



Setti D. Warren  
Mayor

**Newton Parks & Recreation Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**City Hall, Room 209, 7:00pm**  
**December 19, 2011**



Robert J. DeRubeis  
Commissioner

**Attending:** Arthur Magni, *Chairman*, Kathleen Heitman, *Vice-Chairman*, Bob DeRubeis, *Commissioner*, Walter Bernheimer, Fran Rice, Andrew Stern, Bethel Charkoudian, Peter Johnson, Richard Tucker, Peter Kastner, Robin McLaughlin, *Secretary*

**Absent:** Jack Neville, Michael Clarke, Don Fishman

**Also Attending:** Carol Schein, Parks & Recreation Open Space Coordinator

*Meeting called to order at 7:00pm*

- **Meeting Minutes –November 21, 2011- accepted 7-0**
  - (Mr. Johnson arrived after the vote)
- **Commissioner’s Reports on Programs, Forestry and Maintenance**
  - **Department Snapshot-** (attached)
    - Commissioner DeRubeis reviewed the department snapshot.
    - Commissioner DeRubeis provided CIP (Capital Improvement Project) information for the Commission. Distributed was the two-page Executive Summary (attached) of the CIP process and a list of P & R CIP projects.
    - Mr. Bernheimer asked where the Master Plan for Upper Falls and Newton Highlands appears on the list. Commissioner DeRubeis will check and report.
    - Mr. Stern would like to see how the 5 year assessments plan done by P & R, in 2006, compares to the CIP list.
  - **Department Holiday Party**
    - The P & R Department is having a Holiday/Farewell to 70 Crescent Street party on Wednesday December 21 from 12pm-2pm. All Commission members are invited.
  - **Department Move to 124 Vernon Street**
    - The P & R Department will be moving to 124 Vernon Street on January 4, 2012.
  - **Ice Rinks Procedure** (attached)
    - Ice rinks have been put up around the City over the last few years. The ice rinks are sponsored by the neighborhoods. Two years ago an ice rink was installed at the Hyde Community Center last year the Lower Falls Community Center installed an ice rink. This year Newton Pride has sponsored an ice rink in Newton Centre. There is a proposal for an ice rink in Newtonville. A procedure to sponsor and install an ice rink has been developed.

- **Newton Highlands Playground**
  - Commissioner DeRubeis reported in 2007 the Commission voted on the conceptual design of the Newton Highlands Master Plan. The biggest issue from the master plan was drainage. Recently Commissioner DeRubeis, Alderman Rice, Carl Schein and Ted Tye have been working with the sports leagues on a feasibility study. The leagues have donated approximately \$29,000.00 for the study. The updated plan is the same as the 2007 plan with a few minor changes.
  - Mr. Stern asked if there will be lights and synthetic turf. Commissioner DeRubeis said yes.
  - Mr. Stern is concerned this project will set a precedent on future field types, lights and turf.
  - Chairman Magni commented this field will cost a lot of money it would be a premiere field, not the standard. Commissioner DeRubeis stated the project would cost \$3.5 million. Mr. Bernheimer asked how much of the cost would be covered by donations. Commissioner DeRubeis stated \$3.5 million dollars will need to be covered by donations.
  - Mr. Bernheimer stated the Commission has only approved the conceptual plan not the final plan.
  - Mr. Kastner asked about the stream. Commissioner DeRubeis stated the stream has a culvert. Mr. Kastner suggested creating an open space area for residents and families to have picnics the park is being overtaken by organized sports. Ms. Schein commented the front area has always been called the neighborhood area by the residents. And the fields in the master plan already exist in the park.
  - Commissioner DeRubeis asked the Commission what they would expect going forward.
  - Chairman Magni commented there were public hearings back in 2007. Mr. Bernheimer stated the public may not remember the project. An informational meeting may be a good idea and a vote to formally accept the Master Plan. Mr. Kastner stated an informational meeting may raise enthusiastic support.
- **Kennard Park**
  - Commissioner DeRubeis stated there has been concern regarding the building at Kennard Park. The Newton Partnership Administrative offices moved in the building at the beginning of December. There will be approximately 12 people in the offices and parents may visit the office.
  - Mr. Kastner stated the building was a gift to the City and any proceeds from the building should go to the maintenance of the building or the park. The Kennard trust gave the building to Parks & Recreation; a resource of the P & R Department has been transferred to the School Department.
  - Commissioner DeRubeis commented the building is under the responsibility of the Public Buildings Department.
  - Mr. Bernheimer stated the Commission needs to verify the bequest. Chairman Magni stated the Commission should make a formal inquiry. Commissioner DeRubeis will speak with the Law Department.

