

Newton Parks & Recreation Commission

Meeting Minutes

Room 204 - City Hall

7:00 p.m. – Monday, November 19, 2018



Robert J. DeRubeis
Commissioner

Attending: Chairman Magni, Vice-Chairman Tucker, Commissioner DeRubeis, Peter Johnson, Andy Stern, Michael Clarke, Jack Neville

1. Meeting Minutes – October 15, 2018 - Approved 6-0

Add-on. Solar Panels in Auburndale Cove parking Lot -Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer & Bill Ferguson, Public Buildings Co-Director of Sustainability

- Mr. Ferguson presented preliminary information for a project at Auburndale Cove to install parking canopies with solar panels on the roof. The total number of panels would be ~ 1,014 which, at the present rates, would create \$313,347.00 in savings, over 20 years. The parking canopies have been in place at NSHS for two years and have been very successful.
- Chairman Magni asked if heavy snow is an issue and will the unit be one big canopy. Mr. Ferguson responded the panels are v shaped and the snow falls into the middle and there will be 4 separate canopies.
- Mr. Stern asked if any green space will be under the panels. A part of one canopy will hang over the walking path next to parking area. Mr. Stern asked if the parking spaces are used. The Commissioner replied yes during picnic/sports league season.
- Mr. Johnson asked if any trees will be removed. Mr. Ferguson responded if any trees are removed the company must replace the trees, per caliper inch.
- Mr. Yeo stated the parking lot has been recently paved, so this will be a good matchup of schedules.
- Mr. Neville asked where the power goes and who pays for the project. Mr. Ferguson replied the power goes into the grid. Currently there have been 12 projects within the City. The solar company develops the plans and installs the panels, the City receives a share of the electricity.
- Mr. Magni asked if the schools ever ask for revenue. Mr. Yeo stated the savings goes into the general fund which supports the Parks & Recreation Department.
- Mr. Clarke asked if the savings can go into CPC funds? Mr. Yeo replied no, the savings in electricity costs is benefitted in the general fund.
- Mr. Stern commented, he understands about the general fund but has seen over the years funding has been removed from the department.
- Mr. Tucker asked if there is a standard payback period. Mr. Ferguson replied there is no money out but there is an immediate benefit.

- Mr. Neville asked the contract/life expectancy. Mr. Ferguson replied the contract is for 20 years the life expectancy of the panels is around 25 years.
- Mr. Yeo commented another benefit is having shade in the parking area.
- Mr. Tucker asked what is concern this will not work out? Mr. Ferguson commented the big issue they have run into, is underground utilities.
- Chairman Magni stated the informational meeting will be scheduled for the December 17th and a Public Hearing would follow the informational meeting.

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

- The Commissioner is happy to report Marc Welch has been promoted from Urban Forestry Director to the Deputy Commissioner. Deputy Commissioner Welch's responsibilities will have a heavy emphasis on forestry, maintenance and beautification. All Commission members present requested congratulations be sent to Mr. Welch.
- Minimum wage will be increasing in January which will increase seasonal wages which impacts camp fees. Chairman Magni asked about scholarships. Commissioner DeRubeis commented there are scholarships available. Over the year's though donations have decreased. Another impact of the salary increase has been using the camp revolving accounts to subsidize the swim program.
- Currently there is a working group developing a proposal for a free-standing Cultural Affairs Department.
- The staff took a tour of Mt. Ida field and gym. UMass has offered space and time for Parks & Recreation programs.
- Jason Roberts the Off-leash Recreation Specialist is leaving the position. It is time to re-evaluate the position, possibly investigate a full-time park ranger position.
- Newton Highlands Project- The contractor lowered the drains to alleviate the flooding issue. There is still an issue as to whether they are low enough.
- Farlow Park Pond & Bridge Project - Contracted Solitude Lake Management to monitor the pond. The department will drain and clean the pond.
- Pellegrini Wall – the wall is outdated and needs maintenance. Meeting with Franklin Marval, who puts the wraps on the electrical boxes to see if he has options for the wall.
- Heartbreak Hill Park at Waban Hill Reservoir project - on hold due to the gatehouse being a historical building.
- Nahanton Park Conservation Restriction- Ouida Young is retiring but will stay on to complete this conservation restriction.
- Lyons Field- additional testing to be done regarding drainage issue

