

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2010

Present: Ald. Sangiolo (Chairman), Linsky (Vice Chairman), Baker, Blazar, Fischman, Hess-Mahan, and Rice

Absent: Ald. Merrill

Also Present: Ald. Crossley and Lennon

Others Present: David Olson (Clerk of the Board), Linda Walsh (Acting Commissioner, Health and Human Services), Bob DeRubeis (Acting Commissioner, Parks & Recreation Dept.), Bob Rooney (Chief Operating Officer), Jonathan Kantar, Karyn Dean (Committee Clerk)

Chairman's Note: The Committee is inviting Department Heads for brief introductions and informational discussions. Bob DeRubeis, Interim Commissioner of the Parks & Recreation Department, and Linda Walsh, Interim Commissioner of the Health and Human Services Department, joined the Committee this evening.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Linda Walsh, Interim Commissioner of the Health and Human Services Department, addressed the Committee. She explained that she has been Interim Commissioner for 6 weeks and has been with the Department for 22 years. The Department has 4 divisions including the Administrative Division which includes the general clerks as well as the Emergency Preparedness Specialist who runs the Medical Reserve Corp and does all the drills and training exercises. The Environmental Health Division is made up of inspectors that oversaw restaurants, pools and the like, and the Housing Inspector who took care of lead and related issues. The Clinical Services Division is quite large and encompassed the Director of Health Services, the School Nursing Supervisor, and 26 nurses (24 in the schools and 2 public health nurses). Typically school nurses were hired and fired by the School Department but in Newton they are under the HHS department which has been advantageous especially with the recent H1N1 campaign. There are also 2 part-time mental health nurses funded through CDBG grants. They primarily go to the homes of elder adults to assist with their mental health needs. The Department also encompasses The Human and Volunteer Services Division run by Bev Droz, as well as Human Services at City Hall run by Ana Gonzalez.

New Initiatives

- Some new initiatives included the H1N1 campaign in which they were able to get out 8,000 vaccinations in a very short period of time to a very worried and anxious population. They partnered with Newton-Wellesley Hospital, brought the vaccinations into the schools, and had various clinics around the City. They will likely receive \$15,000 - \$20,000 from third-party insurance reimbursements to cover the cost of the supplies and administration - the vaccinations themselves were free. The Mass. Dept. of Public Health has purchased shingles vaccines and will be offered to Newton free of charge. Ms. Walsh said they will be scheduling both pneumonia and shingles vaccines clinics to the older population.
- Ms. Walsh said she was in the process of looking at the license and permit fees in the Environmental Health Division. The fees have not changed in 12 years. She compared them with surrounding communities and found that Newton was quite low and felt they could be brought more towards the middle. Ald. Linsky asked for the numbers when she finished her research.
- The Environmental Inspectors have been out checking on pharmacies to ensure compliance with the new tobacco ban and are also working on the prevention of the sale of tobacco to minors. They are also on the lookout for the new smokeless electronic cigarettes that have been showing up in kiosks in malls.

The Committee thanked Ms. Walsh for her time and information.

PARKS & RECREATION

Bob DeRubeis, Interim Commissioner of the Parks & Recreation Department, addressed the Committee. He stated that he has been the Interim Commissioner for 6 weeks, Deputy Commissioner for 9 years, and has been with the department since 1987. He provided a booklet which outlined the mission, elements, accomplishments, major projects, and management approaches in the Department. It is attached to this report.

Reorganization

Ald. Baker asked what would happen to the current major projects (see attachments) if the Mayor's reorganization of the Parks & Recreation, Public Works and Public Buildings Departments went through. Mr. DeRubeis said he hasn't been told by the Mayor's office but he had his own point of view. He felt the projects were park development projects and should stay under the purview of recreation. He did not feel these were maintenance projects. Ald. Baker also asked what responsibilities would take the place of the maintenance responsibilities that would be moved out of Parks & Recreation with the Mayor's reorganization plan. Mr. DeRubeis said he did not know at this point. Ald. Sangiolo felt that Community Education should be under the same umbrella as recreation so that the City wouldn't be competing in their offerings. Mr. DeRubeis said he felt there was duplication of services and that they could be under one roof. Mr. DeRubeis said that the Forestry division would be put under the new maintenance arm in the reorganization plan.

