



## Newton Parks & Recreation Commission

### Meeting Minutes

### Room 204 – City Hall

7:00 p.m. –Monday, April 25, 2016

**Attending:** Vice-Chairman Richard Tucker, Commissioner Bob DeRubeis, Andy Stern, Bethel Bilezikian Charkoudian, Jack Neville, Don Fishman, Byron Dunker, Peter Kastner, Michael Clarke, Chairman Arthur Magni

Meeting began 7:15 pm

Vice-Chairman Tucker chairs meeting

1. Meeting Minutes – March 21, 2016
  - Approved 8-0
2. Commissioner's Reports on Programs, Forestry and Maintenance
  - The Department budget presentation was given on April 20 to the Councilors.
    - Mr. Tucker asked what the toughest questions were during the presentation. Commissioner DeRubeis stated the main focus was the Big Belly Program, trees and some questions on programs. Mr. Tucker asked if the questions were adversarial. Commissioner DeRubeis replied no.
  - The Auburndale Cove
    - New Playground currently being installed
    - Tennis courts are being renovated
    - The department received a \$200k gift from the Helen Curtis Abel estate. With part of this gift, new exercise equipment will be installed at the Cove with a focus on the Over 55 crowd.
  - Solar panels on park land:
    - Ms. Charkoudian is concerned about the pressure for solar panels to be installed on city property and would like to pass an agreement that there shall be no solar panels on park land. Solar panels are an industrial use of parkland and therefore have no place on parkland.
    - Mr. Stern asked if this would be for solar panels installed on structures in the parks or free standing solar panels. Ms. Charkoudian replied no solar panels free standing or on structures.
    - Mr. Kastner stated it may be a mistake to pass this agreement and be an organization responsible for the environment. Mr. Clarke stated he understands not having solar panels in the parks but the solar panels may fit on field houses, and the electricity would be used for municipal purpose.

- Mr. Stern stated the concept is valid but a hard fast rule may not fit existing structures or future technology.
- Councilor Leary asked would this agreement include any land or just greenspace.
- Mr. Stern stated there is already protection under the existing rules and regulations, no permanent structures are allowed on park land without approval from the Commission.
- Commissioner DeRubeis stated some of the little league scoreboards are currently run by solar.
- Mr. Stern stated there needs to be a refined proposal. Mr. Dunker agreed a detailed discussion is required.
- Vice-Chairman Tucker stated at a later date the Commission will continue this discussion. Ms. Charkoudian agreed to table the discussion.

### 3. St. Mary of Carmen Festival – Public Hearing

- At the April 25<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting, St. Mary of Carmen Society presented the proposal for the annual festival in July. There are no changes to the festival. The St. Mary of Carmen Society would like to again sponsor Fiesta Shows to operate a carnival & food vendors at Pellegrini Playground.
- Commissioner DeRubeis stated both the St. Mary of Carmen Society and Fiesta Shows do a wonderful job with this event.
- Letters were sent to abutters of Pellegrini Playground notifying them of this public hearing to voice any comments or concerns.
- There were no public comments or concerns.

*Mr. Dunker made the motion to accept the proposal as accepted. Mr. Fishman seconded the motion. Motion passed 8-0.*

### 4. Tennis – Mike Lewitt

- Mr. Lewitt presented the fees, rules and regulation for the Newton Centre Clay Courts. There are no changes from last year. There are no changes in fees in an attempt to attract more people.
- Mr. Tucker asked for last year membership numbers
- Mr. Lewitt stated there were 84 members which included 58 residents, 10 women
- Mr. Lewitt was notified they would be losing several parking spaces on Tyler Terrace due to the construction of the new fire station, and the staff continuously receives tickets, and asked if there was anything he could do? The group suggested contacting the Traffic Department.

*Mr. Stern made the motion to approve the fees, rules and regulations for the Newton Centre Clay Courts as presented. Ms. Charkoudian seconded the motion. Motion passed 8-0*

5. Cheesecake Brook Bridge- Albemarle

- Commissioner DeRubeis stated Greg Swan of the City Engineering Department is managing the Cheesecake Brook Bridge project.
- Design ~ \$9,300.00 – Construction ~ \$75,000.00
- The project may qualify for accessibility funding.

6. Committee Reports

- *Community Preservation Committee* – Mr. Fishman stated the committee has been receiving a lot of requests for affordable housing and they are looking for a commitment on the 2.5 million dollars awarded to the Newton Highlands project or they would like to take back the money. Commissioner DeRubeis stated there is a plan being submitted to the Executive Office for phasing the project.
- *Farm Commission* – no report
- *Cabot Redesign Committee* – no report
- *Commonwealth Golf Course* – no report
- *Off-Leash Area Working Group (OLAWG)*
  - The group is discussing areas for an off-leash area for small dogs.
  - Mr. Stern asked on the status of the enforcement rights for the Off-leash Specialist. Commissioner DeRubeis is in discussions with the Police Chief.
  - Ms. Charkoudian stated the Newton Corner Neighborhood Association held a meeting and one of the topics was the parks being trashed by people with dogs. An idea was discussed to develop pride in Newton parks. Commissioner DeRubeis stated with the Bigbelly deployment there will be an education portion to the program. Ms. Charkoudian stated the education should begin in the schools
- *Crystal Lake Working Group (CLWG)*
  - The City received \$88k from the state to be spent on water quality at Crystal Lake.
  - Mr. Stern stated there is pollution from those that break the rules at Crystal Lake and asked if natural barriers have been discussed to deter people from breaking the rules.

7. New Business - none

Meeting adjourned 8:30pm

Respectfully Submitted,

*Robin McLaughlin*