

Newton Parks & Recreation Commission

Meeting Minutes

On-Line Meeting

7:00 p.m. – Monday, October 19, 2020



Attending: Chairman Magni, Commissioner Banks, Byron Dunker, Al Cecchinelli, Andy Stern, Patty Kerwin Derrick, Melisa Sommer, Midge Connolly, Mark Feldhusen, Jack Neville, Michael Clarke

Meeting began 7:00pm

1. Meeting Minutes

- September 2020 - approved

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

Park and Pedal - Forte Park Nicole Freedman, Director of Transportation Planning

- There were issues with electricity at the originally proposed location Lyons Field. Forte Park was proposed electricity can be used from the field house on site. There are memorials on site at the location and they will not be disturbed. Chairman Magni commented that Richard Forte died in a war and Forte means strength in Italian. Chairman Magni checked the proposed location, and it will not interfere with the memorial.
- Mr. Stern asked if the bike pad will be made of impervious material. Ms. Freedman replied yes, there is concrete under the footing only the remaining covering is stone dust.
- Mr. Cecchinelli asked if the location is too far from the main road to be used. Ms. Freedman commented no, Park and Pedal had this location first on their list because it is close to a bike path. Mr. Cecchinelli commented the location is near a utility box and asked if they utility box could be caged like the one at Albemarle. Commissioner Banks commented this idea sounds like a nice improvement.

Programs

- The summer Farmers Market season has ended- Thank you Judy Dore and the Farmers Market team for a great season
- Orienteering Program created by Channon Ames Program Manager
 - 4-week basics of orienteering at Cove
 - Orienteering maps for parks allow participants/families to visit multiple destinations and find landmarks with different levels of difficulty
- Aquatics
 - Pool at North is operational currently there is the Swim Team with modifications and a lifeguarding certification course is scheduled
- Culture
 - Time for Partners Program – meeting outdoors at Cove
 - Halloween Window Decorating
 - Linda Plaut memorial plaque – Donations from local businesses and Wegmans came in to cover the cost of affixing Linda's plaque to a boulder at Newton Centre Green

Facilities/parks

- Haywood House
 - Construction will be starting soon. The open space improvement plan calls for improvements to the path on Jackson Road to include a few seating alcoves along the path. Also looking into sidewalk and landscaping work to be specified.
- Jackson Rd Dunstan East

- Developer is providing mitigation funding for improvements to the Elm Street playground (West Newton Common) including replacement of play structure and upgrade of safety surfacing for accessibility.
- Bullough's Pond
 - Working with Bullough's Pond Association (BPA) to review retaining wall addition that requires approval and acceptance. The Conservation Commission issued a Notice of Violation to the BPA to rectify erosion issues resulting from the wall construction.
- Levingston cove
 - The city received 3 bidders for design development and permitting. The proposals are currently being reviewed and interviews will be conducted within the next few weeks.
- Waban Hill Reservoir
 - There will be a ribbon on October 28th at 2:30 PM. The Fiends of Heartbreak Hill Park at Waban Hill Reservoir will attend, along with Ward councilors, the Mayor and department staff.
- Gath Memorial Pool Renovation
 - Gath Memorial Pool has served Newton residents for over 50 + years. Though the building was recently renovated in 2013, the swimming pool and all attendant components (i.e. pump, filter, piping, decking, electrical, and chemical feeder) require complete renovation and replacement work to ensure continued enjoyment by the community. A renovation plan is needed to determine the cost to upgrade systems and restore the pool shell to stop water loss through leaks.
- Budget
 - Chairman Magni asked the status of the budget
 - Commissioner Banks stated there was a \$400K budget cut July 1, which affected playgrounds, maintenance water for irrigation, tree plantings and overtime. Tonight, there is a financial update scheduled by the Mayor with the Council. There will be a significant impact over the next few years due to Covid. Ms. Connolly commented there was some good news from the Governor today. Due to a level funded budget and a rainy-day fund, the budget is a bit better than expected.

3. Committee Reports

- Athletic Fields Committee
 - Mr. Dunker reported the first meeting with the group established a plan; determine what can be done right away, increase inventory of fields and develop a fee structure. Mr. Dunker hopes the Commission approves artificial turf the material used now is different than 10 years ago.
 - Commissioner Banks commented department staff will be assisting with the group and the CPC request for money. This plan will take time. Commissioner Banks has been asked to attend the Programs & Services meeting to report on field fees.
- Community Preservation Committee
 - Mr. Dunker reported the Episcopal Church next to Farlow Park requested funds for their steeple. The Council must approve
- Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee
 - Mr. Cecchinelli reported there is no movement the Council must approve the Open Space Plan.
- Farm Commission
 - Ms. Kerwin Derrick reported the Farm lost \$3K worth of lettuce to the deer this year. They are going to ask CPC for money; Mr. Dunker has been very helpful with the process.

- Commonwealth Golf Course
 - Mr. Neville reported revenue was up 15% this year. The maintenance building project is moving along. They would like intern housing. The fire suppression system choices are either wet or dry, the dry system needs a lot of maintenance the wet system requires a heated building.
 - Ms., Connolly asked if cross country skiing is allowed at the golf course. Mr. Neville replied the course does not make snow, but the gates are open during the winter for sledding and cross-country skiing.
- Off-Leash Area Working Group (OLAWG)
 - Commissioner Banks reported there was an on-site meeting at Hunnewell to discuss expanding the off-leash area. We are gathering input and exploring costs.
 - The ordinance has been updated to allow the Off-Leash Specialist to issue citations. A policy must be developed and discussed with the Police union.
- Crystal Lake Working Group (CLWG)
 - Ms. Stapleton reported currently the bids are being reviewed for Levingston Cove once this project is under way the working group will have a meeting.

4. New Business

- No new business

Meeting Adjourned at 8:19pm

Robin McLaughlin
Commission Secretary