



Setti D. Warren  
Mayor

**Newton Parks & Recreation Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**City Hall - Room 209**  
**7:00 p.m. –Monday, April 22, 2013**



Robert J. DeRubeis  
Commissioner

**Attending:** Arthur Magni, Chairman, Commissioner Robert DeRubeis, Richard Tucker, Vice- Chairman, Wally Bernheimer, Peter Johnson, Andrew Stern, Don Fishman, Michael Clarke, Jack Neville, Joe Frassica, Peter Kastner, Robin McLaughlin, Secretary

**Also Attending:** Jason Roberts, Off-Leash Recreation Specialist, Chief Proia, Ouida Young, Associate City Solicitor, Josh Morse, Public Buildings

*Meeting began at 7:01 pm*

1. **Meeting Minutes –March 18, 2013** – Approved 6-0  
(Mr. Clarke & Mr. Stern Mr. Kastner, Mr. Fishman were not present during the vote)
2. **Commissioner’s Reports on Programs, Forestry and Maintenance**
  - Commissioner DeRubeis introduced Jason Roberts the Parks & Recreation Off-Leash Specialist. Jason has been hired to monitor and educate park users of the off-leash rules and regulations in the parks and off-leash areas. Jason has been visiting all of the off-leash areas but primarily Old Cold Spring and Cabot Park.
  - The Budget presentation to the Board of Aldermen is Wednesday April 24.
  - April Vacation camp wrapped up last week.
  - Maintenance is busy prepping the athletic fields, and working on a netting project at NNHS.
  - Newton Centre Playground is scheduled to be repaired over the next couple of weeks. The damage was caused by the snow dumping over the winter. The tennis courts were not affected by the snow dumped in the area.
3. **Poetry in Edmands Park- Public Hearing – Grey Held**
  - Mr. Held provided an overview; the objective of this proposal is to transport nature poetry from the library and the printed page into the living landscape of Newton’s Edmands Park. The poems will be secured to existing stone structures within the park. A Newton resident who has written five poetry books will be a judge. There is a review process with the Commission. Notification of the contest has been posted in the Poetry Journal and others will be solicited from the New England Area.
  - Mr. Neville asked how many poems will be posted. Mr. Held stated 20 poems will be posted in Edmands Park.
  - Ms. Michelle Weinfeld, abutter commented Edmands Park is special and unspoiled and should remain that way. There are different users who enjoy the park. There is historical remnants from when there was skating at Edmands Park. Do not drill holes in the remnants. Preserve the woods in its natural state. There is very little parking at Edmands and this proposal will create additional parking issues. If this proposal is approved you must justify why.
  - John Reuman, Resident of Auburndale, commented he is not an abutter of Edmands Park and respects the abutters of Edmands Park but parks have variety of purposes and this proposal does not detract from Edmands Park. Mr. Reuman is a fan of poetry and the proposal with the discreet poetry deserves careful attention.
  - Alderman Linsky reported he has received a number of e-mails from abutters objecting to the proposal. The Friends of Edmands Park have put a lot of effort in making this a great park. The Commission should get a sense of consensus regarding

the proposal. Alderman Linsky asked is there a reason for 20 poems in one location, can the poetry be in different places.

- Janet Buccaro, Resident supports the abutters request regarding the proposal and agrees there will be parking issues. The proposal is a lovely concept has the proposer considered other green space.
- Chairman Magni asked Mr. Held to comment on the question regarding the number of poems. Mr. Held commented there is an element of critical mass, the quantity does not have to be 20 it could be a phased in approach. This is not meant to be intrusive and he does not think there will be a rush to Blake St to see the poetry.
- Chris, Resident, Beacon St., supports the proposal. He has a background in conservation. The proposal has a light touch and is tasteful and appropriate. Chris stated he has known Mr. Held for a number of years and appropriate describes his work.
- Jeff Baker, 28 Cottonwood stated he walks his dog in Edmands and does not think the traffic will increase because of this proposal. Mr. Baker like the discovery element of walking through the park and finding the poetry.
- Mr. Neville asked if the poetry will be in one spot or spread through the park. Mr. Held stated the poetry will be spread throughout the park.
- Mr. Bernheimer stated the proposal is a good idea it is compatible with a walk in nature and he does not believe traffic will increase.
- Mr. Kastner stated the proposal is a good idea and suggested adding a few each year to see what happens.
- Mr. Johnson asked if the poems will be permanently attached or could they be rotated. Mr. Kastner stated there must be a way to prevent people from taking the plaques. Mr. Held stated the plaques would be secured.
- Mr. Stern commented he is in favor of the proposal.
- Mr. Tucker does not believe traffic will be a problem and the plaques will not be an eyesore or a hardship. Having people use the space in a variety of ways is better than a specific group deciding all of the uses.

*Mr. Bernheimer made the motion to approve the concept of the proposal and requests a specific plan for 10-12 units with specific locations. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-1.*

#### **4. Fire Station – Nahanton Park**

- Chief Proia recapped that Fire Station 10 is being torn down and rebuilt in the spring of 2014. The fire station needs to move to a temporary site. A matrix was created and ten locations were reviewed. There were discussions with the Charles River Country Club, but that did not work out. The Nahanton Park – Winchester Street location always came up as the best location. The Nahanton Park – Winchester Street location keeps the fire station in the district which is important to the response time of a call and if the fire station moves out of district the insurance company must be notified, which could affect insurance rates. There will be hurdles to get over if using Nahanton Park; state approval, adding a traffic signal and prepping the area of the temporary fire station.
- Mr. Stern asked how long the station would be located at Nahanton Park. The chief stated approximately for 18 months.
- Mr. Kastner asked if late penalties will be added to the contract. Ms. Young stated there is a liquidated damage provision in the city's contracts for failure to deliver in a timely manner, but that can be difficult to implement because there can be a variety of reasons a contractor runs late.
- Mr. Bernheimer asked what type of remediation will be received for damage to the park. The heavy vehicles will damage the park and he cannot support the proposal without a plan to repair.
- The chief respects that but he is looking at this from a public safety point of view.
- Mr. Kastner asked for a plan of what the site will look like with the temporary fire station in place.

