



Setti D. Warren  
Mayor

**Newton Parks & Recreation Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**City Hall - Room 209**  
**7:00 p.m. –Monday, February 25, 2013**



Robert J. DeRubeis  
Commissioner

**Attending:** Arthur Magni, Chairman, Commissioner Robert DeRubeis, Richard Tucker, Vice- Chairman, Peter Johnson, Donald Fishman, Walter Bernheimer, Michael Clarke, Peter Kastner, Robin McLaughlin, Secretary

*Meeting began at 7:00pm*

1. **Meeting Minutes –January 28, 2013 –** Accepted 6-0 (Mr. Kastner was not present during the vote)
2. **Commissioner’s Reports on Programs, Forestry and Maintenance**
  - Due to the recent snowfall a large pile of snow was placed in Newton Centre Playground near the tennis courts. There has been feedback from the neighbors. Fencing has been placed around the pile to keep people off of the pile. There is filtration around the brook to prevent the salt and sand from draining into the brook. Once the snow melts the City will go in and clean up the area.
  - Mr. Clarke asked if the snow is covering the tennis courts. Commissioner DeRubeis stated no
  - Commissioner DeRubeis stated the Greenway project is moving forward as reported by Ms. Schein:
    - “The full Board of Aldermen voted unanimously December 2012 to allow the City to enter into a 99-year lease with the MBTA for the use of the old rail line for a greenway. The proposed 1-mile linear park will run from Easy Street, near National Lumber, to the Charles River in Upper Falls. The City intends to sign the lease Spring 2013 and to then file with the Conservation Commission as required for some of the trail segments. Iron Horse Preservation is projected to arrive on-site Fall 2013 to remove the tracks and restore the path. Preliminary design work discussion has begun regarding; benches, signage and pathway surface material. Parks and Recreation will be responsible for maintenance of the park and its amenities.”
  - Waban Hill Reservoir is in preliminary discussions. The Planning Department is facilitating the meetings. Most likely Parks & Recreation will be responsible to maintain the area.
  - Budget- Seasonal wages have been taken out of the budget, but the good news is it looks like about sixty thousand will be put back into the budget for vehicles.
  - Special Needs Director Mark Kelly and his wife just had their second baby, Lauren Cecilia Kelly, 8lbs, 11 oz. and 21” long.

*(Agenda items #5 & #7 were heard out of order, as posted on the agenda, to accommodate the crowd)*

**7. Cabot Off-Leash Area- Informational**

- Cathy Matero, 11 Pillion Ct., neighbor of Cabot Park
  - Ms. Matero commented she sent a letter to Mayor Warren regarding the issues at the Cabot off-leash area. The issues are:
    - The noise from the barking dogs affects the ability for her to enjoy her yard
    - The hours were modified after meeting with the Off-Leash Area Working Group (OLAWG), and that has been helpful, but some people still use the park during the closed times.

- Aesthetically the park is an eye sore
  - There is no enforcement and self-policing is not a reasonable solution
  - A city ordinance does not allow more than four dogs in a residents yard, but the off-leash area has more than four dogs at one time
  - Parking is an issue
  - The off-leash park users who walk to the park go through the neighbors yards and leave dog waste behind
  - The OLAWG criteria for off-leash areas does not apply to this park
  - <Ms. Matero distributed pictures of the off-leash area to the Commission members>
- Mr. Tucker asked Ms. Matero if she had a suggestion for an alternate location. Ms. Matero responded Edmands Park but there is opposition to that location, otherwise no she does not have a suggestion.
- Lizabeth Hedsstrom, 27 Lewis St, Representative of the Friends of Cabot Park Off-Leash Area
  - Ms. Hedstrom commented the Friends of Cabot Park off-leash area includes 40 families at this time.
  - Ms. Hedstrom thanked the Commission for the off-leash area, before there was an off-leash area in place the area was an eyesore and now it is truly a happy place.
  - Ms. Hedstrom has met her neighbors at the off-leash area and they have formed a community and have begun to self-police the area.
  - Ms. Hedstrom and the Friends group would like to be a resource for OLAWG and the Commission as responsible dog owners and users of the area.
  - Ms. Hedstrom has not seen dogs running through the neighbor's yards and they are vigilant, not to allow barking in the off-leash area.
  - Ms. Hedstrom lives 30 yards from the park and hears all types of noise from the park including, tennis, little league, etc.
  - The new hours do not accommodate the people who work until 5pm and the Friends are requesting the hours be revisited to accommodate the people who work.
  - Every morning Ms. Hedstrom walks her dog before work and has not seen dogs in the off-leash area before 7am.
  - Ms. Hedstrom requested the Commission not let the exaggerated complaints of a few close the off-leash area.
- Chairman Magni asked for comments from the Commission and if this issue requires a public hearing.
  - Mr. Clarke suggested the noise decibels be measured.
  - Mr. Bernheimer commented the area is unique because it is closer to abutters than the other areas. The OLAWG should come back to the Commission with recommendations and enforcement.
  - Mr. Kastner agreed that OLAWG should review the issues and come back with recommendations.
  - Commissioner DeRubeis commented Ms. Matero has attended the OLAWG meetings and the group cut back the hours at the park. There is an Off-Leash Recreation Specialist close to being hired to assist with enforcement in the parks. Mr. Tucker asked if Officer Torres is available. Commissioner DeRubeis stated yes but he is the only Animal Control Officer in Newton and he is spread pretty thin.
  - Mr. Fishman commented instead of acting rashly the Commission should allow for enforcement to be put in place. Enforcement will help with these issues.
  - Mr. Clarke agreed enforcement should be given a chance to work.

