



Setti D. Warren
Mayor

Newton Parks & Recreation Commission
Meeting Minutes
City Hall, War Memorial, 7:00pm
May 21, 2012



Robert J. DeRubeis
Commissioner

Attending: Arthur Magni, *Chairman*, Kathleen Heitman, *Vice-Chairman*, Commissioner DeRubeis, Andrew Stern, Peter Johnson, Richard Tucker, Fran Rice, Jack Neville (sitting in for Mr. Bernheimer), Don Fishman (sitting in for Ms. Charkoudian), Peter Kastner, Michael Clarke, Robin McLaughlin, *Secretary*

Absent: Bethel Bilezikian Charkoudian, Walter Bernheimer,

Meeting called to order at 7:08pm

1. Meeting Minutes –April 23, 2012- accepted 8-0

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

- Commissioner DeRubeis distributed the budget book presented to the Alderman, and reviewed current events:

This past weekend:

1. Hoops For Our Troops
2. Relay For Life
3. Veterans Day parade
4. Open Studios
5. Birds & Bugs Festival at Nahanton Park
6. Community Gardens –
 - Upper & Lower levels are rented to 90% - all is going well
 - Compost bins built by volunteers, DPW picking up trash - 5 bee hives on site
7. Charles River Canoe & Kayak is open

Coming Up:

8. Youth Awards- June 18th Commission Meeting
9. Mayor's Prayer Breakfast- Wednesday May 23rd
10. Update on Forestry crew
11. Job posted- RFP for equipment is out
12. Swim Lesson registration - beginning of June
13. Over 55 Summer Programs & Trips beginning

Maintenance & Projects

14. Cabot Park Off-leash Area has been reseeded & will re-open on Friday May 25.
15. LFCC window project - progressing slowly
16. Upper Falls Tennis Courts
17. Horace Mann Community Classroom-concrete poured-should be done this week

3. Nonantum Neighborhood Association- Public Hearing

- Nonantum Neighborhood Association appeared before the Commission in April for an informational meeting for a Nonantum Village Day on June 3, which will include balloon rides at Pelligrini Park. Notification was sent to abutters of the neighborhood.
- Chairman Magni asked if there were any comments, questions or concerns. There were none.

Mr. Rice made the motion to approve the proposal by the Nonantum Neighborhood Association for a Village Day as proposed. Ms. Heitman seconded the motion. The motion passed 8-0.

4. Newton West Little League (NWLL)- Concession Stand-Public Hearing

- Alderman Sangiolo commented there was a presentation made to the neighbors of Lyons Field on May 13.
- Ms. Somers, of NWLL commented on the following issues brought up at the neighborhood meeting:
 1. Having a building on park land.
 2. ADA parking within the park – the proposed parking has been pulled from the proposal. All parking will be on the street.
 3. Sewerage – NWLL is working with the Engineers.
 4. Landscaping- NWLL has doubled the budget to work with the City's Adopt-a-Space program to include appropriate plantings.
- Chairman Magni opened the floor for comments. All comments are limited to a three minute time limit and all comments be directed to the Commission.
- Jane Sender, 47 Kingwood Rd. and a representative of the Newton Conservators is against buildings on park land. Currently there are buildings in Kennard Park and Nahanton Park originally intended for park use which are now being used for non-park use. Ms. Sender is also concerned about the maintenance issue, being a low part of the City there are sewerage issues. The proposed parking on park land is a safety issue. If the Commission moves forward there should be compensation for plantings and not just decorative plantings but plantings to enhance the natural habitat.
- Sally Rudicel, 19 Islington Rd, commented eighteen years ago this was a neighborhood park. NWLL started small and now there are lights, loud speakers, increased traffic and now a concession stand, it is more like an amusement park then a neighborhood park.
- Ms. Abernathy of Islington Rd read a letter from a neighbor who could not attend the meeting. Ms. Rossi stated in the letter it is nice having the games at night. She is concerned with having junk food available to the kids.
- Mr. Abernathy of Islington Rd asked if NWLL really needs a concession stand. Port-a-potties come in different styles, the money should be used for port-a-potties. A building for private use, on public land, is against what he knows of park land. Mr. Abernathy supports little league, but enough is enough.
- Amy, a direct abutter does not support parking on the Marty Sender path. Getting rid of the port-a potty is a good idea.
- Lisa, of the Fessenden School commented that NWLL has improved the park and they have been receiving a lot of backlash which is disappointing.
- John Fitzpatrick, 30 Eden Ave stated he has a son in the little league program. In regards to the junk food concern, there are other options of food besides junk food. All the improvements have been exciting for the kids.

