



Setti D. Warren
Mayor

Newton Parks & Recreation Commission
Meeting Minutes
City Hall-Cafeteria



Robert J. DeRubeis
Commissioner

7:00 p.m. –Monday, April 27, 2015

Attending: Chairman Arthur Magni, Vice-Chairman Dick Tucker, Commissioner Bob DeRubeis, Bethel Charkoudian, Andy Stern, Peter Kastner, Byron Dunker, Peter Johnson, Jack Neville, Pat Palmer, Sam Figler, Michael Clarke

Meeting began at 7:15 pm

1. Meeting Minutes - March 16, 2015

- Approved 8-0

2. Commissioner's Reports on Programs, Forestry and Maintenance (report was given after item #8)

- The Marathon was uneventful, the concern was protestors but it was a good day
- Newton Serves - Parks & Recreation supported 45-50 projects with tools, bags and deliveries of mulch
- Crescent Street re-use is back on the table
- Crystal Lake Working Group is drafting a management RFP

3. Nonantum Village Day – Public Hearing

- Ms. Dominique appeared at the March 18 P&R Commission for an informational meeting. This is the 4th year of the Nonantum Village Day. The event will be the same as last year and will take place on Watertown Street between Adams Street and Chapel Street. There will be activities in the Magni-Coletti Park (see attached) the event will take place rain or shine. Abutters were notified of the public hearing to share comments, issues or concerns. There were no abutters present.

Mr. Tucker made the motion to approve the proposal as presented. Mr. Kastner seconded the motion. Motion passed 8-0.

4. St. Mary of Carmen – Public Hearing

- Mr. Proia appeared at the March 18 P&R Commission for an informational meeting. This is the 80th Anniversary of the festival. The dates are July 15th – July 19th (see attached). Fiesta Shows will be managing the festival this year. This is a family friendly event. Abutters were notified of the public hearing to share comments, issues or concerns. There were no abutters present.
- Chairman Magni recused himself from the vote. Chairman Magni is a member of the St. Mary of Carmen Society.

Mr. Tucker made the motion to approve the proposal as presented. Mr. Stern seconded the motion. Motion passed 8-0.

5. Bike Newton – Traffic Garden – Informational - Helen Rittenberg, Lois Levin, 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. The group presented the attached proposal. And are asking the Commission to recommend a location and approval to proceed with proposal.
- The Commission members concerns:

- There is limited open space in Newton, many groups' present proposals for use of open space. The Commission asked the group if they have looked at utilizing school property. The group would like a central location for all residents to access. Using school property raises concerns for the schools, having people they do not know on their property. Bike Newton members stated Newton Centre appears to be an ideal location, there is the space required near the tennis courts and the park is centrally located. Ms. Schein commented the proposal would be required to go before the Conservation Commission due to the water running through the park.
- Ms. Charkoudian requested info on the plastic composition of the grates proposed to be used for the track.
- The Commission requested Bike Newton research other available non Parks & Recreation property as an option for the traffic garden.

6. Pellegrini Park - Shade Structure – Informational

- Lydia Scott of the Planning Department presented the plan for the shade structure at Pellegrini Park. The Shade structure is part of the Master Plan for the area the concrete slab is in place and will be installed through CDBG funding. (See attached)
- Commissioner DeRubeis commented that, the shade structure is an appropriate use for the area.
- Mr. Johnson asked if the structure will be installed after the St. Mary of Carmen Festival. Ms. Scott relied yes.
- Chairman Magni asked if a public hearing is required.

Mr. Tucker made the motion to suspend the requirement of a public hearing.

Mr. Johnson seconded the motion. Motion passed 8-0.

Mr. Stern made the motion in favor of installation of the shade structure at Pellegrini Park.

Mr. Johnson seconded the motion. Motion passed 8-0

7. Tennis Fees – Mike Lewitt

- Clay Court Fees -Rules & Regulations – no changes for the season.
- Mr. Johnson asked the breakdown of residents and non-residents. Mr. Lewitt replied 94 residents and 9 non-residents. Mr. Stern asked what the goal is for membership. Mr. Lewitt stated 150 members is the goal.
- Commissioner DeRubeis stated of the 94 members 15 are women. To increase women membership a bathroom facility would be required. The Hut is being used for a summer camp and after school program so, it is unavailable for the tennis court members.
- Mr. Kastner asked the cost to maintain the clay courts. Mr. Lewitt replied \$400.00.