- Mr. Stern asked if the state has approved the proposal. Ms. Young answered no, this park received two Urban Self-Help Grants from the State which requires we ask permission from the state to make any changes in use of the park and may also include federal involvement. We have initiated discussion with user groups of the park. There has been discussion of adding a possible conservation restriction and mitigating impact to the park.
- Mr. Stern asked if there is state involvement under Article 97. Ms. Young is not sure.
- Mr. Tucker asked if there will be an access issue for users going into the park. Chief Proia stated there should not be an issue.
- Mr. Clarke suggested having the existing building cleaned out of flammable items and requested restoration to the building from damage done by hose testing.
- Mr. Morse presented a rough sketch plan for the fire station and stated there will be minimal paving and the modular will roll in and out of the area.
- Commissioner DeRubeis asked about the traffic island located in the area. Mr. Morse stated they will avoid the island.
- Mr. Kastner asked how many emergency calls the fire station receives per month. Chief Proia stated they receive 1200 calls per year.
- Ms. Young is requesting a public hearing next month to gather the questions and concerns from the abutters.
- Mr. Bernheimer commented a public hearing cannot be scheduled without a specific plan. Mr. Tucker agrees and requests they come back with more details and information from the state.
- Ms. Young stated a more developed plan will be presented to the Commission at the May 20<sup>th</sup> meeting and then a public hearing could be scheduled for the June 17<sup>th</sup> meeting.

#### **5. Off-Leash Area Working Group (OLAWG) Report – Cabot Park**

- Commissioner DeRubeis presented improvement ideas for Cabot Park Off-Leash Area.
- Off-Leash Recreation Specialist- Jason Roberts is ACO certified and has two years' experience as an animal control officer in another community. Mr. Roberts has primarily been visiting Cabot Park and Cold Spring Park. Mr. Roberts is working with Officer Torres, Animal Control Officer.
- Mr. Bernheimer asked what happens with violations. Commissioner DeRubeis stated the Law Department is working on changing the ordinance to allow the off-leash specialist to write citations for violations.
- The Cabot Park off-leash area is a blighted area. Arborvitaes will be planted along the park perimeter fence. The arborvitaes will be spread out so the site line remains.
- The off-leash area will be resurfaced. There are several design ideas submitted P & R Open Space Coordinator, Carol Schein. Mr. Tucker asked what the best surface is for picking up dog waste. Commissioner DeRubeis stated a permeable surface is preferred.
- Over the winter the hours were changed. The area closes at 5pm. This 5pm close time cuts out use by those working during the week. OLAWG proposes to extend the hours Monday – Friday to 7pm. Mr. Bernheimer asked why not extend the weekend hours until 7pm. Commissioner DeRubeis commented this is a compromise. Mr. Tucker stated the hours can always be revisited.
- In addressing the noise issues the group researched companies and the types of tests and more research is required. Mr. Clarke suggested using an iPhone application. Commissioner DeRubeis commented OLAWG has been told by the neighbors they will only accept a report from a neutral source.
- Chairman Magni commented this is a work in progress. The Off-Leash Area Working Group meets every Friday and is confident they are keeping an eye on all off-leash areas.

*Mr. Bernheimer made the motion to accept the proposal for the Cabot off-leash area as presented. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion. Motion passed 8-0*

**6. Newton Central Little League – Shade Cover & Scoreboard**

- Jim Appelbaum of Newton Central Little League presented a proposal to add shade cover to the player benches and an electronic scoreboard.
- Mr. Tucker stated concern for adding a permanent structure to the park. Mr. Bernheimer stated the benches will be open.
- Mr. Bernheimer asked if the scoreboard will obstruct the abutters view. Mr. Stern asked if there will be advertisements on the signs. Mr. Appelbaum said yes. Mr. Stern recommended lowering the height of the sign.
- Mr. Stern asked if the sign can be any color or only the color black as shown in the proposal. Mr. Appelbaum stated yes, but the black sign is in stock and ready to be delivered. Mr. Stern suggested a green color sign to match the others around the city.
- Mr. Bernheimer stated if this is going to be permanent, it needs to be done right. For the public hearing bring a drawing including the sign height and in the green color.
- Mr. Tucker asked if the other leagues have electronic scoreboards. Mr. Appelbaum stated yes.

*Mr. Bernheimer made the motion to move the proposal to a public hearing. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion. Motion passed 8-0.*

**7. New Business**

- Mr. Clarke and Mr. Stern met with Ms. Young prior to the meeting regarding the March commission minutes and the triangular portion of land at Angier School in exchange for the area being used for parking. There will be a good faith discussion to incorporate the triangular area into the plan.

*Mr. Stern made the motion to amend the March 2013 minutes regarding the Angier School project using the revised language submitted. Mr. Bernheimer seconded the motion. Motion passed 8-0.*

Meeting Adjourned at 9:30

Respectfully Submitted,  
*Robin McLaughlin, Secretary*