*Mr. Bernheimer made the motion the Off-Leash Area Working Group is to come back to the April 22 Commission meeting with recommendations for the Cabot off-leash area. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.*

**5. Angier School- Presentation-** Ouida Young, Associate City Solicitor,  
Ken DiNisco, DiNisco Design Partnership

- Ms. Young and Mr. DiNisco appeared before the Commission on January 28<sup>th</sup> for the first informational meeting. The Commission requested they come back with specific measurements of green space affected and an overlay of existing plan and proposed plan. The Commission was given the overlay with specific measurements.
- Ms. Young is requesting a public hearing in March and the Angier School Building Committee is asking the following of the Parks & Recreation Commission so the committee can move forward with the preliminary design:
  - Support the close relationship between the Angier School and the Waban Playground as it has in the past
  - Support a shared parking arrangement with the playground and school users, with approximately 35 new parking spaces located on the playground
  - Support the allowance of an emergency access road along the edge of the school building on the playground
  - Support the removal of the existing play structure and the creation of two new play structures on the playground
  - Support the replanting of new trees along the playground side
  - Support the use of approximately 1/3 the playground adjacent to the school site for temporary construction activities
  - Direct Parks & Recreation Commissioner DeRubeis to work with the design team to implement all of the above
- Mr. Tucker stated it appears there will be 30 cars parked on the playground currently there are 8 or 9 cars. Mr. DiNisco commented there would be 35 cars on the park side and 35 cars on the school side.
- Mr. Clarke asked if the Poor House foundation is still on the site. Ms. Young stated she is checking on the Poor House foundation and for burial sites. Mr. Clarke suggested Ms. Young check the 1895 map that is on the city website.
- Mr. Tucker asked when the construction will take place. Ms. Young stated the construction will be a two year process and will require use of the playground.
- Mr. Tucker commented the public hearing should be focused on the park, not the design of the school.

*Mr. Clarke made the motion to move the proposal to a public hearing. Mr. Bernheimer seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.*

**3. Susan G. Komen – 3Day –Informational-**Jennifer Ricker

- The Commission received an application from the Susan G. Komen 3-Day for the Cure Event for permission to use the fields at McGrath Park as a Lunch Stop on Friday, July 26, 2013 from 9:00am to 5:00pm.
- Mr. Johnson asked if there have been any issues at the event last year. Commissioner DeRubeis stated no.

*Mr. Johnson made the motion to move the application to a public hearing on March 18, 2013. Mr. Fishman seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.*

**4. St. Mary of Carmen Society Festival-Informational-**Chuck Proia

- St. Mary of Carmen Society submitted a proposal to sponsor the St. Mary of Carmen Fiesta Show, July 17, 2013 through July 21, 2013, at the JoAnne C. Pelligrini Memorial Playground. Mr. Proia stated the event will be run the same as last year.

*Mr. Bernheimer made the motion to move the proposal to public hearing on March 18, 2013. Mr. Tucker seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.*

## **6. Poetry in Edmands Park- Public Hearing**

- The proposer for the Poetry in Edmands Park was not present at the meeting. The public hearing is rescheduled to the April 22, 2013 Commission Meeting. There were abutters of Edmands Park present to comment on the proposal:
  - Ms. Marlyn Altman Victor commented she would be disappointed to see this happen. The park should be preserved as it is.
  - Ms. Nancy Brandeis commented Edmands Park is a natural space and there is no compelling reason to add poetry to the park. The poetry would be one more thing to be maintained at the park.
  - Mr. Tucker asked if Ms. Brandeis if she had neighbors who would object to this proposal. Ms. Brandeis commented there was no notice about the idea until notification of the public hearing.
  - Mr. Sanders, Friends of Edmands Park representative commented there are approximately 250 members on the e-mail list and only 6-7 members opposed the idea.

## **8. New Business**

- Commissioner DeRubeis commented the Excer-trail in Cold Spring Park is being evaluated for renovation.
- Commissioner DeRubeis commented he met with Mr. Clarke. Mr. Clarke did a great job creating a draft of waterway regulations. The next step will be to meet with the Law Department to review the draft.
- Mr. Fishman asked the status of the Swim at Your Own Risk (SAYOR) proposal. Commissioner DeRubeis commented there is a Crystal Lake Working Group determining how to maintain the health of the lake. There is a representative from the SAYOR group who is part of the Crystal Lake Working Group. Right now all interest groups are represented on the committee and the primary focus right now is the health of the lake.
- Mr. Sanders asked if the fireman triangle has been considered for a snow dump. Commissioner DeRubeis stated the snow dump locations are determined in September.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:32  
Respectfully Submitted  
Robin McLaughlin, Secretary