3. Jackson Road/NHA proposal – Public Hearing– Alan J. Schlesinger

- The Newton Housing Authority (NHA) received a comprehensive permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals in August 2018 to construct a building containing 55 units of elderly housing at John F. Kennedy Circle. The project site will be accessed via the City's land on Jackson Road. The NHA is proposing to use the land shown on (attached) plans for access and staging during construction. At the end of the construction project, the NHA proposes to install plantings, sidewalks and benches to be enjoyed by the public. A 36" tree is being saved and the invasive plants are being removed. NHA would maintain plantings for a period of one year following the installation.
- Mr. Clarke asked if pervious pavement was an option. Slope is steep, is an ADA ramp being added? Mr. Schlesinger replied yes, an ADA ramp is included in the plan and they will investigate the pervious pavement options.
- Mr. Stern asked what the bench material will be. Commissioner DeRubeis replied the department will work with the group on benches. This project is a win – win for the residents, and the City.

Mr. Tucker made the motion to approve the proposal as submitted. Mr. Neville seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0-1

4. 20 Rogers Street Conservation Restriction – Catherine Farrell

- 20 Rogers Street is a 1.02-acre parcel of land next to Crystal Lake. The City of Newton acquired the title to the property in 2007 for recreational purposes. The acquisition was funded by the Community Preservation Act through Newton's Community Preservation Committee. The requirement for a permanent Conservation Restriction is set forth in the Community Preservation Act.
 - COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT General Laws Chapter 44B (2010 Official Edition) As amended by St. 2012, c. 139, §§ 69-83 Section 12. (a) A real property interest that is acquired with monies from the Community Preservation Fund shall be bound by a permanent restriction, recorded as a separate instrument, that meets the requirements of sections 31 to 33, inclusive, of chapter 184 limiting the use of the interest to the purpose for which it was acquired. The permanent restriction shall run with the land and shall be enforceable by the city or town or the commonwealth. The permanent restriction may also run to the benefit of a nonprofit organization, charitable corporation or foundation selected by the city or town with the right to enforce the restriction. The legislative body may appropriate monies from the Community Preservation Fund to pay a non-profit organization created pursuant to chapter 180 to hold, monitor and enforce the deed restriction on the property.
- Ms. Farrell stated the Newton Conservators have voted on the conservation restriction and agreed to manage the property.

- Mr. Stern asked if this is part of Levingston Cove. Commissioner DeRubeis stated no the address is 20 Rogers St.
- Ms. Farrell proposed a vote on the following:
 - As required by the Community Preservation Act, the Parks and Recreation Commission agrees in principle to grant a permanent Conservation Restriction to the Newton Conservators, Inc. for 20 Rogers Street, which was acquired with Community Preservation Act funds and is now in the custody of the Parks & Recreation Commission.
- Mr. Clarke is a member of the Newton Conservators and will abstain from the vote.

Mr. Stern made the motion to approve the proposed language. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0-1

5. Committee Reports

- Community Preservation Committee
 - No report
- Farm Commission
 - Bethel Charkoudian voted in as Farm Commission representative.

Mr. Stern made the motion to nominate Bethel Charkoudian as the Farm Commission representative. Mr. Clarke seconded the motion. The motion passed 6-0.

- Cabot Redesign Committee
 - No report
- Commonwealth Golf Course
 - No report
- Off-Leash Area Working Group (OLAWG)
 - No report
- Crystal Lake Working Group (CLWG)
 - No report
- Athletic Fields Committee
 - No report
- NewCAL
 - No report
- Policy & Procedure Review
 - Field Naming
 - No report
 - Sign Policy
 - No report

6. New Business

- No new business

Meeting Adjourned at 8:45 pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Robin McLaughlin

