



Setti D. Warren
Mayor

Newton Parks & Recreation Commission
Meeting Minutes
City Hall - Room 209
7:00 p.m. –Monday, April 28, 2014



Robert J. DeRubeis
Commissioner

Attending: Arthur Magni, Chairman, Richard Tucker, Vice-Chairman, Commissioner Robert DeRubeis, Peter Johnson, Don Fishman, Bethel Bilezikian Charkoudian, Byron Dunker, Andrew Stern, Michael Clarke, Jack Neville, Robin McLaughlin, Secretary

Meeting began at 7:06 pm

1. Meeting Minutes - March 17, 2014 - Approved 8-0

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

- Commissioner DeRubeis stated April has been a busy month.
- During the Marathon the Commissioner was in the EOC (Emergency Operating Center) at the Fire Station. Mr. Johnson commented on the great job done cleaning Commonwealth Ave. after the marathon.
- Newton Serves took place yesterday. There were over 50 City wide projects. Newton Serves would not happen without the volunteers and the maintenance crew. The maintenance crew delivers mulch and tools to most of the project locations.
- Last week, April vacation camp was well attended.
- Crystal Lake Working Group continues to move forward with water quality. Signs for watershed are being ordered this week and will be installed before the swim season. Mr. Tucker asked if the signs are encouragement not enforcement. Commissioner DeRubeis replied yes.
- There is a sign ordinance being developed to tone down the number of signs posted. Alderman Johnson recommended the ordinance due to all the signs popping up around the City.
- Budget will be presented to the Alderman on Wednesday night.
- The Field renovation plan has been implemented. Turf work is being done on Halloran Football Field.
- The department is working with Ms. Charkoudian to have a Plant Exchange on June 14 at the Recreation Office.
- There was a greenhouse at the old Carr School before the building was taken over to be used as a swing school. Pat Rand requested a new location for the greenhouse and the Commissioner has allowed the greenhouse to be put up at the Recreation Office.
- There are several playground builds in process. Pierce school is being renovated this week.
- Marc Welch, Director of Forestry has gone before the Board of Alderman for an ordinance change regarding contractors and the tree removal process.

3. Nonantum Village Day- June 1-Public Hearing

- Nonantum Village Neighborhood Association is proposing to hold the 3rd annual Nonantum Village Day on June 1st. The Association is requesting the use of Coletti-Magni Park. Abutters of the area were notified of the public hearing to voice any issues, complaints, or comments regarding the event. No abutters were present.

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

4. St. Mary of Carmen Festival-Public Hearing

- The St. Mary of Carmen Festival is scheduled July 16th-July 20th at the Joanne C. Pelligrini Memorial Playground. Abutters of the area were notified of the public hearing to voice any issues, complaints, or comments regarding the event. One e-mail was received from Mr. Antonellis of Lothrop St. Mr. Antonellis concern is with the noise level and hour of night when

breaking down the carnival the last night of the carnival. Mr. Proia commented the permit allows breakdown of the carnival until 1:00am on the last night and there is a police detail on site.

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

5. Relay For Life- Public Hearing

- The Relay for Life has taken place at Forte Park for the last 6 years. The event is an overnight event with 30-40 teams to raise money to fight cancer. Abutters of the area were notified of the public hearing to voice any issues, complaints, or comments regarding the event. No abutters were present.

Mr. Tucker made the motion to accept the proposal as presented. Ms. Charkoudian seconded the motion.

Motion passed 8-0.