Ald. Hess-Mahan noted that the Citizen Advisory Group had also generally recommended a consolidation of these departments, but expected a monetary savings of only \$100,000 which would come through attrition of personnel. He was concerned that the City may save money by losing people but would not gain any efficiencies in that process. Ald. Rice complimented the Parks & Recreation staff. He said he has seen them go above and beyond their responsibilities many times.

Mr. DeRubeis said he worked on RecStat in the department as Deputy Commissioner. It was a reporting and accountability procedure to measure accomplishments, achievements and performance through statistical analysis. He would like to move forward with this management approach.

The Committee thanked Mr. DeRubeis for his time and information.

#47-10 CLERK OF THE BOARD, ALD. LENNON AND ALD. LAPPIN
requesting an amendment to Article V, Section 2B of the Rules of the Board of Aldermen, to change the docketing deadline from the Tuesday before a Board meeting to the Monday before a Board meeting to allow compliance with recent changes to the Open Meeting Law which take effect on July 1, 2010. [01-29-10 @ 1:52 PM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 6-0 (Ald. Fischman not voting)**

NOTE: David Olson, Clerk of the Board, addressed the Committee. He explained that the current Open Meeting Laws allowed for a body to post its meeting agendas 48 hours in advance, including Saturdays, but excluding Sundays and legal holidays. On July 1, 2010, the language will exclude Saturdays as well. The Clerk's office currently posted agendas for Monday meetings on the previous Friday. Since Saturday will no longer be counted as a legal 24-hour period, the postings must move to Thursday. In order for the Clerk's office to have sufficient time to create the docket and prepare agendas, Mr. Olson was asking for the current docket deadline of Tuesday prior to a full Board meeting at 7:45 pm to be changed to Monday prior to a full Board meeting at 7:45 pm. Clerks will be in the office until 7:45 pm on those Monday nights due to Committee meetings and will be able to assist in taking in docket forms. On the rare occasion of a Monday holiday falling on a docket deadline, the deadline could be postponed to Tuesday.

Packets would continue to be delivered to the aldermen on Fridays. Since the Docket, Reports Docket, Zoning and Planning Agenda, and Finance Agenda all pertained to Monday meetings, they would be posted on Thursdays at City Hall and on-line through the City's website, and included in the Friday packets.

Mr. Olson will start to implement the new docket deadline in mid-June with plenty of notice to the Board.

The Committee voted to approve this item by a vote of 6-0 with Ald. Fischman not voting.

REFERRED TO PROGRAMS & SERVICES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#51-10 ALD. CROSSLEY & HESS-MAHAN requesting adoption of a policy to purchase only fuel-efficient vehicles for municipal use whenever such vehicles are commercially available and practicable, in order to satisfy the requirements to qualify as a Green Community under MGL Chapter 25A, §10(c). [02/09/10 @ 7:25 PM]

ACTION: **HELD 6-0 (Ald. Fischman not voting)**

NOTE: Ald. Crossley addressed the Committee on this item. She explained that there were several criteria necessary for a city or town to be designated as a Green Community by the state. This docket item represented one of the criteria. The idea was to reduce the energy footprint across the state.

Benefits and Uses

Applying for this designation by May 14 would make the city eligible to apply for up to \$1,000,000 in protected state monies this year. They could also apply for this designation next year but she felt the sooner they applied the better. So far, no communities had received the designation. The money could be used to fund all or a portion of the costs of studying, designing, constructing and implementing energy efficiency activities, including but not limited to:

- Energy conservation measures and projects
- Procurement of energy management services
- Installation of energy management systems
- Adoption of demand side reduction initiatives
- Adoption of energy efficiency policies.
- Finance the siting and construction of renewable and alternative energy projects on municipally-owned land

Process and Implementation

Some vehicles would be exempt from the energy efficient requirement including emergency vehicles, heavy equipment and special vehicles such as snowplows. This policy would mainly affect City cars. A list of fuel-efficient cars that would qualify was attached to the agenda. The cars did not have to be hybrids to qualify, they just needed to meet the performance standard which varied by vehicle. Ald. Crossley said they should first check the current City fleet to say if any of the vehicles already qualified. She said if the City preferred to buy vehicles through auctions, they needed to find out if those cars could meet the requirements. She also understood that there needed to be a cost benefit analysis. She would like for the Committee to think about any questions they might have. She felt they could easily call the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources with any questions and she felt there could be some latitude.