- **Nahanton Park**
  - Ms. Schein reviewed a summary (attached) of the Nahanton Park Natural Resource Management Study done by Jeff Collins of Mass Audubon. The study makes 11 recommendations.
    - Mass Audubon’s Final Report Recommendations:
      - Standardize the Community Gardens
      - Restore the Dirt Lot at the Winchester Street Entrance
      - Manage Early Successional Habitat w/Thinning and Periodic Clearing
      - Manage Invasive Species
      - Renovate Trails
      - Continue the Conversation with Newton Community Farm (NCF)
      - Maintain Meadow as Wildlife Habitat
      - Manage Dog Walking
      - Investigate Storm Water Discharge
      - Improve the Overflow Parking Lot
      - Continue Canoe and Kayak Rental
  - The Nahanton Park Working group (appointed by the P & R Commission) prioritized and consolidated the above into:
    - Management of the Community Gardens / Continue Conversation with NCF
    - Management of Invasive Species and Successional / Wildlife Habitat
    - Park Entrances: Winchester Street (the building and dirt lot) and Nahanton Street (upper parking lot and Charles River Canoe and Kayak)
    - Restore Trails
  - Ms. Schein stated work has already begun to clean-up the gardens. The gardeners have been notified of the clean-up is going well. Mr. Stern asked what the yearly fee is for a garden plot. Commissioner DeRubeis replied the fee is \$40.00/year. Ms. Schein commented the water costs are \$4,000.00 per year and there are 100 gardeners, which just covers the water costs. Mr. Bernheimer recommended putting the garden fees on an upcoming agenda.
  - Mr. Stern asked where the study left the Farm. The proposal from the farm last year generated the study. Ms. Schein stated the farm must come to the Commission with a new proposal based on the study results.
- **Policy Sub-committee-update**
  - **911 Memorial Committee – Report on the December 6 Meeting**
    - Ms. Heitman reported the meeting went well. The 911 Memorial Committee understands the memorial will not be on park land and they are moving forward.
    - Commissioner DeRubeis stated the committee is speaking with the Fire Chief about putting the memorial on the land by Fire Headquarters.
  - **Historical Perspective City Hall grounds**
    - Mr. Stern submitted an e-mail conversation he had with Brian Lever of the Planning Department. Mr. Stern asked Mr. Lever why the Historic Commission opposed the 911 Memorial being placed on City Hall grounds.

Mr. Lever is the Senior Preservation Planner for the city's Historical Commission. Mr. Lever explained:

1. City Hall and its grounds are on the federal National Register of historic properties. Listing on this registry enables developers (of private property) to receive tax credits and governmental grants for historic preservation.
2. The significance of the Olmstead firm's original landscape design would be "diminished" as monuments or other alterations were added/made to the grounds.
3. CPA funding for "historic preservation" would be jeopardized the more the original design was altered with art, monuments or other modifications.
4. The Historical Commission opposed the proposal location of the 911 monument (i) given its size (ii) since the south side of the City Hall grounds has remained fundamentally consistent with the original Olmstead design (vs. the alteration caused by Millennium/Balsamo Park) and (iii) based on the desire to support the Pressley firms master plan of City Hall's grounds to restore the original, historic design.