- Tom Enselek, President of NWLL thanked the neighbors and commented the concession stand also includes storage and bathrooms. NWLL is trying to beautify the area and there are healthy options at the concession stand. There was an issue with the lights being on early this year for maintenance. There is a strict policy that the lights go out at 9:30pm.
- Galen Boyer, 305 Cherry St., seconded Mr. Fitzpatrick's' comment about what the improvements mean to the kids. The Conservators are concerned about what will happen to the building in ten years, NWLL will be around for a long time.
- Susan Regan, Kingswood Rd commented her family has all played little league at Lyons Field. And it has been a wonderful experience for the kids. Ms. Regan had a letter from her neighbor Alison Charmer who supports the concession stand.
- Rich Lee, Board Member of NWLL commented this proposal is about improvement, and safety and security are an added benefit.
- Chairman Magni concluded the public comment portion of the hearing and requested Commission member's comments.
- Mr. Tucker is concerned if this proposal is approved a precedent will be set that would be problematic with other leagues.
- Mr. Stern echo's Mr. Tuckers comment and stated if more structures are put in the parks will this limit the department's flexibility with future opportunities. The City will need to establish stewardship.
- Mr. Fishman stated the Commission is careful about permanent structures. Approval of this structure would not set a precedent. And as a father with kids on the field all day, this is a good idea.
- Mr. Johnson commented each proposal would be looked at on a case by case basis. Lyons Field is unique and likes the idea.
- Ms. Heitman agrees. This proposal is well thought out and would bring joy to the children.
- Chairman Magni asked if there is a maintenance plan. Mr. Enselek stated NWLL has a strong and healthy budget and the same process will be followed as with the lighting at Lyons Field. A contract will be signed with the City. Commissioner DeRubeis commented the license agreement would be done by the Law Department.
- Mr. Stern requested NWLL post a letter of credit.

Mr. Johnson made the motion to approve the proposal by NWLL for a concession stand as proposed. Mr. Rice seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-1 (Stern).

Mr. Stern made an amendment to the motion, Mr. Johnson seconded the amendment: A license agreement between NWLL & the City for use of the concession stand is condition upon NWLL maintaining a letter of credit for future demolition, landscaping and capping off of utilities. Motion passed 7-1 (Rice).

5. New Business

- Commissioner DeRubeis reminded the group the Youth Awards will take place before the June meeting in the Aldermanic Chambers.
- Commission Member Heitman, Vice Chairman, is resigning from the Commission. Chairman Magni presented Ms. Heitman with a gift for her years of service. Ms. Heitman will be missed.

- A new vice-chairman must be elected to replace Ms. Heitman. Ms. Heitman made the motion to nominate Mr. Tucker as vice-chairman. Mr. Stern seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.
- Commissioner DeRubeis commented the Off-leash Area Working Group is working with Newton Youth Soccer to locate off-leash areas.
- Commissioner DeRubeis commented the vote to open the Braceland Playground off-leash area being contingent on having a cross walk installed is more difficult than expected. A study must be done in the area before a crosswalk is considered by the Traffic Department. Ms. Stapleton commented the Newton Highlands Area Council is requesting the off-leash area at Braceland Playground be opened.
- Mr. Clarke commented a proposal is required for the Alms House to be considered for the historical register.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:25pm
Respectfully Submitted,
Robin McLaughlin, Secretary