Executive Office Response

Bob Rooney, Chief Operating Officer, joined the Committee. He said the administration was excited about this initiative and thought it was the right thing to do. In this difficult fiscal climate, it was not a good time to be spending more money rather than less.

Typically, the City bought cars from auction for about \$10,000 when the old ones fell apart. However, in streamlining effectiveness, they were finding that sometimes it took money to make money. He said it would take some hard work to implement this policy. Ald. Linsky said the City simply needed to develop the policy. He didn't expect that the City would need to purchase any new vehicles in the next fiscal year or two or more. When the time came to purchase vehicles, the City could still go to the auction and very likely find cars that met the standards.

Considerations and Concerns

Ald. Baker noted that most of the cars that met the standard were relatively small. He wondered if cars of that size would meet the needs of City personnel. Ald. Linsky felt they would because they would generally be used for Inspectional Services or the Assessors office, for example – typically a one or two person team. The departments that required larger vehicles such as heavy equipment would be exempt. Mr. Rooney explained that most of the cars in the current city fleet were manufactured by Ford. This made it easier for parts ordering and repairs. He noted that many of the cars on the approved list were foreign cars. Ald. Sangiolo and Ald. Crossley said the City had to consider the cost of maintenance of these vehicles as some foreign car parts were expensive. Ald. Crossley said they needed to look at the lifecycle of older vehicles that may be bought for less money, but likely had higher maintenance costs and didn't last as long as a newer model. Ald. Baker felt they needed to look at the safety ratings of cars as well and wondered if the City had any obligations in that area.

Support

Jonathan Kantar addressed the committee. He said he expected the stock of fuel-efficient cars on the market to steadily increase. He also felt the marginal cost between fuel-efficient cars and non-fuel-efficient cars would decrease. Considering the money the City could garner from the grants, he felt this policy was well worth the effort. He pointed out that adopting a STRETCH code was another criterion for Green Community designation and Newton already met that. There was not much time left in this application period and he would like to see this policy developed.

Ald. Hess-Mahan said it was important to have a policy that balanced the needs of the City with fuel efficiency. However, he felt it made sense to purchase smaller cars whenever possible. He said it was the direction the state was moving in and the grants would provide money to implement other green initiatives.

Follow Up

Ald. Sangiolo said she envisioned Ald. Crossley working together with the administration to form the policy. She didn't feel the policy should be driven by the Board. The Board would ultimately have to approve money to purchase vehicles, however, the policy need only come from a "local official or authority" as described in the application. To have consensus of the Board and the Executive office would be the ideal. Ald. Crossley asked for Committee members to send her any questions or concerns in preparation for future discussions. She said she will come to the next discussion of this item with the proposed language of the policy.

Ald. Linsky moved to hold this item and the Committee voted in favor 6-0.

#8-09 ALD. HESS-MAHAN, LINSKY, ALBRIGHT, FREEDMAN, MANSFIELD, JOHNSON, HARNEY & VANCE proposing an ordinance requiring that the installation of synthetic in-filled turf athletic fields on city-owned property shall use sustainable, recyclable, lead-free, non-toxic products to the maximum extent feasible. [12/30/08 @ 9:55 AM]

ACTION: **HELD 7-0**

NOTE: Ald. Hess-Mahan explained that this item was discussed last year. The next step was to prepare the proposed language for the ordinance and get feedback from the Committee. He also wanted to give the Parks & Recreation Department an opportunity to look at the language. Bob DeRubeis, Interim Commissioner of Parks & Recreation, said he would be happy to look at any alternatives and work with the Committee. He would speak to his Turf Specialist about this as well and come back with some suggestions on the language. Their department has purchased some machinery for vacuuming and sweeping of turf and he hoped it would work for any new products so that new equipment would not need to be purchased.

The language is attached to this report. Ald. Hess-Mahan noted that the ordinance would not require that the City use an alternative, but that an analysis would be done to determine if it would be feasible, and if so, that it be used.

History

Ald. Hess-Mahan reminded the Committee that this item came out of concern for the products being used on the Newton South fields regarding environmental and health issues. The crumb rubber used in many of the older turf products contained lead and other potentially toxic substances. A Resolution had been sent to the former Mayor to investigate non-toxic products for use on the City's fields.

