

Newton Parks, Recreation Commission

Meeting Minutes
Room 204 - City Hall
7:00 p.m. – Monday, May 20, 2019



Robert J. DeRubeis
Commissioner

Meeting began at 7:00 p.m.

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

1. Meeting Minutes

- April 22, 2019- approved 8-0

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

- There is a new Aquatics Director, Sean Nickerson
- Forty-two resumes have been submitted for the Cultural Director position.
- Highlands Open House was a great event
- Maintenance is prepping fields
- Lyons Field has issues with flooding, the issue may be that the river is the same height as the field, the field would have to be raised a foot. We need to know the flood plain.
- Mark Kelly received the Presidents Award from the organization, Families of Children with Special Needs.
- The next request the Commission receives for a sculpture show, the Commission may want to require sculptures are submitted for approval. There were a couple of questionable sculptures refused for the Greenway Sculpture Trail.
- The Farlow Park final presentation was presented to the CPC. Thanks goes to Planning and CBDG for kicking in \$400K to complete the project.
- Youth Awards are scheduled in June before the Commission meeting

3. Levingston Cove Project – Public Hearing

- Gene Bolinger and Cassie Bethoney of Weston & Sampson presented the proposed plan for the renovation of Levingston Cove. The renovation will:
 - Improve condition of landscape
 - Ensure pedestrian movement
 - Improve the passive recreation opportunities
 - Improve water quality
 - Enhance and protect view
- Mr. Tucker asked if the green area will be grass or ground cover. Mr. Bolinger replied the grass area will be a combination of both.
- Mr. Figler asked the process followed that led to this proposal. Mr. Bolinger replied he has been working with the Crystal Lake Working Group for two years and then there was a public meeting at the library which led

to this plan from all the input at that meeting. This is a preliminary design, once the preliminary design is finalized, we can generate more details of a basic plan.

- Mr. Cecchinelli asked how the shoreline can be made less desirable to stop people from going into the water. Mr. Bolinger suggested being more proactive with stones, etc.
- Chairman Magni asked why slope stability has not been incorporated. Mr. Bolinger commented once they have the final details of the plan, they will work with the engineers on slope stability.
- Will the large tree be impacted near fishing area? Mr. Bolinger commented there will be limited disturbance since the grading plan accommodates the tree.
- Regarding the columns, what is the height requirement of the columns. The requirement is one foot.
- Chairman opened the meeting to abutter comments and questions.
- Beth Wilkinson asked if the invasive crab apple trees could be removed. Mr. Bolinger commented it is an opportunity to remove trees and prune healthy trees.
- What is the purpose of the railing along the sidewalk? Mr. Bolinger stated the current rail fence needs to be replaced and the new railing is meant to discourage people from cutting across down the slope.
- Is there a cost estimate broken down by section? Mr. Bolinger said no, it will depend on the final scope of work.
- Has the intensity of use been considered? Mr. Bolinger replied yes, use varies by season.
- Has the stormwater that flows into the lake been considered? Mr. Bolinger replied those improvements are included in finished design.
- Can you give an estimate on the length of the project and the time of year it will begin? Mr. Bolinger commented the project should take about 4 months and will be done in the warmer weather months, but it may take more time for the grass to be established.
- Braeburn Terrace resident asked if consideration for water activities such as long-distance swimming, paddleboard, etc. have been considered. Mr. Bolinger replied not a lot of discussion because there are other areas of the lake better suited for these activities.
- Has DPW been included with this plan regarding maintenance. Commissioner DeRubeis commented there is a DPW staff person on the Crystal Lake Working Group and maintenance is the responsibility of Parks & Recreation.
- The guard rails are destroyed by snow plows every year are you going to use materials to protect the guard rails. Mr. Bolinger replied yes.
- Is there a railing on the water side of the of the deck or along the path? Mr. Bolinger stated there is no railing on the lower deck.
- 203 Lake Ave, in favor of plan but opposes cantilever and wooded steps and suggests removing these features. There is little foot traffic from

September – June. The concern is the large crowds that will come to the area. This will invite unauthorized swimming, there are no restrooms or changing rooms, this is unhealthy for the outfalls. This will threaten the conservation efforts.

- 17 Berwick Rd Loves the plan and thanks the group, this plan allows kids access to the lake.
- 160 Lake Ave, Crab apple trees are not invasive, and their root system supports the shoreline. Chinese wisteria is present and is invasive. Geese will not go under tree branches so having the trees on site will deter the geese. Make sure the railings are strong enough to with stand vandalism.
- 51 Hyde St uses both the beach area and the cove area, this plan is the best of both worlds.
- 15 Norwood Ave keep as natural as possible, the structures are unnecessary.
- 238 Lincoln St, Like the plan merges the many diverse views which have been complicated to bring together.
- 39A Charles, formerly at 15 Rogers St., when he lived on Rogers Street, he knew Louise Levingston. Louise wanted the area to be kept natural, the cantilever is not natural.
- 31 Norwood Ave, sees benefit of plan but railing is a negative feature, most people walk along Lake Ave.
- 203 Lake Ave, the cantilever is not needed. The proposed extension promotes crowds. Create a buffer zone using plantings and it is less expensive. The swim deck invites Swim at Your Own Risk. What began as restoration now creates issues.
- Karen Bray, the plan is natural and simple. The terrace is a good idea for protecting the slope, the cantilever deck is a good idea and gives access for walk thru and those fishing have their own space.
- 53 Pine Croft Rd, the grassy area is enough space for people to sunbathe, the fishing deck is a good idea to keep the path clear, mixed feelings about the other deck, just keep materials natural.
- 28 Kenmore loves the proposal it is elegant but maybe too elegant and expensive, it may take decades to happen.
- 14 Saxon Terrace, glad the area is being addressed, fishing pier infrastructure is not consistent with lake, railing makes it impossible to fish. Keep attention on sustainability of plants and grade.
- 296 Lake Ave is horrified by the fence behind lawn area.
- Beth Wilkinson, Weston & Sampson did a great job using hardscape that looks natural. Likes the separate areas for those fishing and those walking thru.
- 128 Allerton Rd, group did a great job dealing with storm water and erosion. The fishing platform looks very natural, but the railing will discourage fishing. Certain areas in plan look like a resort.
- 24 Norman Rd has skepticism, this is a high use area with a tough grade. The cross connection is thoughtful but there are other alternatives, stairs

