



Newton Parks & Recreation Commission

Meeting Minutes

Room 204 – City Hall

7:00 p.m. –Monday, November 21, 2016

Attending: Vice-Chairman Tucker, Commissioner Bob DeRubeis, Peter Johnson, Andy Stern, Byron Dunker, Peter Kastner, Don Fishman, Bethel Bilezikian Charkoudian, Jack Neville, Mike Clarke

Meeting began 7:09 pm

Vice-Chairman Tucker Acting Chairman

- **Meeting Minutes – October 17, 2016**
 - Approved 7-0-1 (Bilezikian Charkoudian-did not review minutes)
- **Commissioner's Reports on Programs, Forestry and Maintenance**
 - **NSHS Turf** – Issues with turf. Glued hash marks are all coming up, the vendor; A-Turf is not honoring the warranty (8 year warranty). A-Turf is claiming the turf has not been maintained and infill has not been added. Assistant Superintendent Derek Mannion reviewed the maintenance manual and there was no mention of adding infill. We are working with the Law Department. The turf is supposed to last 10-12 years. A Gmax test (concussion test) is done each year on the turf and has passed each test.
 - **Cold Spring Park Excertrail** – working with Bike Newton to include a walking/biking trail to Zervas School. A meeting is scheduled with the group next week. The School does not like the idea of kids walking through the park to get to school and the money Bike Newton thought was available to pay for this part of the trail, is not available.
 - **Crescent Street Project** – presented to CPC. CPC requires additional information and feels \$500k per unit is too much money. Remediation showed oil contamination near the oil burner. The space is to be injected with chemicals to neutralize the oil contamination.
 - **Programs** – NNHS Indoor Recreation is in progress. NSHS indoor Recreation, Ski & Snowboard Program, Vacation Camp are scheduled the end of December and January. The Summer Camp Fair is scheduled Sunday, January 29 at NNHS cafeteria 12pm-4pm
 - **Newton Highlands Playground Project**- In progress
 - **Farlow Park Pond/Bridge Project** – A bid request form has been submitted to the Purchasing Department. The project may be done in phases.

- **Playgrounds** – Installation of the new Memorial Spaulding School Playground has been completed. The Ed Center Playground has been relocated to Aquinas. In 2017:
 - Burr Park spray park
 - Family Access (Davis School)
 - Underwood School
 - Cold Spring park and possibly Auburndale Park Excerptail
 - Commissioner DeRubeis is in discussion with a Company for a spray pool/ice rink next to Gath Pool.
- **Parks & Recreation Holiday Party** – All Commission members are invited to the department holiday party on December 15th between 12pm-2pm.
- **Lyons Field- Newton Little League – Public Hearing**
 - Rick Dinjian and Joe Russo of Newton Little League appeared before the Commission in October requesting permission to install two, black, chain link, permanent, batting cages on Lyons Field. Tonight’s meeting is a public hearing for abutters to comments and asks any questions about the proposal. No abutters attended the meeting.
 - Mr. Dinjian made a presentation with a change to the proposal:
 - The two batting cages would be temporary not permanent. With silver posts and black netting.
 - Proposed drainage and stone dust for the floor of the batting cages due to flooding issues at Lyons Field.
 - Commissioner DeRubeis commented the stone dust is a good idea; the grass will be worn away in the batting cages. Mr. Neville suggested making the stone dust deeper for better drainage.
 - Vice-Chairman Tucker asked if there have been any comments from abutters. One email was sent in support of the proposal from 2212 Commonwealth Ave.
 - Mr. Johnson suggested putting the cages next to each other in right field. From the street it would appear to be one batting on one side of the field.
 - Mr. Stern asked the advantage to having two cages and if any other of the fields have two cages. Mr. Dinjian commented Murphy Field has two batting cages and having the two cages allows for additional practice.
 - Mr. Stern asked if there will be advertising on the batting cages and if there will be night use of the cages. Mr. Dinjian responded there will be no advertisement on the cages and no night time use, there is not enough light in the area proposed. Mr. Stern asked how long the season lasts. Mr. Dinjian responded the season is April – October.

