



NEWTON PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

Zoom Meeting

7:00 PM – Monday May 18, 2020

Attending: Chairman Magni, Vice-Chairman Richard Tucker, Commissioner Nicole Banks, Al Cecchinelli, Sam Figler, Andy Stern, Byron Dunker, Patty Kerwin Derrick, Melissa Sommer, Michael Clarke

1. **Meeting Minutes** – April 2020 minutes – Approved 8-0

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

- Commissioner Banks reported the department budget was presented to the City Council with Deputy Commissioner, Marc Welch, Open Space Coordinator, Luis Perez Demorizi and Recreation Manager, Carol Stapleton
 - There are a couple of vacant positions on hold
 - The Mechanic position has been cut as well as overtime budgets except for when it involves safety and security
 - Two playground projects are postponed
 - A couple of vehicle purchase are delayed for a year
- Mr. Stern mentioned the globe article that reported over 100 part time staff were laid-off. Commissioner Banks replied that 50+ from the spring season were kept on for 5 weeks and were given the option for unemployment. Once a decision is made regarding summer programs a letter will be sent to seasonal staff.
- Fields have been rested due to the stay at home order, though this is not nearly enough time. We are continuing to review guidelines.
- IPM Committee has been meeting with Derek Mannion, Superintendent of Maintenance leading the charge. A plan is being developed for a pilot program.
- The Open Space & Recreation Plan – a link was forwarded to all members for review and comment. The current plan ends at the end of this month.
- Off-leash Areas: the parks have been busy, but people are following the social distancing guidelines. Wood chips have been put in at the Hunnewell off-leash area. There will be a meeting next week to discuss the licensing process and dog walking companies.



- Projects:
 - Expanding Reverend Ford Playground at Crescent Street
 - Levingston Cove
 - Waban Hill Reservoir pathway should be complete mid-June
 - Cold Spring Park Trail Renovations Phase I is complete. Phase II is under review, needs funding.
 - Crystal Lake water treatment began May 8 & 9 with positive results. Maria Rose, DPW will be monitoring the program and reporting monthly.
 - Newton South High School Lighting project will begin as soon as June 15
- Governor's Update
 - Reviewing plan, meeting with the Executive Team tomorrow. Camps/Aquatics did not receive guidance. Phase II could begin mid-June.
 - Farmers Market will open the end of June
- Parks, Recreation & Culture Team know the details of what they do, and it has been great working with them.

3. Kennard Sculpture Trail – Informational- Carolyn Kraft, Allison Newsome

- The sculpture show is an outdoor show will run from September 12 – November 7
- The event information and artist projects may be reviewed at the following website: <http://friendsofkennardpark.org/>
- All state guidelines will be followed.

The motion was made to move this proposal to a public hearing. The motion was seconded.

Motion passed 8-0

4. Committee Reports

- *Community Preservation Committee* -Approved 2.5 million in rent relief, but it was blocked by the City Council.
- *Open Space & Recreation Plan* –City Council held up the plan. They want their people included in the working group
- *Farm Commission* – They have had some financial losses. Seed sale was successful. The City has come up with capital funds for the farm. The farm also received a small business loan.
- *Commonwealth Golf Course* – no report
- *Off-Leash Area Working Group* – updated above
- *Crystal Lake Working* – Chairman Magni commented that swim at your own risk may become an issue this summer. Commissioner Banks replied if the lake does not open there will be an enforcement issue. There have been meetings with the Police Department. Mr.



Stern commented the area could become a Covid hot spot. Chairman Magni stated the Mayor seems to be aware of the issue. The issue needs support by the Executive Team.

- *Athletic Fields* – Commissioner Banks reported she has met with the different sports groups this past month. The permit policy is being reviewed. Mr. Figler stated this group was formed a few years ago and the group has lost focus of its goals and made a request the Commission discuss the groups goals at the next meeting. Mr. Dunker commented he is available to discuss the goals, but more field space is required before the permit issue can be resolved. Previously, there was discussion of artificial turf at Forte Park, the Commission must approve the artificial turf before being presented to CPC. Commissioner Banks stated she will set up a meeting with Mr. Dunker, Mr. Figler and Ms. Connolly to discuss further.

5. New Business

- No New Business

Meeting adjourned the meeting at 8:19 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin McLaughlin