



Setti D. Warren  
Mayor

**Newton Parks & Recreation Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**City Hall, War Memorial, 7:00pm**  
**September 24, 2012**



Robert J. DeRubeis  
Commissioner

Attending: Arthur Magni, Chairman, Bob DeRubeis, Commissioner, Walter Bernheimer, Fran Rice, Andrew Stern, Bethel Charkoudian, Richard Tucker, Peter Kastner, Jack Neville, Carol Stapleton, Acting Secretary

1. Meeting Minutes – June 18, 2012 – accepted 8-0
2. Commissioner's Reports on Programs, Forestry and Maintenance:
  - Department sponsored camps were very successful this past summer; in addition, there were new camps and incorporating of the dissolved NCSC camp. A meeting will be scheduled with Newton Public Schools on new inclusion items which will affect the Department's existing summer camps.
  - The Farmers Market has flourished again with both the Tuesday and Friday Markets and the introduction of a Winter Market at the Hyde Center.
  - The Over 55 programs flourished including ballroom dancing, pickle ball, Zumba, kayaking and Golf and the fall trips are filling up fast.
  - Other Department Fall programs include Horseback Riding Program, Fencing, Golf, Puddle stompers, Funtastic Fridays and the ever popular Haunted House.
  - The Newton North Indoor Program is scheduled to open on October 8th.
  - Paddy's Road Race to benefit the Special Athletes will be on October 14th as well as Harvest Fair which is held in Newton Centre on the Green.
  - The Commissioner noted that a copy of the Department's Fall Newsletter is enclosed in each member's packet as well as Department Flyers of all programs.
  - The newly acquired Forestry Equipment has arrived and is ready to go. Two of three positions have been filled to date. Northern Tree Service will begin to work on removals and stumps will be grinded out at a later date. Members asked that Marc Welch be invited to a future meeting to give a progress update on trees.
  - Swim Season at Crystal Lake was cut short by an early in the season algae bloom which forced a total shut down of the entire program on July 30th. The Health Department as well as the City's Environmental Engineer and the State's DEP continuously monitored the water. The bloom did subside for about one week but then returned and is currently present. The Commissioner also reported on the formation of a new working group for Crystal Lake issues. Combining representatives from the Crystal Lake Conservancy, The Friends of Crystal Lake and the Swim At Your Own Risk groups as well as representatives of the Health Department and Public Works and Engineering Departments. This working group is now meeting monthly with a focus on identifying the Lake's Watershed with signage and notices sent out to homeowners as well as tagging street drains. The Commissioner will keep Commission Members updated on the progress of the working group. Gath Pool had a successful swim season however the building itself experienced structural issues as well as the need to manually feed the pumps on a daily basis. The Pool

also picked up swimmers from Crystal Lake all of August and a portion of September. The Commissioner also reported that he has placed Gath Pool into the CIP Program for a new facility. The facility as it stands today is 50 Years old and showing its age on a daily basis. We will begin the design phase and recommendations for a new facility and will keep the Commission updated on the progress of the project. He also noted that the City's Summer Swim Team numbers have topped over 250 participants.

- Off-Leash Working Group continues meeting weekly on Fridays. Braceland has now opened and so far has been well received. The group continues to work on Off Leash Area Specialist position with Human Resources and Police Department. This position would be able to issue citations if necessary as well as outreach at all off leash areas that are open for use. Over 1,200 medallions have been sold. The Commissioner also noted that there has been a report of a bite incident at Cold Spring Park and the Committee is awaiting a formal report from NPD. The Group is now working with residents of the Edmands Park area as Edmands is now in the cue for a new off leash area. The Law Dept. is presently reviewing the deed.
- The Upper Falls Heritage Day was celebrated on September 22nd and a grateful acknowledgment was received by the Department for the competition of the tennis courts, walkway, cross walk, benches, trees and work done in the parking lot.

### 3. Poetry in Edmands Park.

- The Commission was joined by Mr. Grey Held and Ms. Wendy Drexler.
- This is the second meeting for informational purposes of the project. Mr. Held reported that they had met with members of the Edmands Park Friends Group and proceeded to hand out photos of the locations of the 20 sites in the proposal. Ms. Drexler also passed around samples of the recommended types of plaques that would be installed. Examples were of a hand painted tile, an etched granite stone and a stainless steel plate. Commission Members asked that if the project were to be moved forward to a public hearing that items such as a long-term maintenance plan , provisions for vandalism such as graffiti and a notation be made on each pillar of the WPA project be incorporated into the proposal. Members also requested that the project also be presented by Mr. Held and Ms. Drexler to the Newton Historical Commission as well as the Newton Conservation Commission for their review of the project. The Commission voted 8-0 to move the project to a public hearing with a date set when Mr. Held and Ms. Drexler are ready for a presentation. The Department will notify all abutters to Edmands Park of the date and time of the hearing. Another requirement of the project would be a review of all content on each plaque before any installation would be granted. Details of the formation of the Committee for the selection process would be discussed at the next meeting.

### 4. Other Business:

- Kennard Estate: Commissioner DeRubeis reported that the sign on the Estate Grounds is still up and he is working with the School Department on this item. Perhaps in the future a subcommittee would be formed as to the future plans of the building and land.
- The Alms House: No discussion. Michael Clarke was unable to attend the meeting.

5. New Business:

- Andy Stern reported that he had a phone conversation this past summer with City Solicitor Kahn and Assistant Solicitor Lawlor regarding Crystal Lake. He was informed that the Board of Alderman must enact a civil fine ordinance as a statutory prerequisite to the Parks and Recreation Commission being able to enforce its rules and regulations regarding illegal swimming in the Lake. Mr. Bernheimer suggested that, as a first step, Commissioner DeRubeis ask newly appointed Police Chief Mintz whether the Police Department would support an Aldermanic enactment of a civil fine ordinance.

Respectfully submitted by Carol Stapleton