6. Waban Hill Reservoir – Update

- Commissioner DeRubeis reported he held a meeting in the Recreation Office including Vice-Chairman Tucker, Carol Schein, Katie Holmes, Planning Department, and the Waban Hill Ward Alderman. Commissioner DeRubeis explained at the meeting the P & R Commission were ok with the acquisition of the property but had questions on the use of the property. Gail Silberstein and Peter Clote, co-chairs of the Waban Hill Reservoir Acquisition proposal will attend the May 19th P & R Commission meeting to present the proposal to the Commission and answer any questions.
- Alderman Laredo commented he is strongly in favor of the acquisition of the Waban Hill Reservoir.
- Katie Holmes stated she assisted in organizing the Waban Hill working group in January 2013 and has been with the group through the entire process and she is working on the historic aspect of the site also.
- Mr. Tucker shared his thoughts on the proposal:
 - The acquisition is good for the entire city not just for Ward 7
 - Ward 7 could use recreation space
 - Safety is a huge concern
 - Low maintenance benefits the P & R Commission
 - Personally believes the area should be a multi-use recreation area
 - 60% is occupied by water, there is only 2 acres of land
 - There is a question on access. If the acquisition is for the entire city make the area inclusive
 - What is to be done with the pump house
 - The height of the berm around the water needs to be lowered for safety and usefulness.
- Chairman Magni asked what the status of the proposal is. Commissioner DeRubeis stated this is a pre-proposal. Chairman Magni asked if the City has first refusal for the property from the MWRA. Alderman Baker replied yes.
- Mr. Clarke commented it is a good idea to acquire the property but the planning is not comprehensive. There are other small open space areas in the same location, what can be done with all of these properties together. Chairman Magni stated this is an informative meeting. Mr. Clarke stated these are points for discussion.
- Mr. Clarke stated it is not good practice for the Commission to take on new space without funding. Alderman Laredo stated this parcel will be low cost maintenance.
- Mr. Stern stated the parcel should be envisioned as a city wide park, there needs to be some planning for this. No action benefits the neighbor's wishes.
- Alderman Laredo stated this is designed as a city wide asset. Mr. Stern asked if there is parking access. Mr. Dunker stated a site becomes popular, the neighbors petition for no parking signs and the signs start popping up at the site.
- Mr. Tucker commented the proposal mentions funding will be raised by other sources besides the CPC. Ms. Holmes commented there are grants available.

- Mr. Tucker asked what the next step is. Commissioner DeRubeis stated there will be a presentation at the next meeting. Chairman Magni stated there could be a public hearing in June.

7. Emerson Playground

- Commissioner DeRubeis reported the Our Common Backyards grant program is a grant program aimed at building a new playground or spray park in cities throughout the Commonwealth. Each community is eligible for up to \$200,000 in grant assistance. The Parks & Recreation Department submitted a proposal to develop the play space at Emerson Playground with a proposed cost of \$250,000.00. The Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs has approved the funding of Emerson Playground through Our Common Backyards grant program. This project will design and construct a children's play area, including play structures, swings, resilient surfacing, trees, picnic tables, benches and an accessible walkway.
- Commissioner DeRubeis stated the State requires the Commission accept the grant money, confirm custody of the playground and dedicate the playground as park land in order to proceed.

Mr. Tucker made the motion:

The P & R Commission accepts the Our Common Backyards grant money for Emerson Playground and requests the Board of Alderman and Mayor Warren also accept the urban grant money; the P & R Commission confirms that Emerson Playground is in the custody of the P & R Commission and Emerson Playground be dedicated as park land.

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

~~8. Bowen Playground PTO – Rescheduled~~

9. New Business

- Zervas School – Mr. Clarke commented the Zervas School is building a new school and it looks like the new building may be partially on park land at Cold Spring Park. Ouida Young, Law Department will add to her tasks of items to investigate.
- Mr. Clarke stated there are two individuals who have gone unrecognized that had a great impact on park land in Newton, Ernst Hermann and Mayor Childs. Mr. Clarke has the history of both men. Mr. Clarke would like to have a memorial for each man; one on the corner of Commonwealth Ave and Walnut St, on city hall property and the other across the street near Bullough's Pond. The spouse of the granddaughter of Mayor Childs was present and supports this recommendation. Chairman Magni mentioned the Commission has had issues with memorials on City Hall grounds. Mr. Clarke stated there is a process to follow for the memorial and would like to be added to the agenda in May for the informational part of the process.
- Mr. Tucker stated Mr. Clarke raised the issue of the Commission not take on any other land without money for maintenance. The Commission should make this a bedrock principal of the Commission.
- Off-Leash Area Working Group- the group is proposing two areas, one at Thompsonville Playground and on at Newton South High School. The group continues to work on getting citation powers for the Off-leash Specialist.
- Mr. Clarke suggested allowing people launch boats near the boathouse during the off-season.

Meeting Adjourned 8:51 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Robin McLaughlin