

# Newton Parks & Recreation Commission

## Meeting Minutes

### On-Line Meeting

7:00 p.m. – Monday, September 21, 2020



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

**Also Attending:** Carol Stapleton, Recreation Manager, Luis Perez Demorizi, Open Space Coordinator, Nicole Freedman, Director of Transportation Planning

*Meeting began 7:02pm*

#### 1. Meeting Minutes

- June 2020 - Approved 8-0
- July 2020 – Approved 8-0

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

##### Park and Pedal / Blue Bikes

- Nicole Freedman, Director of Transportation Planning reported the City received a Mass DOT grant for Park and Pedal Stations. Two Blue Bike stations which are bike rental stations and two Park and Pedal stations which are drive to stations.
- The areas being reviewed for these stations: Lyons Field for the Park and Pedal station and Lowell Park for the Blue Bike station. The Blue Bike station is 32'x6' with 11 docks.
- Mr. Cecchinelli asked if the company is making money from the station. Ms. Freedman replied no, the fees do not cover the costs, the municipalities pay for the installation of the station.
- Mr. Stern asked if there will be advertising on the stations. Ms. Freedman stated advertisement would require Council approval.
- Mr. Stern asked if street parking is required. Ms. Freedman replied yes. Lyons Field carriage road functions as a parking lot. Mr. Demorizi replied the city is looking at the area to make it neater.
- Mr. Clarke asked why the bike pad is a hard surface and not permeable surface. Ms. Freedman replied the hard surface prevents the pad from sinking. Mr. Clarke commented if this is a hard surface it is considered a permanent structure and would require a public hearing. Chairman Magni agreed.
- Mr. Neville asked why in Upper Falls next to the Greenway meters were added to parking spots overnight without notice. Ms. Freedman had not heard about this.

##### Summer Programs & Events Recap

- Camp Echo Bridge virtual program - extending the program to fall
- Farmers Market Tuesday and Saturday at Newton South High School (NSHS)
  - There have been huge participation numbers
  - Staying at current location as NSHS is not in use

##### Field permitting

- Sheila Butts continues to assist schools, and other groups
- Challenge with state guidelines
- Continue to wait for NSHS lights to be completed by Eversource

##### Summer Fun at Lower Falls

- Well received, no issues, continued up to school start date

##### Culture Development

- Drive in movies: hosted 3, kudos to Newton Community Pride, Culture
- Chalk Art - Newton Cultural Council and Newton Community Pride

- Painted Newton AI Fresco barriers - Still in effect, some interest in looking at tents/heating systems. Likely not for park spots
- Summer concerts adversely impacted by tightened restrictions

#### **Facilities/Parks**

- Tennis/Pickleball/Basketball
  - In-house Courts task force assessing and prioritizing work
  - Newton Center Tennis - Successful season, Congrats to Mike Lewitt's team and Stephanie Lapham for managing this contract
  - The contract for lessons and clay court management will be going out to public bid

#### **Playgrounds**

- Playgrounds: approval for 4 accessibility mats, potential grant opportunity for more

#### **IPM Committee**

- Successful pilot study, still collating data to assess expanding to additional fields
- Congrats so far to the Maintenance and IPM team

#### **Waban Hill Reservoir**

- 1 remaining item (hydroseed), group fundraising for a bike rack and building clean-up

#### **Newton South HS Lights**

- Awaiting Eversource (backed up) to upgrade power supply. Working many channels to schedule

#### **Forte Park improvements**

- The city is finalizing agreement with the developer. Unsure of the timing but we expect to see developer funded improvements to Forte in the coming year. Development construction schedule has not been confirmed but developer confirmed they intend to begin pulling construction permits December 2020.

#### **Upper Falls Greenway/Petee Square**

- Looking at area improvements Sept 23 at 5:30 pm is a public hearing
- Mr. Neville commented the area should be a pocket park and the parking spots should be removed where the bike spaces are presently located

#### **Youth Sports**

- **Justin Traxler -Newton Girls Soccer**
  - Mr. Traxler thanked the Commissioner and the team for field scheduling allowing over 100 games this fall. The kids are happy.
  - The pilot program using herbicides is complete on Albemarle football field and the results are dramatic
  - Pinched on field space – Eversource is holding up NSHS lights project which would open-up more field space. Commissioner Banks commented the wind-storm put Eversource behind schedule.
  - Ms. Connolly commented MIAA started today and masks are required during youth sports but driving by Albemarle Field nobody was wearing a mask. Commissioner Banks commented if the group has a permit through the department, they are required to wear masks.

### **3. Committee Reports**

- Community Preservation Committee
  - Mr. Dunker reported the committee has funds for housing, park land and historic projects
- Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee
  - Mr. Feldhusen asked if Dunstan East and Jackson Rd projects have supplied the park amenities promised. Commissioner Banks will check on the status.
- Farm Commission
  - No update
- Commonwealth Golf Course
  - Maintenance facility project in process
  - Meeting tomorrow
  - Did not receive a positive response regarding the Mass Golf Association kids on Course program adjusting hours to accommodate participants.

- When management contract comes up for renewal it should be reviewed to add the above program and the fees should be reviewed.
- Off-Leash Area Working Group (OLAWG)
  - Cabot shade structure installed
  - Off-Leash specialist to receive a tablet to have access to dog license/OLA permit database while at parks
  - Hunnewell Park – looking into options to expand the off-leash area
  - Ordinance changed to include civil ticketing in addition to Police enforcement
- Crystal Lake Working Group (CLWG)
  - Treatment of the lake successful- there were no algae blooms this year
  - Levingston Cove is moving forward
  - Chairman Magni asked to discuss Swim at Your Own Risk at the next meeting.
- Athletic Fields Committee
  - Commissioner Banks reported the sub-committee is ready to begin. On the agenda, setting goals and reviewing field fees. Stake holders will be invited. Mr. Dunker reminded the group the Commission and Conservation Commission must approve the use of synthetic fields before appearing before the CPC requesting funds.

#### **4. New Business**

- No new business

Meeting Adjourned at 9:16pm

Robin McLaughlin  
Commission Secretary