to lower platform, porous pavement instead of pavement. This is a great pond and the public should be encouraged to use the pond and preserve the pond.

- 9 Laurel St, I have fished over railings over bridges and off piers with railings and have never had a problem.
- James Jampol, the filters on the storm drain were replaced in 2014 and since then the water quality has been good.
- 25 Merlin Ave, this is a good plan addressing erosion and an expanded path. It is a worthy resource to invest in.
- 30 Berwick Rd, appreciated separating the walkers and the fishers
- 184 Allerton, this is a good plan, regarding the fence on the sidewalk, “fences make good neighbors”, the fence is a reminder to go to the pathway.
- 230 Lake Ave, this is a wonderful plan but let’s not do this. His garden is used as a bathroom and when he asks where the person is from, they are usually from out of town.
- Marshall St, Fishing platform is ok, but the other platform is a magnet for trouble.
- Jini Fairley, ADA Coordinator, this is a fantastic plan the pathways are accessible, and the lower deck provides a stable surface.
- 51 Lake Ave, the lower deck will not be more of a magnet than the area already is. Access is much improved.
- 32 Lakewood Rd, everyone walks on the street they do not want to deal with the current path.
- Chairman Magni closed the public comment portion of the meeting and asked for Commission comments.
- Chairman Magni asked if there is flexibility after vote on path by the house and the lower deck. Mr. Bolinger stated the deck is to lessen the slope and needs to be ADA compliant but there is some flexibility.
- Mr. Figler asked if the preferred plan moves forward what is the next step in the process. Mr. Bolinger replied the next design would be more definitive which will take multiple months and then it will be presented to the Conservation Commission.
- Mr. Neville asked if the 11.5’ feet is wide enough for the pathway. Mr. Bolinger replied yes.
- Ms. Somers asked how the policing issues are deal with. Commissioner DeRubeis stated enforcement is a Police issue.
- Chairman Magni suggested the motion to accept the plan contingent on a final look at materials used and the Council passing an ordinance against Swim at Your Own Risk (SAYOR). Commissioner DeRubeis stated if the motion passes the proposal is dead.
- Councilor Danberg requested they do not tie the two issues together, SAYOR has been discussed for decades.

Chairman Magni made the motion to accept the plan contingent on a final look at materials used and the Council passing an ordinance against Swim at Your Own Risk. Motion failed 2-6.

*Mr. Dunker made the motion to accept the preliminary plan with the request to come back to the Commission with any material changes. Mr. Figler seconded the motion.
Motion passed 8-0.*

4. CPC Presentation – Alice Ingerson, Byron Dunker

- Ms. Ingerson stated she is required to meet with all governing bodies to discuss the list of needs the group may have that are not on the list the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) currently has in.
- Mr. Figler asked what cannot be included. Ms. Ingerson replied what can be included are:
 - Housing
 - Open Space
 - Recreation
 - Historic
- Mr. Dunker commented the CPC likes partnerships.
- Ms. Ingerson commented the plan sent to the members via email provides a sense of what can be and what is currently listed. The CPC is trying to review the list and decide what should be funded. CPA funds are not a substitute for municipal funds. The CPC recommends projects, but the Council must approve the project. Does Parks & Recreation have any proposal ideas? Mr. Dunker suggested NSHS lights project.

5. Committee Reports

- Community Preservation Committee
- Farm Commission
 - *Patty Kerwin Derrick accepted position*
- Commonwealth Golf Course
 - Had a productive meeting with the Engineering Department discussing the Maintenance Building
- Off-Leash Area Working Group (OLAWG)
 - Issues at Hunnewell
 - Norumbega Park design is being developed by BETA Group
- Crystal Lake Working Group (CLWG)
- Athletic Fields Committee
- NewCAL
- Policy & Procedure Review
 - Field Naming

6. New Business

- Open Meeting Laws – Chairman Magni reviewed the rules for responding to emails
- No Smoking signs in the parks – Sami O'Reilly, Friends of Newton Tennis is requesting No Smoking signs in the parks. In Stearns Park, residents of the housing units are not allowed to smoke in federally funded housing so they smoke in the park, sitting next to the Tennis Courts.

Meeting Adjourned at 10:09 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Robin McLaughlin
Parks & Recreation Commission Secretary