



Setti D. Warren  
Mayor

**Newton Parks & Recreation Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**City Hall, Room 205**  
**7:00 p.m. –Monday, February 23, 2015**



Robert J. DeRubeis  
Commissioner

**Attending:** Arthur Magni, Chairman, Richard Tucker, Vice-Chairman, Commissioner Robert DeRubeis, Peter Johnson, Don Fishman, Byron Dunker, Andy Stern, Peter Kastner, Pat Palmer, Michael Clarke, Robin McLaughlin, Secretary

*Meeting began at 7:04 pm*

**1. Meeting Minutes - December 15, 2014 – Accepted 8-0**

No meeting, no minutes January 2015

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

- Snow removal has been the focus
- Camp Fair registration- This was the first season with automatic credit card processing. There was a technical glitch with the new system on the first night of registration. The staff immediately communicated the issue with the participants. The glitch was fixed by the following day and participants were able to register for the camps.

**3. Cabot School Renovation project- Alex Valcarce, Public Buildings - informational**

- Mr. Valcarce stated Cabot school is next in line for renovation. The project is similar to the Angier School renovation project, where organized parking is in the plan, additional space is required and tonight the group is looking for input from the Commission.
- Leno Fillipi and Donna DiNisco of DiNisco Design Partnership presented three options for a revised parking plan at Cabot School. Each plan requires a portion of Cabot Park. Currently there are 27 parking spaces the new plan includes 70 parking spaces.
- Mr. Kastner asked if there is a footprint of the new school. Mr. Valcarce said no, they are waiting for the Commission's input on the parking.
- Mr. Stern asked what is driving the need for additional parking. Mr. Valcarce stated the basic need for parking, right now the teachers are parking all around the neighborhood. Mr. Stern suggested taking the two houses on the corner next to the school. Mr. Valcarce commented the City would like to work within city land.
- Alderman Fuller commented there are issues at the park such as parking and financing upgrades. This project could provide useful upgrades for the school and for the park; it would be a win-win for everyone.
- Mr. Dunker commented during league games there is a parking issue.
- Commissioner DeRubeis stated there has been serious discussion to keep the little league field where it is. There is an opportunity to look at the irrigation and add to the baseball field and major league field.
- Mr. Kastner asked Commissioner DeRubeis if Cabot Park is in the capital plan. Commissioner DeRubeis replied no Cabot Park is not in the capital Plan.
- Mr. Stern asked if the plan includes cutting down trees. Mr. Valcarce commented he would work closely with Marc Welch, Director of Urban Forestry.
- Mr. Stern asked Ms. Schein if Cabot Park has a master plan, Ms. Schein responded no, Cabot Park needs a master plan.
- Ms. Schein asked where the school playground would be located.
- Chairman Magni asked which option works best for the committee, Alderman Fuller responded the committee is still sorting out which would be best, renovation or a new school, the committee has to make the best plan for the next 100 years.

- Mr. Stern stated the Commission also must think of the next 100 years. There is a constant parade of well-meaning folk asking for park land.
- Mr. Clarke asked the committee to come back with a cost benefit analysis that does not involve park land.
- Mr. Tucker suggested the committee look into acquiring more property.

**4. Kennard Park Art Show – Carolyn Kraft, Alison Newsome – informational**

- Ms. Kraft, friends of Kennard Park presented an idea to create the opportunity for people to come to Kennard Park for an outdoor art show. Ms. Newsome is an artist and has participated in a similar type of art show in Portsmouth, NH. A webpage would be developed for people to follow the progress of the artists. There would be a grand opening celebration.
- Mr. Clarke asked where in Kennard Park this art show would be held. Ms. Kraft stated anywhere; the group is also working with the Conservation Commission.
- Mr. Stern asked if there would be a cost to the P & R Department. Ms. Kraft stated they would work with the P & R Department staff.
- Ms. Newsome stated there would be 7 or 8 artists, sometimes less is more. The exhibit would be a place of renewal.
- Mr. Tucker asked if this could be an annual event. Ms. Kraft responded yes.
- Mr. Kastner suggested a write up about the history of the building and land is included at the exhibit. Ms. Kraft stated that is a great idea and the Friends of Kennard Park will support the City to bring back the building and land.

*Mr. Stern made the motion to approve the concept of this proposal. Mr. Fishman seconded the motion. Motion passed 8-0.*

**5. Bike Newton-Informational-Helen Rittenberg, Lois Levin, Caroline Genco, Nathan Phillips, Alicia Bowman**

- Bike Newton is proposing a traffic garden be installed into one of the City's parks, possibly Newton Centre, between the tennis courts and Centre St. A traffic garden is used to educate children and adults on bike, pedestrian and auto safety. Mr. Phillips commented he has been to a traffic garden in the Netherlands; it is not only educational but a fun activity for families. (Mr. Phillips provided a video link to the Commission of the Netherlands Traffic garden, <https://vimeo.com/31545084>). There is a traffic garden in Connecticut.
- Ms. Rittenberg stated the location of the traffic garden should be in a central, accessible location. The traffic garden would be around 3,600 square feet. The full time Newton Police Safety Officer and Bike Newton would be on site to provide the educational piece of the program. Bike Newton will be looking for contributions from the community. The plan is to design the traffic garden in 2015 and have it built in 2016. The P & R Department will take care of the area maintenance.
- Commissioner DeRubeis stated that at this stage the Newton Centre location is not set in stone. No matter where the traffic Island is installed it would have to blend in with the site and include plantings and possibly a storage area. When Bike Newton makes their next presentation a detailed plan/schematics to show what the area will look like would be required.
- Mr. Tucker asked if the traffic garden would be for all ages and who would supervise the activity. The traffic garden will be for all ages and there are many volunteers through Bike Newton that will supervise the activities.
- Carolyn Genco stated she lost her daughter in a bicycle accident and believes the traffic garden would be a wonderful way to educate children and adults about bike, pedestrian and auto safety. Ms. Genco is also part of a 501c(3) that is willing to donate to the traffic garden.
- Mr. Palmer asked what the cost of the traffic garden will be. Ms. Levin stated the project is in the preliminary stage
- Ms. Bowman stated the next step would be to contact the Connecticut traffic garden organizers for their input.

- Mr. Kastner stated it is sad that the immediate thought is to further intrude on limited park land, other options should be considered.
- Ms. Levin stated she is an advocate for open space.
- Mr. Stern stated Newton Centre Playground is an Olmstead Brothers designed park. Would a traffic garden compromise the historic standing of the park. The more you venture from the original plan the less historic the site.

**6. New Business**

- Chairman Magni Introduced newly appointed Commission member Pat Palmer.
- Commission Elections – Commissioner DeRubeis requested nominations for Chairman and Vice- Chairman of the P & R Commission:

*Mr. Stern made the motion nominating Arthur Magni as Chairman Mr. Fishman seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.*

*Mr. Stern made the motion nominating Richard Tucker as Vice-Chairman. Mr. Fishman seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.*

Meeting Adjourned 8:55 pm  
Respectfully Submitted,  
Robin McLaughlin