Future Use

Ald. Linsky said that since the decision had already been made to use a particular type of synthetic turf on the fields at Newton South, he felt this was an opportunity to assess new products for use on the fields at Newton North and any others that may come up in the future. He realized that in terms of selecting a product for the Newton North fields, time was of the essence. He felt the City would not be able to sustain and maintain all the natural turf fields over time and that more synthetic turf fields will be installed throughout the City. Ald. Hess-Mahan agreed saying there were many new products available and they should be researched. The market has adapted through demand providing less toxic and more cost effective products. They both understood that lifecycle costs had to be one of the determining factors in selection.

Ordinance

Ald. Baker wondered if this needed to be put forth in an ordinance. Ald. Hess-Mahan said the ordinance would provide a framework that required the City to look at

alternatives. Because the parks, the playgrounds and the school grounds can be under the auspices of different departments, it would be better to have an ordinance that applied to all City-owned fields regardless of department.

The Committee voted to hold this item by a vote of 7-0.

REFERRED TO PS&T AND PROGRAMS & SERVICES COMMITTEES

#391-08 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting Board of Aldermen approval to
(#122-92(3)) petition the General Court for an amendment to the legislation that governs the appointment of a Police Chief in the City of Newton in order to add two members to the committee: an additional representative of the Newton Superior Officers Association and an additional citizen member.
[11/4/08 @12:31 PM]

ACTION: **HELD 7-0**

NOTE: Ald. Sangiolo noted that the Public Safety and Transportation Committee approved this item last term. Ald. Linsky recommended having Marie Lawlor from the Law Department come to the next meeting as PS&T had already approved language for this and she had worked on it. When the last Chief was hired, the Committee in fact comported with the description in this item but they need to put through the special legislation. Ald. Sangiolo asked that this item be put on the next agenda and that Marie Lawlor come with the language.

The Committee voted to hold this item by a vote of 7-0.

Rules Subcommittee

Ald. Baker suggested that the Rules Subcommittee meet at 6:30 on March 3rd and the Committee agreed.

Motion to adjourn.

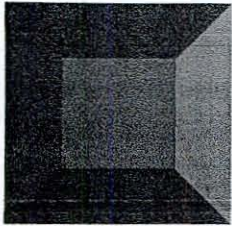
Respectfully Submitted,

Amy Sangiolo, Chairman

MISSION

To provide traditional and innovative
recreation, leisure and cultural activities
in a quality environment
to all residents of Newton

DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW



Five Key Elements Of Department



Recreation Programs

Programs and activities for toddlers to seniors including camps, sports, swimming, social activities, after school programs and learning.



Arts and Culture

Cultural and arts programs focused on children's enrichment, public concerts, youth theater, City-wide festivals, and holiday events.



Parks and Open Space

Public parks, playgrounds, recreational facilities and natural areas that serve to benefit the public's health, well being and sense of community



Grounds Maintenance

Responsible for the care and maintenance of the City's parks, school grounds, public buildings grounds, athletic fields, and cemeteries.



Urban Forestry

Responsible for the care and custody of trees located on City controlled land and regulatory authority of the Tree Preservation Ordinance.



BY THE NUMBERS

- ❖ 4.1 millions dollar budget
- ❖ 32 full time employees
- ❖ 300 seasonal and part time employees
- ❖ 1.2 million dollars of revolving account revenue annually
- ❖ 50 major parks
- ❖ 45 playgrounds
- ❖ 250 locations maintained
- ❖ 55,500 hours of field use permits
- ❖ 130 recreation and cultural programs
- ❖ 100,000 program participants and attendees
- ❖ 15 summer camps
- ❖ 5,100 annual swim permits issued each year
- ❖ 20,000 people utilize Department picnic facilities
- ❖ 15,000 shoppers attend Department Farmers Market annually
- ❖ 30,000 streets trees



