

Newton Parks & Recreation Commission

Meeting Minutes

Room 211 - City Hall

7:00 p.m. – Monday, November 18, 2019



Attending: Chairman Magni, Vice-Chairman Tucker, Commissioner DeRubeis, Andy Stern, Byron Dunker, Patty Kerwin Derrick, Al Cecchinelli, Melissa Sommer, Michael Clarke, Sam Figler

1. Meeting Minutes

- October 21, 2019 minutes approved 8-0

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

- Peter Mazzapica, Off-Leash Recreation Specialist has been visiting the off-leash areas, focusing on Hunnewell Park. Furniture for Cabot Park has been ordered as a trial. Current users are bringing in chairs, etc., and the neighbors have been complaining the area looks like a junk yard.
- Final interviews for the Cultural Development Assistant are scheduled
- Human Resources has met with staff to review the 1st Amendment rights of the public and staff. This was scheduled to address the questions due to the two YouTubers filming at City Hall in Newton and other communities.
- Heartbreak Hill at Waban Hill Reservoir project has begun
- The Northland Project in Upper Falls will include green space with a spray park adjacent to the green space.
- Work is being done to renovate Weeks Field and Nahanton Park and Lincoln Warren Playground are next on the list.
- Levingston Cove project is moving forward, including the master plan for the bath house. Chairman Magni asked about the funding. The Commissioner replied the funding will be requested from the Community Preservation Committee.
- Forestry has planted over 500 trees this month with the support of the Tree Conservancy.
- The October 17th wind-storm cost \$217K in tree damage. The Commissioner will be requesting the funding from the Finance Committee.

3. Kennard Sculpture Trail - Sept-November 2020

- Carolyn Kraft, Friends of Kennard Park & Allison Newsome Artist Coordinator presented a proposal for an outdoor Sculpture Show at Kennard Park from September 2020- November 2020.
- Commissioner DeRubeis commented Ms. Kraft & Ms. Newsome coordinated the 2015 Kennard Park Sculpture Show. The show was a great success and brought awareness to Kennard Park.
- Ms. Newsome explained:
 - There will be fewer artists for the 2020 show
 - The artists will be using natural materials
 - The artists have visited the park and the sculptures will be inspired by the park
 - A website will be created to follow the artists and the process to create the sculptures
- The Commissioner recommended Ms. Kraft & Ms. Newsome return in March when there is detailed information about the event.

4. Athletic Fields & Fees – Justin Traxler- Newton Girls Soccer

- Mr. Traxler requested the P & R Commission support the proposal for a Master Plan to determine proper allocation and upkeep for athletic fields. *Presentation is attached.*
- Chairman Magni commented a Working Group has been created for this purpose. Mr. Figler stated the group has been meeting for two years and cannot come to a consensus.
- Commissioner DeRubeis commented it is problematic to eliminate any group, the fenced fields are single use and permitting is an issue.
- Mr. Stern commented the CPC does not allow funding for artificial turf. The Commissioner commented the rule is misleading. The CPC will fund the preparation for the artificial turf but will not pay for the actual turf.
- Commissioner DeRubeis recommended Forte Park. The park is surrounded by commercial property on three sides and the field has lights.
- Mr. Traxler is requesting endorsement by the Commission for a plan. Mr. Tucker stated the mission of the Commission is the preservation of open space, isn't this plan a conflict in the mission? And where do you find additional space in the City?
- Mr. Traxler used Weeks Playground as an example. Weeks is not a playground it is a field used predominantly by athletic groups. This field could be turned into an athletic complex with soccer and lacrosse fields.
- Commissioner DeRubeis stated if you checked with the neighbor's and other users of Weeks Playground they may not agree.
- Mr. Clarke commented the City does have an Open Space Plan which should be reviewed and includes definitions for active and passive recreation.
- Mr. Stephans of Newton Youth Soccer commented that times change, baseball is declining and the city is adding baseball fields. Some of the baseball fields should be converted to accommodate the other sports leagues.
- Mr. Figler asked what the Commission can do to help in the short-term to alleviate the permitting issues. And the long-term for additional fields. Mr. Clarke suggested if the process is not productive, they should go to the department for a plan.
- Commissioner DeRubeis is currently working on an RFP for a field assessment. It is currently being reviewed in the Executive Office. This will be a good starting point. An independent party will be reviewing the issues. Mr. Figler asked the timing of the RFP. The Commissioner responded early spring into winter.
- Mr. Stern stated he understands the issue and would like more information on the policy on the use of CPC funds regarding athletic turf. Parks & Recreation would have to sponsor a proposal for Forte Park.