Mr. Tucker made the motion to accept the 2015 Newton Tennis clay court rules, regulations and fees.

Mr. Kastner seconded the motion. Motion passed 8-0.

8. Nahanton Park – Tool Shed- Update

- Nahanton Park Tool Shed Working Group Chairman Tucker provided an update from the group.
 - The temporary fire station will be leaving the park this summer/early fall.
 - The Memo of Understanding (MOU) between the Commission and City needs to be reviewed and enforced.
 - It is important that the ruins be well documented and preserved.
 - The working group majority are ok with taking the building down.
 - It is highly unlikely CPC funds will be available, this building is not a top priority of the city. To restore the tools shed is cost prohibitive.
 - The Newton Historic Commission has tabled the request for the building to be landmarked the Mass Historical Commission requires additional information. Mr.

Tucker contacted Mass Historical Commission and they informed him the building would not be landmarked the land/park would be landmarked. Mr. Clarke put a lot into the research and history of the Alms House, worthy of respect and gratitude.

- Seeking landmark status seems counter-productive. Ms. Schein and Ms. Schroeder have suggested memorializing the area with a nice path through the actual ruins of the Alms House. Ms. Schein stated interpretive signs could be installed. Mr. Figler asked a cost estimate. Ms. Schroeder suggested a BCA intern make a plan.
- Mr. Clarke made a presentation showing a few of the 50 cubic feet of documents regarding the almshouse, many of which have been recently found in the City Archives, including: indenture contracts from 1730-1789, petitions of the Overseers of the Poor over the same period, almshouse registers and ledgers from about 1820 to 1912, and minutes of the Overseers of the Poor and their successors from about 1865 to 1968. The Newton City Archivist, Nancy Kougeas, believes these to be among the most complete set of such documents in Massachusetts.
 - Mr. Clarke also observed that:
 - Nahanton Park is Newton's only true heritage park. Unlike parks such as Farlow, Edmands and Burr, which were donated by wealthy families, Nahanton Park derives from Newton's rich social and cultural history.
 - The remaining structure is still standing because it was made to last of brick, stone and heavy beams, and has been in constant use since its construction in 1938.
 - Nahanton Park has nothing to do with Nahanton (Nehoiden) who occurs in history mainly as a land dealer, so the name does not reflect its history.
 - Nahanton Park exists because half of its land was the almshouse and poor farm, constructed in 1900, and the other half the Diocesan Working Boys Home, constructed in 1896. Consequently, it is Newton's Almshouse Park.
 - The remaining stone and brick structure along with the entire almshouse landscape should be preserved because of the history it represents in how Newton and the nation sought to provide for the less fortunate. The request pending before the Newton and Massachusetts Historical Commissions is to preserve the almshouse landscape in order to acknowledge and reflect the role of almshouses in the social structure of Newton through 18th, 19th and 20th centuries..
- Chairman Magni asked what the plan is for funds so the building doesn't just sit where it is as is, even if the building receives landmark designation there is no money available.
- Alderman Sangiolo stated she has forwarded the information to the Aldermen, and a couple of Aldermen are supporting the request for landmark status. Alderman Sangiolo requested the Commission let the landmark status application play out. The documents have been submitted; if the park is landmarked the money will come.
- Chairman Magni stated the original task for the working group was to come up with a plan by the October 19, 2015 Commission meeting, is this an acceptable time frame. Alderman Sangiolo agreed this was a reasonable time frame.
- Mr. Hillis, abutter of Nahanton Park for 30 years stated Nahanton Park should be a park. The research done by Mr. Clarke is awesome; there is no need to preserve the building to share the history. The conservation restriction agreed upon in the MOU is on hold until the landmark status is decided.

9. New Business

- **Budget** - Budget presentation is scheduled for Wednesday
 - Beautification Division is transferring to Parks & Recreation including vehicles and 9 maintenance staff including Elaine Gentile
 - Forestry – Addition of three additional crew
 - Additional \$150,000 per year to replace 2 playground structures per year
 - Additional \$30,000 per year for regulation ball fields
 - Addition of Assistant Special Needs Director to be paid by revolving account and Athletes Unlimited
- **Parks & Recreation Buildings**

- Upper Falls storage shed used for little league is being cleaned up

Meeting Adjourned 9:55 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Robin McLaughlin