- **New Business**

- No new business

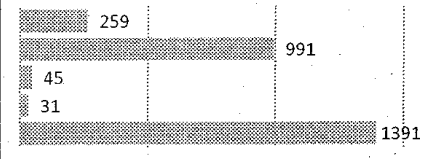
Meeting Adjourned at 8:30 pm

Respectfully submitted,

*Robin McLaughlin, Secretary*

**Parks and Recreation Department Snapshot November 2011**

<b>Customer Service Measures</b>			
	Phone Calls	FAQ's Viewed	Total Inquires
Administration	121	73	194
Program	203	739	942
Facilities	43	0	43
Grounds Maintenance	40	0	40
Urban Forestry	220	1134	1354
<b>totals</b>	<b>627</b>	<b>1946</b>	<b>2573</b>



<b>Service Requests</b>			
<b>Grounds Maintenance</b>		<b>Urban Forestry</b>	
	Rcv'd	closed	Avg. Age of Comp. (days)
School Dude	18	17	na
WebQA	6	3	na
Pruning	35	0	na
Removals	48	0	na
Dn tr, lb, hngr	247	530	3
Removal backlog	240	280	
Prune backlog	735	6587 (18 years)	

<b>Financial Measures</b>					
	Quant.	\$ Amount			
Purchase Orders	27	\$ (69,770.61)	-\$69,771	-\$236,466	\$65,627
Invoices Paid	295	\$ (236,466.19)			\$1,201
Checks Processed	171	\$ 65,627.10			\$40,404
Cash Processed	8	\$ 1,201.00			
Credit Cards Processed	223	\$ 40,403.50			
	738	\$ (198,930.87)			

Purchase Orders	Invoices Paid	Checks Processed	Cash Processed	Credit Cards Processed

<b>Program Attendance</b>	
TOTAL ATTENDANCE	7455
UNIQUE PROGRAM PART'S	728

## CIP Executive Summary

### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – Highlights and Key Findings

#### Overview

The initial intake of capital needs from the operational departments and the municipal building assessment identified over 1,000 projects considered important to maintain and preserve the physical assets that support city operations, programs, and services. These physical assets include 78 buildings, 58 parks and playgrounds, 298 miles of roadways, over 200 pieces of rolling stock (heavy vehicles), and more than 600 miles of water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure. The investments identified are intended to properly maintain or replace capital assets in addition to adding new infrastructure. All of these project proposals were evaluated using a risk-based approach.

Where it made sense, repair/replacement of like-items were bundled into larger capital investments, while other items were migrated to the departments' operational budgets (eg. smaller capital valued at less than \$75,000, maintenance items, administrative vehicles, tree trimming maintenance, etc). This resulted in a final CIP project listing of about 380 projects valued at \$240M. The break-down of projects by asset category is illustrated in Tab 2. As the pie chart illustrates, the majority (66%) of capital needs belong to the City's building inventory. A listing of the twenty buildings with the highest capital needs is listed at the end of this section.

The FY2013-2017 Capital Improvement Plan proposes funding nearly \$119M in projects valued at \$75,000 or more, across the spectrum of infrastructure. The break-down of projects by funding categories is illustrated in Tab 3.

#### Highlights of Process

This Capital Improvement Plan represents a significant shift in the manner by which capital projects are recorded, reviewed, and eventually executed in the City of Newton. Like any planning program, it is fully expected it will continue to evolve, adopting changes that will only improve the process and the manner in which we allocate scarce resources to our infrastructure needs.

The goal of this City-wide comprehensive capital plan is to identify and prioritize critical capital needs across the City, and to allocate funding to implement those projects through a **process that is logical, transparent, and data-driven**. To that end, a mathematical model was developed to create a standard framework for the decision-making process across all departments' capital needs.

One of the first steps was to assess the current condition of the various capital assets both below and above the ground. Consultants (Kleinfelder/SEA Inc.) were commissioned to conduct the technical assessment of municipal buildings and to give the City a current snapshot of both short term critical needs and longer term investments needed to maintain the serviceability of each facility. In a similar fashion, various departmental staff reviewed assets under the stewardship of their respective departments. All assets were rated based on their individual merits and/or deficiencies.

The rating process evaluated and compared the different capital needs using the same criteria: the probability of failure and the consequences of failure of a particular asset or proposed project. *Probability of Failure* considers the age and condition of an asset while *Consequence of Failure* considers the impact of not implementing a project or not purchasing a new capital asset. The details of this risk-based approach are described in Section 3 of this document. It is important to point out that this methodology is the driver for management's evaluation of capital improvement needs within the context of competing demands.

