



Setti D. Warren
Mayor

Newton Parks & Recreation Commission
Meeting Minutes
City Hall - Room 209
7:00 p.m. –Monday, May 20, 2013



Robert J. DeRubeis
Commissioner

Attending: Arthur Magni, Chairman, Commissioner Robert DeRubeis, Richard Tucker, Vice- Chairman, Wally Bernheimer, Bethel Bilezikian Charkoudian, Peter Johnson, Andrew Stern, Don Fishman, Peter Kastner, Robin McLaughlin, Secretary

Also Attending: Fire Chief Proia, Ouida Young, Associate City Solicitor, Josh Morse, Public Buildings, Carol Schein, Parks & Recreation

Meeting began at 7:00 pm

1. Meeting Minutes –April 22, 2013 – Approved 6-0

(Stern and Johnson were not present during the vote)

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

- Commissioner DeRubeis thanked Josh Morse, Public Buildings for all the work done at the Gath Pool
- The Crystal Lake Working Group met with Larry Beals regarding remediation with the water. Drain filters will be installed to help filter the water draining into the lake. Right now the water is ok, but we will see how it is when the weather heats up. Mr. Stern asked if there will be enforcement at the lake this season. Commissioner DeRubeis commented enforcement is done by the Newton Police.
- The Department is preparing for Summer Camps and the opening of Crystal Lake and Gath Pool.
- Commissioner DeRubeis will be going before the CPC for the Farlow Park Pond Project and the newton Highlands Project.
- Mark Kelly held the 35th year celebration for the special needs program.
- The Mayor's annual Prayer Breakfast is May 29th.
- Stephanie Lapham is working on several playground projects.

3. Fire Station – Nahanton Park -Informational

- The Newton Parks & Recreation Commission heard a proposal regarding placing a temporary fire station in Nahanton Park at the Winchester Street entrance. The temporary fire station would consist of a modular building to house firefighters and a modular tent structure to house a fire truck and equipment. The temporary fire station would be in use only during the time Fire Station #10 on Dedham Street is being reconstructed. Once the new Fire Station #10 is built, the modular building and tent will be removed and the site restored.
- Ms. Young commented Mr. Morse is present from the Public Buildings Department. Ms. Young met with the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) on site to request clearance for Self-Help Grant. The meeting was positive. Article 97 must be passed. The location is a good one because of the minimal disruption. The EOEEA thought the conservation restriction was a good approach and respectful of the park.
- Ms. Young stated the project requires the following to move forward:
 - Develop narrative
 - Vote of the P & R Commission
 - Vote of the Board of Alderman
 - Map to delineate boundaries
 - Conservation Restriction
 - File Article 97 legislation

- The projected timeline is to start site work October 2013 with occupancy by February 2014.
- Mr. Tucker asked what Article 97 is. Ms. Young stated Article 97 refers to an amendment to the Massachusetts Constitution that requires approval from the General Court of Massachusetts before land can be removed from open space use even on a temporary basis. Article 97 came in to effect in 1972. Usually to receive approval of Article 97 you have to give compensatory land, the conservation restriction would be a quid pro qua and an added layer of protection.
- Ms. Young stated if a vote tonight allows the project to move forward to a public hearing, at the public hearing they would be looking for a vote to convert the front part of the Winchester St entrance of Nahanton Park for fire station 10 relocation. They would appear before the Commission for further vote on the conservation restriction.

