



Programs & Services Committee Report

City of Newton In City Council

Wednesday, March 18, 2020

Present: Councilors Krintzman (Chair), Noel, Albright, Humphrey, Baker, Greenberg, Wright, and Ryan

City Staff: Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer; Joshua Morse, Director of Public Buildings; Nicole Banks, Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Culture; Luis Perez Demorizi, Open Space Coordinator; Doug McCarthy, Head Coach of Girls' Soccer at Newton South High School; Maureen Lemieux, Chief Financial Officer; Nathan Giacalone, Committee Clerk

#104-20 Appointment of Julie Winsett to the Urban Tree Commission

HER HONOR THE MAYOR appointing Julie Winsett, 33 Alexander Road, Newton Highlands, as a member of the URBAN TREE COMMISSION for a term to expire on March 1, 2023. (60 days: 04/03/20)

Action: Programs and Services Approved 8-0

Notes: The Committee reviewed Ms. Winsett's resume and having no objections or questions about her qualifications for the position, Councilor Noel moved to approve her appointment and the Committee voted 8-0 to uphold it.

#123-20 Appointment of Murali Vemula to the Health and Human Services Advisory Council

HER HONOR THE MAYOR appointing Murali Vemula, 59 E Quinobequin Road, Waban, as a member of the HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL for a term to expire on January 1, 2023. (60 days: 04/18/20)

Action: Programs and Services Approved 8-0

Notes: The Committee invited Mr. Vemula to address the Committee on why he is interested to join the Health and Human Services Advisory Council. Mr. Vemula said that he felt this would be a great opportunity to serve the community. He also said that he felt his healthcare background would be appropriate to contribute to important leadership bodies as well. Councilor Humphrey moved approval and the motion carried 8-0.

#154-20 **Appointment of Silka Rothschild to the Newton Community Education Commission**
COUNCILOR ALBRIGHT requesting the appointment of Silka Rothschild, 46 Alderwood Road, Newton, as a member of the NEWTON COMMUNITY EDUCATION COMMISSION for a term to expire on December 31, 2021. (60 days: 05/01/20)

Action: **Programs and Services Approved 8-0**

Notes: The Committee invited Ms. Rothschild to summarize why she is interested to join the Community Education Commission. Ms. Rothschild referred to her over 20 years of experience with community education, including work at Jewish community centers and as a summer camp director as well. She said that through her professional experience, she is comfortable both as a team player as well as with roles in leadership. Councilor Baker moved approval which carried 8-0.

#155-20 **Appointment of John R. Oliver to the Newton Community Education Commission**
COUNCILOR ALBRIGHT requesting the appointment of John R. Oliver, 14 Wyoming Road, Newton, as a member of the NEWTON COMMUNITY EDUCATION COMMISSION for a term to expire on December 31, 2021. (60 days: 05/01/20)

Action: **Programs and Services Approved 8-0**

Notes: The Committee invited Mr. Oliver to describe why he is interested in joining the Community Education Commission. Mr. Oliver said that he was motivated to give back to his community as this goal requires many citizens to get involved. He said that while he has no professional experience with education, he has worked as a marketing consultant for many years. A committee member said that this was a benefit to the Commission as it needs diverse backgrounds from many residents in order to be successful. Councilor Greenberg moved approval which carried 8-0.

Referred to Programs & Services, Public Facilities and Finance Committees

#200-20 **Accept \$270,000 of lighting equipment for Winkler Stadium Field**
HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to accept \$270,000 of lighting equipment as well as authorization to accept more funds to be expended on the installation of a field light system for the Newton South High School Winkler Stadium Field which is on Newton Parks and Recreation property. The funds are being donated by the Newton South High School Booster Club.

Action: **Programs and Services Approved 8-0**

Notes: Nicole Banks, Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Culture, Luis Perez Demorizi, Open Space Coordinator, and Doug McCarthy, Newton South High School, addressed the Committee on this item. Ms. Banks said that approval on this item would allow her and the Department to accept a donation of \$270,000 for the installation of new lights at Winkler Field. She further explained that the Parks and Recreation Commission has supported this item and the city will oversee the installation. Ms. Banks has met with the School Department to understand optimal uses for the project. Neighbors around the site have also been brought into the process with conference calls scheduled soon to go over

items which they still wish to discuss. Ms. Banks expressed her confidence that all parties would be able to come together and agree on a final plan. Questions, answers, and other comments were as follows:

Will the new lights be LED and sustainable?

Yes, they are Musco's latest energy efficient LED design. They are scheduled and will also allow complete control over when they are on or off.

What do all the red dots on the illumination summary mean?

Those dots show the illumination and how far the light spread will reach at night. Tree-top cover from the forest will prevent most of the light from hitting the ground. By the time the light reaches the houses on Brandeis Road it will be equivalent to that of a single porchlight. Shielding on the lights helps keep the light directed on and toward the field.

Will there be limits for night games and other events to control the noise levels affecting the surrounding houses?