2009 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ❖ Ran successful camp season to meet the needs of the citizens of Newton.
- ❖ Offered lake and pool swimming environs to the citizens of Newton, through the operation of Gath Pool and Crystal Lake.
- ❖ Crack filled and seal coated Newton South Tennis Courts
- ❖ Installed shade structure at Newton Centre Tennis Courts
- ❖ Replacement of storage shed at Newton Centre Tennis Courts
- ❖ Implemented a new fence repair contract. Chain link fence replacement at Newton Centre Tennis Courts and chain link fence installation at Commonwealth Golf Course.
- ❖ Renovation of baseball field at Halloran Sports Complex
- ❖ Renovation of softball field at Forte Park
- ❖ In conjunction with Newton West Little League, installation of state of the art field lighting at Lyons Field.
- ❖ Prioritization of Access Projects for FY11-FY15
- ❖ Expansion of recreational offerings, through additional summer camps and vacation programs.
- ❖ Enhanced the infrastructure at Gath Pool through the installation of a shade structure and water slide.
- ❖ Tennis court crack repair at McGrath and Weeks (7 courts total).
- ❖ Restoration of Coletti-Magni Park
- ❖ Completed path at Crystal Lake
- ❖ Hired Synthetic Turf Specialist
- ❖ Splash feature installed at Gath Pool
- ❖ Implemented Customer Service request system that is web based
- ❖ Report on the State of the City's Urban Forest
- ❖ Created comprehensive Urban Forestry web page

CURRENT MAJOR PROJECTS

Lower Falls Community Center Improvements

\$500,000 of Federal funds have been made available to make building more energy efficient and lower operational costs as well as improve the indoor environment.

Farlow Park Pond Restoration Design

\$34,000 are available for documentation and design to create a plan to restore the historic pond in Farlow Park.

Stearns Playground

\$350,000 is being used to design, build, and replace existing park amenities. New accessible pathway will be installed as well as new basketball courts and new playground equipment.

Pellegrini Park

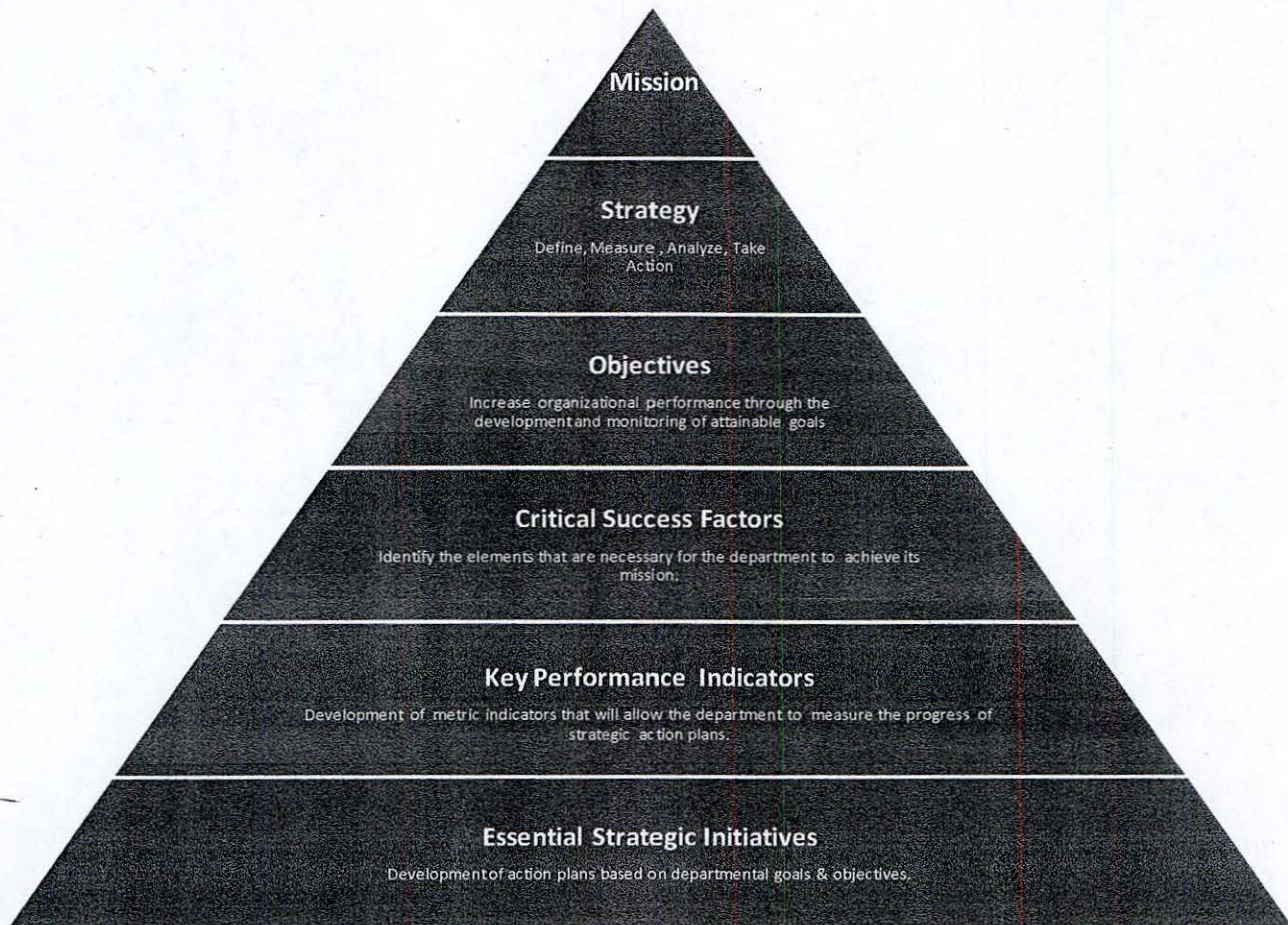
\$200,000 is being used to make site improvements that will improve accessibility, pedestrian safety, and parking issues.

