARLE RD AS WELL AS ON BRICK WALL OF THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE BUILDING.

As Of 07/14/2013 15:01:03

Narrative

ON 7-14-13 AT APPROX. 1141HRS. WHILE WORKING N492 I TOOK A REPORT FOR DESTRUCTION. STATES THAT AT APPROX. 1130HRS. WHEN SHE ARRIVED AT WORK SHE DISCOVERED SOMEONE HAD BROKEN THE BOLT ON THE FENCE FOR THE KIDDIE POOL, IN ORDER TO GAIN ACCESS TO THE BIG POOL. COMP BELIEVES IT HAPPENED SOMETIME DURING THE NIGHT.