Ms. Somer made the motion to investigate synthetic turf at Forte Park. Mr Tucker seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-1.

5. Committee Reports

- Community Preservation Committee
 - Received letter from BC regarding Webster Woods. 15.7 million has been bonded for the eminent domain of Webster Woods.
- Open Space & Recreation Plan Committee
 - A Commission member is required on the Committee for the Committee. Mr. Cecchinelli volunteered
- Farm Commission
 - Doing well. Had a fire inspection. The Fire Department will not respond to the fire box as it was installed by a private company.
- Commonwealth Golf Course
 - Fire Department wants a sprinkler system in the proposed maintenance building.
- Off-Leash Area Working Group (OLAWG)
- Crystal Lake Working Group (CLWG)
- Athletic Fields Committee

- NewCAL
- Policy & Procedure Review
 - Field Naming

6. New Business

- Mr. Clarke will be giving a talk on the History of Parks on January 30, 2020.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:27p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Robin McLaughlin

Parks & Recreation Commission Secretary

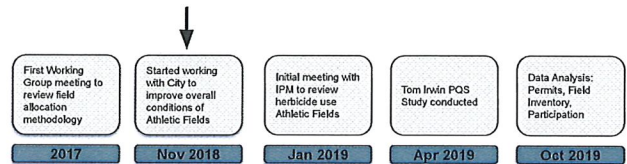
Athletic Fields Review Park and Recreation Commission

November 18, 2019

Justin Traxler, President Newton Girls Soccer

Introduction

- 20 Years: Newton Resident
- 2+ Years: President Newton Girls Soccer 2+
- 7+ Years: Coach
- 30+ Years: Played organized Sports
- 12 months: Working on field improvement program
- Have been to (just about) every field in Newton



Meeting Objectives

Share information collected and synthesized over the past year as part of the "Athletic Field Improvement Program"

Articulate structural **challenges** we have identified

Request for P&R Commission to provide specific **support** of Newton's athletic programs and **athletes**

Things We Agree On: Athletics are Good for Our Residents



Things We Agree On

Kids  Sports



Adults  Sports



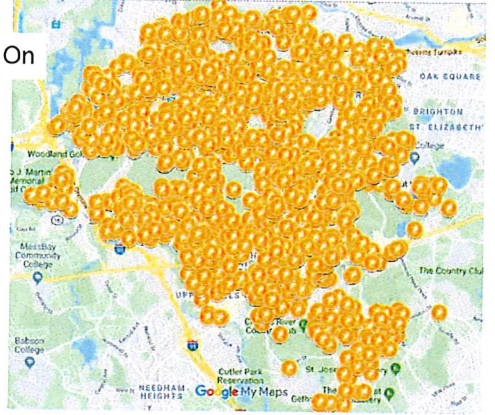
Things We Agree On

Athletes come from EVERY location & demographic of Newton

10,000+ athletes*

1,000's of them use our fields DAILY

Fall 2019 NGS Players
*Estimate Newton does not track this data officially



Definitions: Multi-Purpose Fields (Soccer, Lacrosse, Football, Frisbee, etc.)
 Change the Paint, Change the Sport.





Weeks Park, Newton

One of Newton's largest multi-purpose field sites

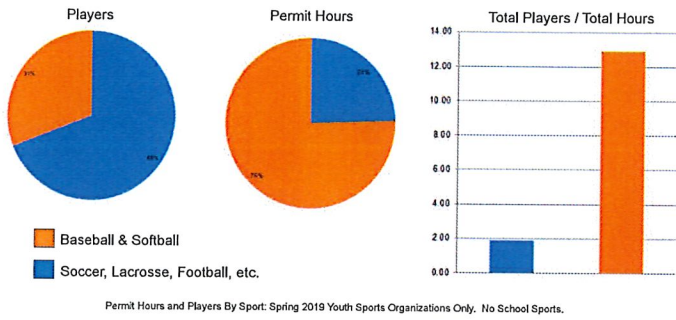
Veterans Park, Waltham

Athletic complex with 4 MP synthetic turf fields.