Accessibility projects City-wide

\$106,000 has been allocated in accessibility funds to improve three major Parks Department sites. Newton Centre playground at Bowen Street, Nahanton Park will have improved access near the Charles River, and Cold Springs Park's tennis courts will be made accessible.

MANAGEMENT APPROACH

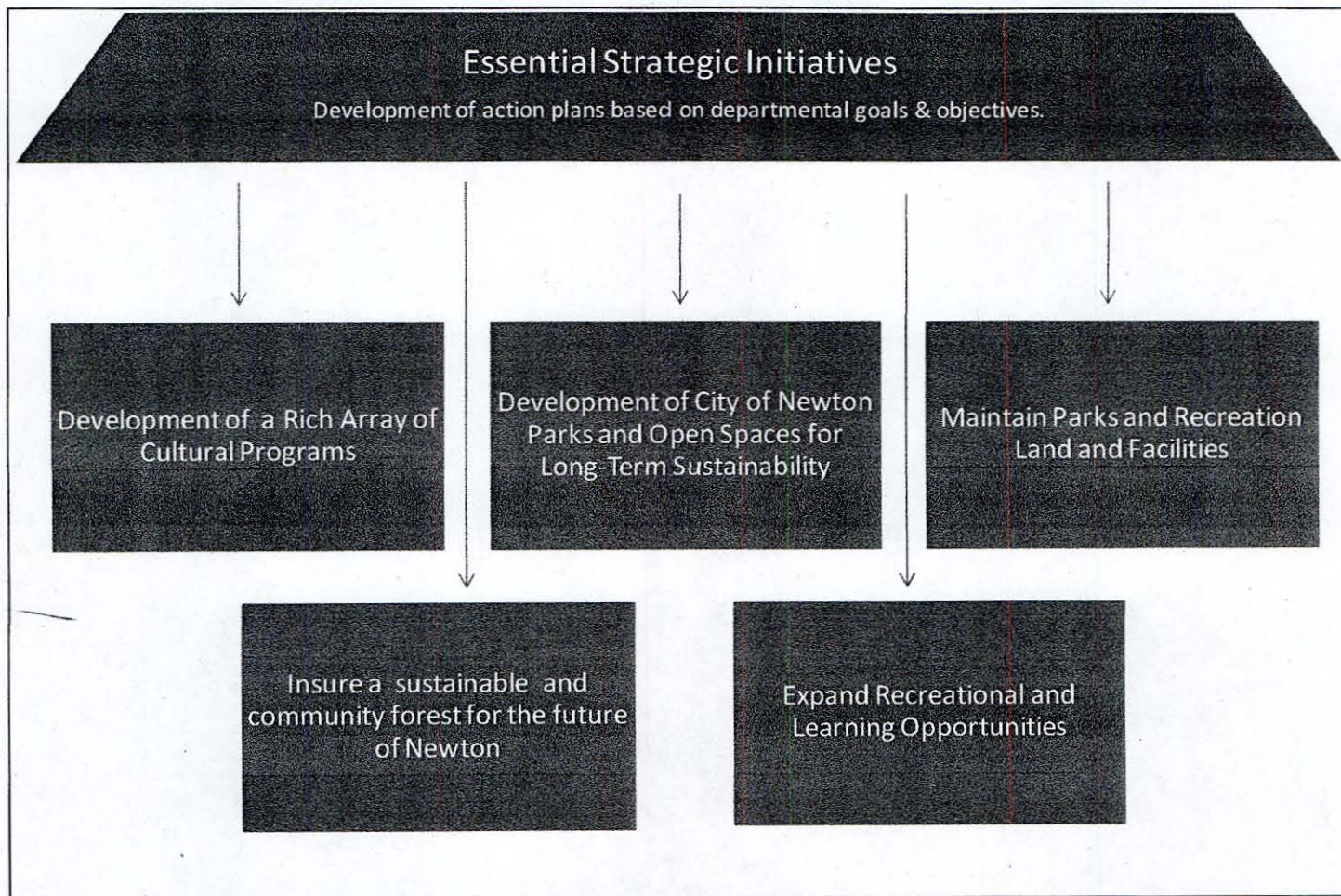
Performance and Goal Oriented



Developed reporting and accountability procedure to measure Departments accomplishments, achievements and performance—**RECSTAT**

Use the RECSTAT approach to measure successes and failures and develop actions associated with the six key areas of our Performance Management Triangle.

MANAGEMENT APPROACH



MANAGEMENT APPROACH

Key Performance Indicators

Development of metric indicators that will allow the department to measure the progress of strategic action plans.

Development of a Rich Array of Cultural Programs

- New Programs
- Increased Attendance
- Increased Revenue
- Promotion & Advertisement
- Increased Diversity

Insure a sustainable and community forest for the future of Newton

- Continued revision of Tree Manual
- Tree Inventory
- Trees Pruned
- Trees Removed

Development of City of Newton Parks and Open Spaces for Long-Term Sustainability

- Increased Accessibility
- Park Project Development
- Implementation of Master Plans
- Enhanced citywide planning for parks and open spaces
- Development and maintaining partnerships to enhance Newton's parks and open spaces

Maintain Parks and Recreation Land and Facilities

- Implementation of maintenance plan
- Completed work orders
- Track maintenance practices
- Monitor cultural practices

Expand Recreational and Learning Opportunities

- Development of new and innovative programming
- Development of facilities to support community recreation needs
- Increased Attendance
- Increased Revenue
- Review demographics, attract more diverse population

