

Newton Parks & Recreation Commission

Meeting Minutes

War Memorial - City Hall

7:00 p.m. – Monday, February 25, 2019



Robert J. DeRubeis
Commissioner

Meeting began at 7:01 p.m.

Attending: Chairman Magni, Vice-Chairman Tucker, Commissioner DeRubeis, Patty Kerwin Derrick, Byron Dunker, Melissa Sommer, Sam Figler

1. Meeting Minutes

- January 28, 2019- approved 6-0

2. Chairman Magni

- Introduction of new members
 - Patty Kerwin Derrick – Ward 8
 - Melissa Sommer – Ward 4
- Peter Johnson announcement
 - Mr. Johnson has retired from the Commission
 - All members present thanked Mr. Johnson for over 30 years of service on the Commission

3. Commissioner's Reports on Programs, Forestry and Maintenance

- **St. Mary of Carmen** – Informational- presented by Commissioner DeRubeis. As voted on last April, if no material changes, proposers would not need to attend informational meeting, only the public hearing.
 - The St. Mary of Carmen Society will celebrate its Annual Festival on July 17th, 2019 through July 21st, 2019. This is the 84th anniversary celebration with no material changes.

Mr. Tucker made the motion to move the proposal to a public hearing. Mr. Dunker seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0.

- Sad week with the loss of Linda Plaut. Linda worked for the city for over 40 years. Linda started the Cultural Affairs Office with Mayor Mann. Linda was the face of culture and arts in the city. She is irreplaceable.
- Budget meetings have begun. Commissioner will update as they move forward.
- Positions being posted in the department, Open Space Coordinator and Aquatics Director. Payroll Clerk retiring July 29.
- Currently at Bullough's Pond test pits are being drilled to check integrity of damn.
- Contacting STS Corporation to discuss drainage issues at Lyons Field.

- Meeting with the neighbors of NSHS to discuss the lights being installed on the football field.

4. McGrath Park Lacrosse Wall – Public Hearing- Mark LaCamera

- Mr. LaCamera stated Lacrosse is the fastest growing sport in America. Newton currently has an intramural team for grades 1-8. NNHS & NSHS both have teams. Both high school coaches support this proposal for the wall.
- Mr. LaCamera explained the wall is standard equipment and the best tool to provide the best experience for the kids as well as make them better players.
- McGrath field is primarily used for lacrosse. The wall will be located against the tree line which will not compromise the field view line. The wall will be placed perpendicular to Washington Street, this way the kids will always be in view.
- Chairman Magni asked if the wall could be moved closer to Washington Street near the tennis courts. Mr. LaCamera stated that is not a good option, it is a safety issue having the kids so close to the street and away from the lacrosse field.
- Mr. LaCamera stated the question of noise was asked. The wall will not be used after dusk and the concrete will absorb the sound of the ball. Ms. Sommer asked if the noise will be different when hitting from different distances. Mr. Figler replied no, it will be the same sound.
- Ms. Sommer commented she is concerned about the safety of other park users being hit by the ball and kids being unsupervised using the wall. Mr. LaCamera commented other park users will see the activity at the wall and move away from the activity.
- Mr. Figler stated that the size of the wall has been changed from 18'x60' to 18'x45'.
- Mr. Dunker commented he has a friend in Needham who uses the wall and has reported the wall is not noisy but also commented the 18' height seemed a little high, nets could be used at the top if needed. Mr. Figler commented the height can be adjusted.
- Chairman Magni opened the meeting to the public for comment:
- *Nancy Sweet*, girl's lacrosse, supports the proposal. The wall will help to improve catch and throw skills. And having the wall in a central location keeps the kids together.
- *Brian Oaks*, involved in lacrosse program, the lacrosse community is an incredible community there is a lot of comradery. The wall will make it easier to teach and will improve all players from beginner to advanced.
- *Paul Weitzell*, son is in lacrosse. Lacrosse is the fastest growing sport. The wall is instrumental in making kids better.
- Commissioner DeRubeis introduced Joan McGrath. The park was named after Mrs.'s McGrath's husband. Mrs. McGrath commented that she

spoke with her kids and in support of the proposal the one recommendation she has is to add a fence around the wall.

- Chairman Magni stated a letter was received from Ryan Oldham, an abutter on Oldham Rd, in opposition of the proposal.
- Ms. Sommer commented she is concerned about the safety of others when a soccer game or other event is scheduled on the field, someone could get hurt.
- Mr. Figler stated the wall has never been a safety in other communities. And we can investigate fencing.
- Commissioner DeRubeis commented Parks & Recreation is responsible for permitting. When soccer or other events are scheduled, we can restrict the use of the wall.
- Nancy Sweet commented the fence could also be a safety issue.

Mr. Dunker made the motion to approve the proposal as presented. Ms. Kerwin Derrick seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-1.

- Residents of 104 Oldham Rd came into the meeting after the motion. They had questions about the lacrosse wall proposal. The Commission reviewed the proposal, questions and concerns with them.

5. Committee Reports

- Community Preservation Committee – No report
- Farm Commission -No report
 - *appoint a representative*
- Commonwealth Golf Course – No report
- Off-Leash Area Working Group (OLAWG)
 - Signed MOU with Conservation Commission regarding proposed off-leash area
- Crystal Lake Working Group (CLWG)
- Athletic Fields Committee -started discussing Field IPM
- NewCAL - beginning negotiations on location
- Policy & Procedure Review
 - Field Naming – Mr. Dunker commented he received a copy of the existing policy and would make a few updates and bring to the Commission for review. The Commission Manual will be sent out to all members.

6. New Business

- Commission Elections
 - Commissioner DeRubeis asked for nominations for Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

Mr. Figler made the motion to nominate Arthur Magni as Chairman and Dick Tucker as Vice Chairman. Mr. Dunker seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0

Meeting Adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Robin McLaughlin
Parks & Recreation Commission Secretary