



Newton Parks & Recreation Commission

Meeting Minutes

Room 204 – City Hall

7:00 p.m. –Monday, June 20, 2016

Attending: Chairman Magni, Vice-Chairman Tucker, Commissioner Bob DeRubeis, Andy Stern, Peter Johnson, Byron Dunker, Peter Kastner, Jack Neville,

7:00 p.m. - Youth Service Awards recipients:

*Judge Franklin N. Flaschner.....Nora Lord
Judge Julian Yesley Young Award.....Maria Proia
Police Officer Robert Braceland.....Cadence Turner
Irene Bickleman Junior Youth Award.....Amar Skelly/Jonah Monet-Viera
Russell J. Halloran Lifetime Achievement Award.....Mary Flynn*

Meeting began 8:06 pm

1. Meeting Minutes – May 16, 2016

- Approved 6-0

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

- *Bigbelly's-* Commissioner DeRubeis and Elaine Gentile are meeting with the Executive Office weekly. There are 170 units (consisting of one trash container and one recycle container). The concern is the barrels that are no longer in certain locations, such as Weeks Field and Commonwealth Ave. An additional unit has been placed at Weeks Field. Thirty gallon pet waste containers have been ordered and will be placed at the entrance of parks and on Commonwealth Ave. A company has been contracted to empty the pet waste containers. Chairman Magni asked what the service does with the waste removed. Commissioner DeRubeis will ask the company. There are 2'x3' signs posted around the city with a QR Code that directs people to the Bigbelly unit in the area. Chairman Magni stated the concept of the Bigbelly program was to be less onerous on staff. Commissioner DeRubeis stated the units provide data through a GPS system. There are lights that indicate how full the barrels are; green, yellow and red. In the morning the driver checks his smartphone app and will pick up all the barrels with red lights and then the yellow lights. Each unit must be unlocked, barrel removed, bag removed and then put back together and locked back up. Mr. Stern asked if Bigbelly is working on improvements, the barrels are not very attractive especially in a historic park like Newton Centre. Chairman Magni stated the he is hesitant to touch the handle of the barrels. Mr. Stern asked if the Bigbelly Company is working on improvements based on feedback

from the city. Commissioner DeRubeis stated yes they are always working on improvements.

- *Waban Hill Reservoir*- The next public meeting is scheduled Thursday June 23rd, 7pm at the Durant-Kenrick House. Mr. Stern asked if there has been any opposition. Commissioner DeRubeis stated this is the beginning stages, a presentation has been made and request for comments on the presentation requested.
- *Highlands Playground* - Commissioner DeRubeis appeared before the CPC to confirm the acceptance of the 2.5 million dollars for the project. The project may begin in the fall, the building and lights are on hold until the additional funding can be found. Hopefully the leagues or a private benefactor will contribute. Mr. Neville asked if the existing trailer is going to be removed; the Commissioner stated yes we need to get rid of the trailer.
- *Crystal Lake and Gath Pool* are open. The Elm Street Farmers Market opened June 18th the Cold Spring Park market opens July 5th. Summer Camps begin next week
- *Forestry* – There is a directive from the Executive Office to have all hazardous tree removed by the end of the summer. Forestry Director, Marc Welch performs a windshield survey of the city trees using USDA guidelines, he recently did a survey of 16 routes out of the 70 routes and found an additional 1,000 trees. The problem is a lot of the same species of trees were planted in the 60's and now they are all dying at the same time. Mr. Stern inquired about replacing the trees once they are removed. It would be helpful to know what a reasonable replacement plan would cost. Commissioner DeRubeis stated Mr. Welch has a 5 year plan and will bring the plan to the next meeting.
- *Playgrounds* – Stephanie Lapham is currently finishing up the playground build at Horace Mann School. Stephanie does a great job with the playground builds from meeting with the PTO's, to writing the specs to actually building the playgrounds.

3. Committee Reports

- *Community Preservation Committee –no report*
- *Farm Commission – no report*
- *Cabot Redesign Committee –*
 - Mr. Stern stated a new school design has been approved. How does this impact what the Commission voted on previously, Chairman Magni stated the Commission is still only giving 1% of the park land.
- *Commonwealth Golf Course – no report*
- *Off-Leash Area Working Group (OLAWG)*
- *Crystal Lake Working Group (CLWG)*
 - The DCR is sending the \$88k check for Crystal Lake; the money will be used towards Levingston Cove.
- *Nahanton Park Committee- no report*

4. **New Business**

- Mr. Palmer, Commission Alternate inquired if the Alternate Commission members could have the authority to vote along with the ward members; not just when a ward member is absent.
- The City ordinance is as follows regarding the Commission: Article II, Section 21-46 Composition; appointment of members; vacancies; chairman. (a) There shall be a parks and recreation commission comprised of eight (8) voting members....
- The consensus was that the rules should stay as they are. First, most Commissioners had the impression that the ordinance allows only for 8 voting members. Voting rights for alternates are not expressly denied, but neither are they expressly allowed. Second, as one Commissioner noted, if alternates were granted at-large voting status, those Commissioners would essentially no longer be alternates. By granting them at-large voting authority, alternates would effectively become full, at-large members of the Commission. Also if you expand the Commission to 12 members, that would raise the threshold for a quorum.

Meeting adjourned 8:49 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Robin McLaughlin