MANAGEMENT APPROACH

Critical Success Factors

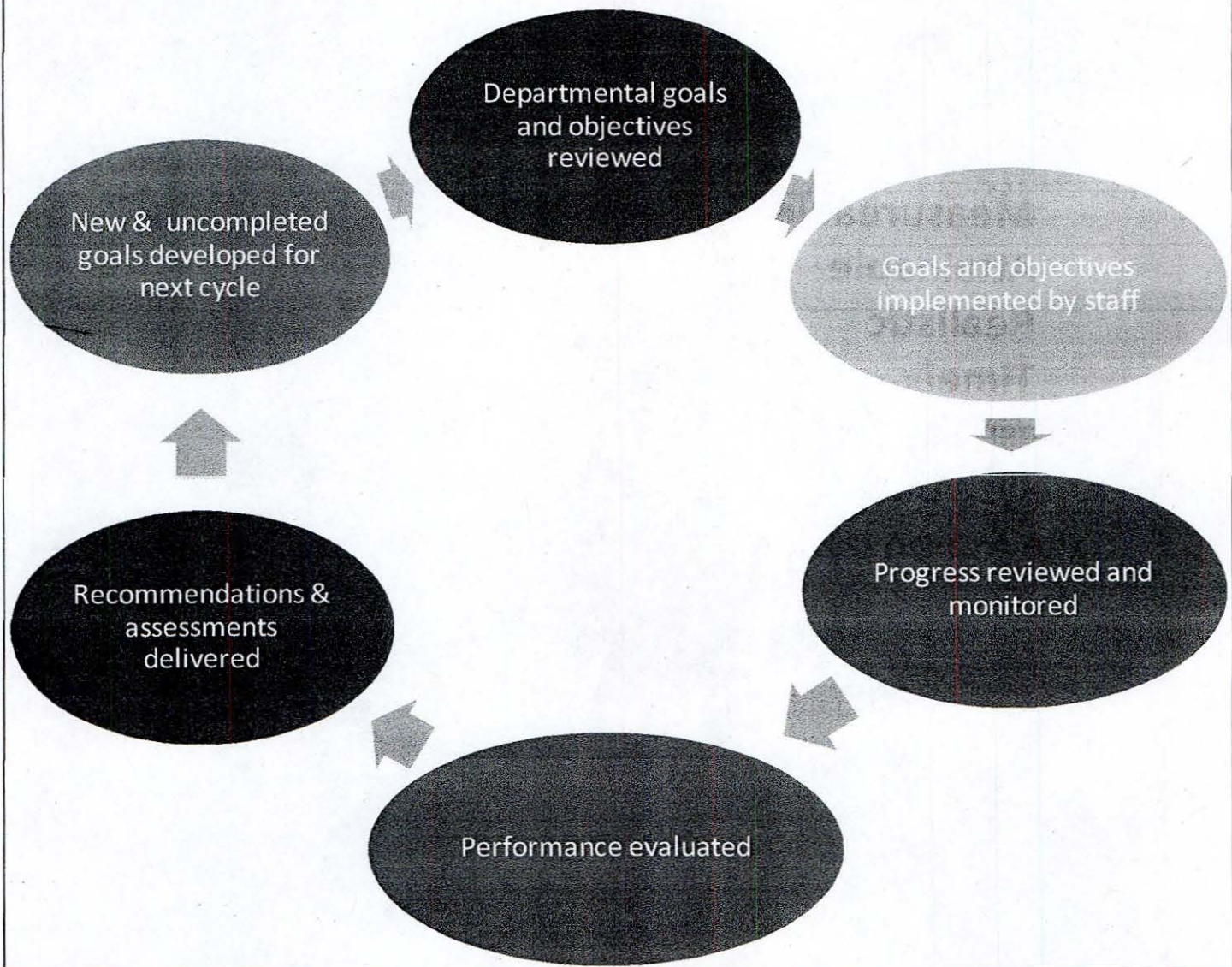
Identify the elements that are necessary for the department to achieve its mission.

1. **Customer service:** Ability to keep the residents/users of services happy with the product that is being put out by Parks & Recreation.
2. **Quality:** Conducting programs/services that will not only maintain attendance, but allow for continued growth.
3. **Revenue:** Continued revenue growth through increased programming and services.
4. **Program & Service Development:** What new programs and ideas are being implemented that will increase business with existing participants and attract new ones?
5. **Sustainability:** In the current difficult fiscal setting, the ability to maintain what you have and seek future growth.
6. **Effective advertising:** Get the message out. Perception is critical to success.
7. **Organizational effectiveness:** The whole is only as good as the sum of its parts.

MANAGEMENT APPROACH

Objectives

Increase organizational performance
through the development and monitoring
of attainable goals



MANAGEMENT APPROACH

Strategy

Define, Measure , Analyze,
Take Action

1. **Define Goals**
2. **Determine Measurement**
Specific
Measureable
Attainable
Realistic
Timely
3. **Measure Performance**
4. **Analyze Data**
5. **Take Action based on Data Collection**

MANAGEMENT APPROACH



Mission

To provide traditional and innovative recreation, leisure and cultural activities in a quality environment to all residents of Newton

Requirement that installation of synthetic in-filled turf athletic fields on city-owned properties use sustainable, recyclable, lead-free, non-toxic products to the maximum extent feasible.

The installation of synthetic in-filled turf athletic fields on city-owned property shall use sustainable, recyclable, lead-free, non-toxic products to the maximum extent feasible.

“Feasible” means capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable period of time, taking into account estimated cost, effectiveness, environmental, safety, public health, legal and technological factors.

“Maximum extent feasible” means no prudent, practical, and feasible alternative exists, taking into account the best available technology, cost effectiveness and other competing issues such as safety, public health, and environmental risks and benefits. In determining what is the maximum extent feasible, the City shall consider, at a minimum, effectiveness, engineering feasibility, commercial availability, safety, environmental impact and cost. Cost shall not be the overriding factor in determining “maximum extent feasible,” and must include consideration of projected life cycle costs, including, but not limited to, maintenance, repair, replacement, recycling and/or disposal costs over the estimated useful life of the installation. “Maximum extent feasible” is intended to be a flexible standard that may vary depending on consideration of the factors listed above and site conditions for each specific installation.