- Mr. Kastner asked if the netting will have any impact on the birds. Mr. Dinjian stated the holes in the net are 2-3 inches wide, birds would be able to fly through the netting.
- Mr. Stern asked if the Parks & Recreation Department is amenable to the proposal. Commissioner DeRubeis stated yes the department approves of the temporary batting cages. There are batting cages at Halloran Field, Cabot Park, and Richardson Playground.
- Mr. Dunker commented the batting cages are used by many users of the parks, not just the little league participants.
- Mr. Tucker asked about liability. Mr. Dinjian responded the league does have insurance for kindergarten age and up.
- Mr. Stern made the motion:

To approve two temporary batting cages stacked in right field subject to department approval.

- No advertising
- Black netting and tubing
- To be removed at the end of the little league season
- Mr. Dunker stated it is difficult to find black posts for the batting cages and if you paint the posts they will look worse in a couple of years. The batting cages should be left up after the season so residents can use the cages like a playground. The cages will have to come down before the first snow or they will be damaged.
- Mr. Dinjian stated volunteers are used to take down the batting cages and it is difficult to have volunteers available by October 31st.
- Mr. Kastner stated the existing cages have been on site for 10 years.
- Mr. Stern revised the motion:

To approve two temporary batting cages stacked in right field subject to department approval. No advertising, with a preference to black tubing and netting. Mr. Fishman seconded the motion. Motion passed 8-0.

- **Committee Reports**

- Community Preservation Committee – Mr. Fishman reported funds are getting tight, there are a lot of housing projects. Mr. Dunker asked if Crescent Street is going to be closed. Commissioner DeRubeis stated in a year or more the maintenance division will be moved to the Eliot St yard into a Butler building near the Fire Department.
- Farm Commission – Mr. Kastner reported the Farm celebrated their 10th annual dinner which was very successful.
- Cabot Redesign Committee – no report
- Commonwealth Golf Course – finished greens project now they are looking to replace the maintenance building for around a million dollars.

- Off-Leash Area Working Group (OLAWG) – Commissioner DeRubeis reported the next meeting is scheduled in January 2017. The group is looking for an area for use by small dogs and areas on conservation land. In talks with Jennifer Steel, Environmental Planner.
- Crystal Lake Working Group (CLWG) –
 - Commissioner DeRubeis stated the \$88K awarded by the state will be used to tier Levingston Cove. Renovation/replacement of the building has come up again; this is not a priority for the Parks & Recreation Department.
 - Mr. Stern met with Police Chief MacDonald, Councilor Danberg and Councilor Blazer to discuss enforcement at Crystal Lake. Mr. Stern stated Chief MacDonald believes in enforcement at Crystal Lake and will speak to the Judge. Both Councilor Danberg and Councilor Blazer believe there can be a compromise regarding “swim at your own risk (SAYOR)”.
 - Mr. Stern stated it has been a few years since the Commission voted to prevent SAYOR at Crystal Lake and would like to add this issue to next month’s meeting to get a sense of where the current Commission stands regarding SAYOR.
- Nahanton Park Committee – Vice-Chairman Tucker, NPWG Committee Chairman commented the group met and had a well-conceived, well attended meeting.
 - Consensus: Agrees Mr. Clarke’s proposal to include some type of recognition of the Alms House history within the park, such as QR codes.
 - Conclusion: The group needs to create a more detailed project list for the tool shed area.
 - Mr. Clarke asked if the building had a water pipe, it would be helpful to have a water source to water any plantings added to the area. Commissioner DeRubeis will check with DPW.
 - Commissioner DeRubeis commented he is working with the Law Department reviewing the terms of the conservation restriction for Nahanton Park.

- **New Business** - no new business

Meeting adjourned 8:24 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Robin McLaughlin