The data from the Building Assessment and the departments was then integrated and reviewed by a CIP Steering Committee to apply a common decision-making metric to what ends up being very different capital needs. For example, it is necessary to conduct a relative comparison of the importance of a fire truck to a roof repair based on a unique risk-based approach. Consistency in the metrics at this level in effect 'calibrates' the rating values across all departments.

Through a weighted average computation, the Risk Factor was calculated as the probability of failure multiplied by the weighted summation of the consequence factors to yield:

$$\text{Risk Factor} = PF \times Q$$

Where: PF = Probability of Failure  
Q = Consequence of Failure

The CIP is then prioritized according to the magnitude of the Risk Factor for each capital need. Finally, the City's annual funding capacity determines the degree to which capital projects in the CIP are funded according to the priority. This model provides a transparent decision-making framework that can support the capital improvement planning process into the future.

The initial master list of prioritized projects included several top priority projects that were identified for FY12 capital funding. Those FY12 projects have been submitted to the Honorable Board of Aldermen for appropriation and are listed in Appendix I of this document.

The CIP Steering Committee consisted of six persons who bring a unique perspective derived from their expertise and the role they play in the City:

Chief Operating Officer	Bob Rooney
Chief Financial Officer	Maureen Lemieux
Commissioner of Public Buildings	Stephanie Kane Gilman
Commissioner of Inspectional Services	John Lojeck
Commissioner of Parks and Recreation	Bob DeRubeis
City Resident and Member of the Citizen's Advisory Group	Scott Oran

## Ice Rink Procedure



### NEWTON PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

#### CREATING A TEMPORARY NEIGHBORHOOD ICE SKATING RINK ON CITY OF NEWTON PARK LAND

1. Submit a written proposal to the Commissioner of Parks & Recreation and include the following information:

- proposed size and location of the rink
- proposed dates and times of operation
- approximate cost of materials and supplies such as lumber, hoses
- purchase price of heavy duty base liner materials
- source of water supply with freeze proof valves
- maintenance plan for restoration of the field at the end of the season
- potential donors to the project
- listing of safety committee and management team members
- site plan noting location of portable signs
- neighborhood parking plan
- A valid Certificate of Insurance for your organization which names the City of Newton as "Additional Insured" in amount of \$1,000,000 or greater covering general liability including bodily injury, property damage and personal injury.
- A Special Event Permit Application\*
- A Volunteer Application for Improvement and Maintenance of City Property.\*

*\*These forms may be obtained at [www.ci.newtonma.us/parks](http://www.ci.newtonma.us/parks)*

Upon receiving the above information, your Organization will be contacted by the Commissioner or designee to arrange a meeting regarding your proposal.

An approved applicant will be required to sign a license agreement with the City of Newton.

12/11



## Nahanton Park Natural Resources Inventory and Management Plan - Update

December 19, 2011

Mass Audubon's Final Report Recommendations:

- Standardize the Community Gardens
- Restore the Dirt Lot at the Winchester Street Entrance
- Manage Early Successional Habitat w/Thinning and Periodic Clearing
- Manage Invasive Species
- Renovate Trails
- Continue the Conversation with Newton Community Farm (NCF)
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1. Management of the Community Gardens / Continue Conversation with NCF
  2. Management of Invasive Species and Successional / Wildlife Habitat
  3. Park Entrances: Winchester Street (the building and dirt lot) and Nahanton Street (upper parking lot and Charles River Canoe and Kayak)
  4. Restore Trails
- 

### Actions Taken - November/December 2011

#### 1. **Management of the Community Gardens:**

- Performed in-the-field visual survey of the Upper and Lower Garden plots
- Updated garden plot maps and checked against listed gardeners/fees paid
- Contacted all gardeners with excess material outside of paid plot boundaries and requested all be removed
- Provided dumpster this week as well as crew to assist gardeners with hauling and dumping
- Wrote new Community Gardens Policies and Procedures Handbook (draft for review)
- Contacted a few active gardeners from each garden level and invited them to be members of a new steering committee to act as liaisons with the Department

#### 2. **Management of Invasive Species and Successional/Wildlife Habitat**

- With The Conservators requested a draft fee proposal from Mass Audubon to help oversee volunteer projects enumerated in the report
- Met with Friends and Conservators for preliminary discussion on how to work with Mass Audubon and approach suggested volunteer projects
- Fall season mowing of the meadow