Definitions: Fenced and Shared Fields

- Shared Field: Multi-sport 
- Fenced Field: Single sport 
- Shared Field: Multi-sport 
- Fenced Field: Single sport 

Challenge: Permit Hours are Not Aligned to Athletes



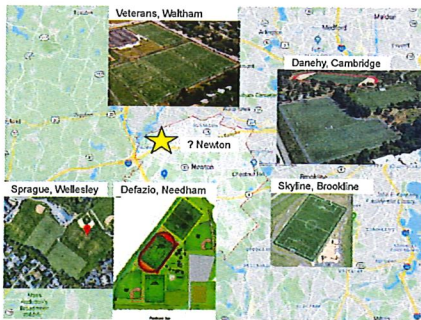
What We Need From the Committee: Endorse

Short Term: Revise permit methodology



- Field allocations are based solely on historic usage and not demand
- The system offers no disincentive for youth groups to overbook field time they don't need
- The result is: more established sports have a tremendously disproportionate amount of field time, at the expense of newer and faster growing sports.
- Field allocation and permitting needs to be revamped based on sensible, equitable criteria.

Solution: Increase Access to Quality Multi-Purpose Fields

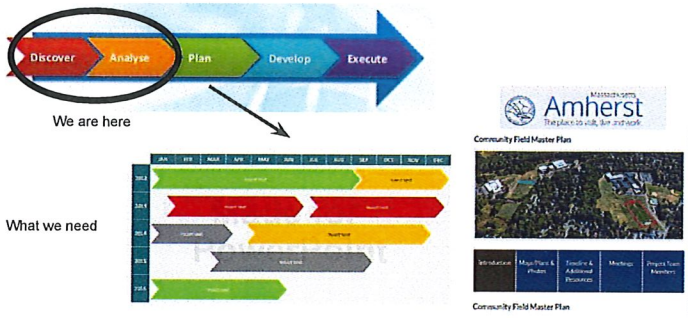


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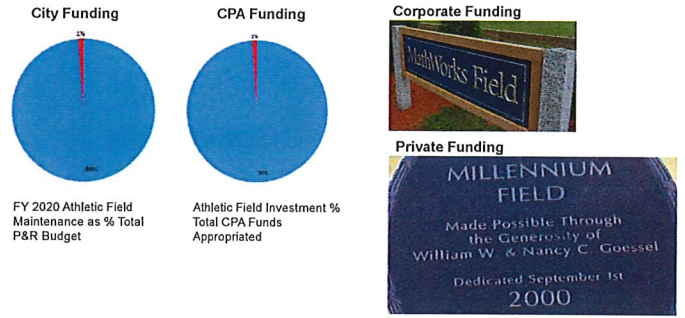


But... We don't have a plan. Yet...

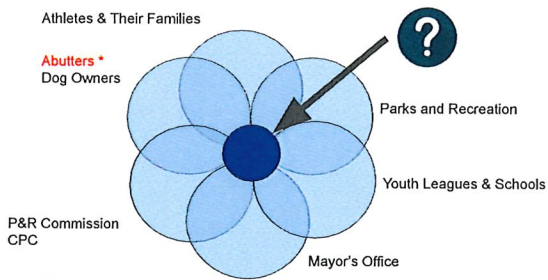
What We Need From the Committee: Endorse Master Plan for Athletic Fields



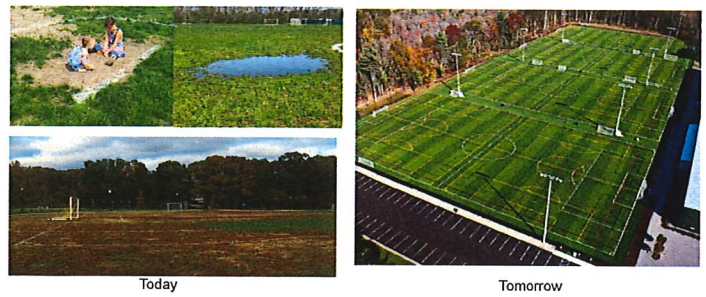
Going Forward: Align funding to demand. Seek new sources.



Going Forward: Streamline decision making



Please support our field(s) of dreams



THANK YOU