Mr. Bernheimer asked if there will be remediation to restore the land once the fire station has moved off the property. Remediation needs to be addressed before approval. Ms. Young commented the city will restore the surface. A group would be pulled together to determine the type of remediation. Mr. Bernheimer was not necessarily concerned about the specifics to be done, but the money in the budget be given up front to provide for the remediation. Ms. Young stated she is not sure which budget the money would be in for remediation and the big ticket item that really cannot be talked about is the building because nobody knows what the preferred use of that building will be. Ms. Young is suggesting putting in place a process to meet with all of the stakeholders to determine the appropriate use of the building. Mr. Stern asked if there is an actual comparative cost for the Charles River location and the Nahanton Park location. Mr. Morse stated they did not get into a dollar value because they do know the Charles River location requires payment for use of the area, and the city would have to remove hundreds of trees, add a driveway and utilities and more so there was never a cost estimate completed – they did not want to use the money on the design for Charles River at this point. Mr. Stern asked if there is a general order of magnitude for the cost of the project, the point being if this commission does not accept the notion of using its land and you were forced by default to use the less desirable path to Charles River there is a certain dealt of dollars that would have to been spent to go to plan b which is not the preferred course but the commission is very concerned about the restoration of the building with interests of its specific use. Having a budgetary commitment of X dollars gives us an idea of what is available to us for restoration and future use. It is the quid pro quo. Ms. Young commented the building was reviewed and is on the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and that cost to restore is comparable to the use of the golf course, you have to let the process unfold to see what the use of that building might be. Mr. Stern stated nothing has been done to the building for the last 100 years and this is the golden opportunity to do something with the building and yes it would be nice not to perpetuate its current use. Commissioner DeRubeis commented there has been conversation about cleaning out the building and giving it back to Parks & Recreation. Commissioner DeRubeis commented the building is deeded to the Parks & Recreation Commission. Ms. Young stated if the entire parcel was deeded to the Commission she is not sure how the current arrangement came to have Public Building in the building. Mr. Kastner commented we have been dealing with the building for a decade the Commission's ability to take the building was restricted and if you are saying that is not true; it is a surprise to us. Mr. Kastner commented the Commission would need a process to identify a use for the building and identify money to be used for the building. Mr. Morse commented they could clean out the building and hand the keys over to the Commission the temporary fire station estimated cost is ~ \$300K; it would be at least twice the cost to bring the building to code then to rebuild it. Mr. Kastner commented maybe a decision could be made by the June meeting; minimally the building should come down. Mr. Morse commented he would be happy to work with the commission regarding the use of the building.

- Mr. Bernheimer stated the Commission is looking for a specific line item that is a reserve for remediation , the Commission is looking for that kind of commitment, to come back to us and say that there may be money for us , sorry but that is not good enough. Carve out \$50k-\$100k for us, maybe it will be used for something, or maybe it won't be needed. Ms. Young commented there will be money somewhere. Mr. Bernheimer stated it will not come out of the P & R budget it will come out of the Fire Station budget. Ms. Young stated Fire Station 10 is part of the override money that is coming through, and money is money there whether

it comes out of the Fire Station budget or the operating budget. Mr. Bernheimer stated the money will not come out of the Commissioners budget. You are not compromising, you are not moving. Ms. Young stated what she is hearing that the Commission wants that commitment from the executive office and you do not want the money to come out of the Commissioners budget.

- Mr. Kastner stated maybe a commitment could be made by the June meeting. There is a division within the commission about what to do with the building. Mr. Stern asked if there were any pre-existing thoughts written down about what to do with the building. Mr. Kastner stated 15 years ago there were no decisions made. Commissioner DeRubeis stated we would need to make that decision internally. Mr. Morse commented he will work with the commission. Mr. Kastner stated all the stuff in the building should be removed no matter what happens. Put aside money to demolish until a decision is made. Mr. Morse stated it was described as having moderate historical significance. It has not been listed.
- Mr. Stern asked if in June there can be information available from the user groups involved.
- Mr. Fishman stated there should be money put aside ahead of time; the request seems reasonable and asked why money cannot be put aside for remediation. Mr. Morse stated that decision must come from the Executive Office.
 - Ms. Young stated if/when she appears before the commission again there would have to be some sort of commitment. Are the following items still acceptable to the commission if you get your dollars? Use of Nahanton Park for Temporary fire station
 - Conservation Restriction
 - File Article 97 legislation
- The group responded yes.
- Mr. Morse reviewed the drawing of the site plan (attached).

Mr. Tucker made the motion to move the proposal to a public hearing. Mr. Bernheimer seconded the motion. The motion passed 8-0.

4. Nonantum Village Day- Informational/Public Hearing

- Chairman Magni stated the process for this item has been compressed, including both the informational and public hearing requirements for a proposal. Going forward, The Nonantum Village Day proposal will be heard in a two-step (two month) process.
- Lois Dominique, the event manager commented the Nonantum Village Day is scheduled June 1 and June 2 and they will be utilizing, Pelligrini Park and Coletti-Magni Park. The local businesses are involved with the festival. There will be a petting zoo, pony rides, vendors and a balloon ride. Commissioner DeRubeis stated his concern about heavy vehicles on the Pelligrini field for the balloon rides. Ms. Dominique stated if it rains there will not be balloon rides, no vehicles will be on the field.

Mr. Tucker made the motion to approve the Nonantum Village Day proposal. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion. The motion passed 8-0.

5. NCLL- Public Hearing

- Jim Appelbaum of Newton Central Little League presented a proposal to add shade cover to the player benches and an electronic scoreboard during the April P & R Commission Meeting. The Commission requested Mr. Appelbaum come back with a mockup of how the new scoreboard will look in the area when installed and in a green color.
- Alderman Linsky commented he has received over 200 e-mails in support of the scoreboard.
- Daphne Potter, 23 Parkview Ave commented she prefers the classic character of the old sign. The neighborhood is gradually being encroached on by shiny metal permanent structures. Ms. Potter recently did some renovations at her home and had to stay within the character of the neighborhood. Ms. Potter is also concerned about kids climbing onto the roof of the shade cover over the bench.
- Patricia Bruno, 212 Cabot St. has lived in the neighborhood for ten years and agrees with Ms. Potter and she is also concerned about noise of rain on the metal.
- Chairman Magni agreed the sound could be annoying. Mr. Appelbaum stated the manufacturer said the sound is no different than rain landing on a slate material.

- Ms. Schein commented she would prefer the scoreboard be placed in right field and inquired on who would be installing the sign. Mr. Appelbaum stated the sign vendor uses a local company. Ms. Schein requested to see the details of the installation.
- Commissioner DeRubeis suggested the sign be placed in right field. Mr. Bernheimer agreed the sign should be placed where the existing sign is located.
- Mr. Kastner stated the dugout is a vast improvement from ones previously installed around the city.
- Ms. Potter asked if it would be possible to plant some trees. Mr. Appelbaum stated the league has a reserve to plant five 4" caliper trees. Chairman Magni asked if the trees have been approved by the P & R Department. Mr. Appelbaum said yes.
- David Strand, 218 Cabot St. asked if the bench cover would be reversible if the noise does become annoying and if a cloth canopy could be used in place of metal. Mr. Appelbaum stated the cost for the metal cover is 17k and is guaranteed for 10 years, a canvas canopy cost 12k and needs to be replaced every season.
- Ms. Potter asked the color of the bench cover. Mr. Appelbaum stated the color will most likely be green.

Mr. Bernheimer approved the proposal by NCLL for the electronic scoreboard and bench covers. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion. Motion passed 8-0.

6. NSHS- Kiosk Proposal – Informational

- Kevin Zhu and several NSHS Students and Michael Kozuch, NSHS teacher, presented a proposal that is a senior project to educate people about the importance of wetlands by putting an informational kiosk next to the wetland at South in order to encourage students and adults to think of this area as an important resource.
- Mr. Stern asked who would maintain the kiosk after the students graduate. Mr. Zhu stated Mr. Kozuch, Mr. Kosack and the janitors will assist in maintenance of the kiosk. The Newton Conservators support the project and has a budget for maintenance of the kiosk.
- Mr. Kastner requested a letter from the school giving permission for the kiosk.
- Mr. Stern asked what the material will be used for the kiosk. Mr. Zhu replied the kiosk will be made of pressure treated wood and will be installed by Legacy Construction.
- Ms. Charkoudian asked why the kiosk is being placed on park land and not school land. Mr. Zhu responded the park land is closer to the wetlands.
- Mr. Stern requested a picture of the kiosk for the public hearing.
- Mr. Kozuch stated this project will transfer into the Global Marine Biology course at NSHS, each year there will be a project related to the wetlands.

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

7. New Business

- Chairman Magni received a complaint from an abutter of Edmands Park who attended the May meeting, she felt humiliated by comments made by the Commission members. Chairman Magni requested the members keep an eye on the sensitivity of the comments. Mr. Fishman suggested the Chairman mention at the beginning of a meeting if comments will not be heard for an agenda item. Some people get upset because they wait to speak on a specific item and then they discover no comments will be heard on the item.
- Commissioner DeRubeis stated Linda Plaut and Arts in the Parks will be moving to City Hall so work can begin at the Carr School on Nevada St.
- Commissioner DeRubeis mentioned Bud Grantham has joined the Off-Leash Area Working Group as a member. He attended as an abutter of Cabot Park and through the process became interested and asked to become a member.
- Mr. Tucker mentioned the Waban Hill Reservoir property is still being discussed; the neighbors would like to leave the area as is, which would make the land Parks & Recreation responsibility.
- Mr. Stern stated the swim season is coming up quickly, what is the Commission going to do about the Swim at Your Own Risk issue? Commissioner DeRubeis stated the Crystal Lake

Working Group is still working on fixing the algae problem. Mr. Tucker asked if it is worth getting in writing that the Commission has no liability as a group or as individuals. Mr. Stern asked if it is possible to use the Crystal Lake fees to hire a person to deter the illegal behavior, or could the Commission ask the Conservation Commission to install a fence at the coves.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:55

Respectfully Submitted,
Robin McLaughlin, Secretary

Fire Station drawing