The Parks, Recreation and Culture Department is currently working to update the field use policy to cover the lights and sound systems for the field. This update will be complete before the new lights are installed.

Is the neighborhood group on board with the proposed night uses of the field?

There are a few more discussions in the works, but concerns over the light and sound from night games will be addressed.

How many days a week will the field be used?

The current intention is to have about 25 night games a year spread throughout the fall and spring seasons. Games will be scheduled to finish roughly around nine o'clock at night. As events finish, the lights will dim to 50 percent for 15 minutes as patrons egress the field.

Has this project been reviewed for accordance to Newton's light trespass notice?

The updated policy will address the latest time off as well as any regulations to pertain to the sound system for what use it will allow. The sound system will only be able to be used for games, not practices. Residents have been taken on a tour of the perimeter of the light spillage area as well. The sound will also be directed towards the field and grandstands in order to minimize spillage into the residential area.

Does tree leaf cover have an impact on the light spillage?

No.

For the 25 nights a year the field is projected to be used, will this be exclusive to Newton South sports or could other rec leagues use the field?

Newton South and other youth league sports will use the field the most. Other leagues will have to get approval from the Parks and Recreation Commission. It can be permitted the same as other fields in town.

Who else needs to sign off on and approve this project?

Both the Parks and Recreation Commission and the School Department will need to give approval to this item. Now that the boosters have raised the funds the lights will be purchased directly. The final project timeline will be finalized with the school department and installation is projected to occur over the summer.

How will this project aid the city in resting other fields?

These lights will grant additional evening play time that adds more hours and allows the artificial turf field to take on more of the burden from other fields in Newton.

Councilor Ryan moved approval which carried 8-0.

#184-20 Request to authorize the use of remote participation in Council meetings
COUNCILOR ALBRIGHT requesting to authorize the use of remote participation for City Council meetings.

Action: Programs and Services Held 8-0

Notes: Chair Krintzman introduced this item to the Committee. He said that it was docketed in response to the ongoing COVID-19 health crisis to allow the Council and committees to meet remotely for the safety of both its members and the public. However, Governor Baker's March 13 executive order on remote municipal meetings overrode the need for this item. Chair Krintzman said that there may be uses for the Committee to explore in remote participation, but he wished to hold the item until after the state of emergency. The Committee's comments were as follows:

There was general agreement to hold the item until a later date.

There still needs to be an avenue for the public to participate.

The policy is wise, but the legal backing is still unclear.

After the state of emergency is lifted, how will the Council address any fears of exposure to COVID-19 in a possible gap between lifting of the state of emergency and passage of remote participation?

A quorum would still be needed to hold the meeting.

Councilor Albright motioned to hold which carried 8-0.

#48-20 Request for a discussion regarding Senior Services outreach

COUNCILORS ALBRIGHT AND GREENBERG requesting a discussion with the Department of Senior Services regarding outreach and services to the growing number of Newton residents who are 85 and older yet living alone. Discussion should focus on the City's efforts to provide a program; whether through current programs or proposed alternatives.

Action: Programs and Services Held 8-0

Notes: Chair Krintzman introduced the item. He said that this item was docketed in order to address the needs of vulnerable senior communities in Newton. Docketed long before the COVID-19 emergency, the appropriate staff was unable to attend the virtual meeting and Chair Krintzman wished to hold the item until a later date.

A committee member expressed disappointment that this discussion would not take place tonight, stating that with the emphasis on social distancing to hinder the spread of COVID-19, isolated elderly require all the more attention.

Councilor Albright moved hold which carried 8-0.

Referred to Programs & Services and Finance Committees

#199-20 Transfer of \$250,000 to prepared for COVID-19

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to transfer the sum of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) from June 30, 2019 Certified Free Cash to Acct #0121030-543500 Emergency Operations-Supplies account for the purpose of being prepared to act, should the need arise.

Action: Programs and Services Approved 8-0

Notes: Maureen Lemieux, Chief Financial Officer, addressed the Committee on this item. She said that this item was docketed in order to transfer the large sums of funds necessary for Newton to prepare against COVID-19. Ms. Lemieux said that in the past 10 days, Newton has done much work to address the spread of the disease. She emphasized that events are moving at a fast pace with states of emergency being declared at the local, state, and federal levels and that she is hoping to get this item approved as fast as possible. Due to the rapid pace of changing developments, Ms. Lemieux said that the executive office may ask for amendments on this item in the future. So far, the City has spent over \$55,000 on supplies such as masks and sanitizer. Many of these expenditures will be reimbursed through FEMA, MEMA, or other organizations. In addition, she reiterated that City Hall is still working to serve the public through remote work and a skeleton crew. Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer, and Joshua Morse, Director of Public Buildings, also joined after Ms. Lemieux was finished introducing the item. Questions, answers, and comments are as follows:

The city administration needs to focus on public information to clearly inform residents about everything they might need in this present emergency. A common protocol of advice would do this.

There should also be protocols for where the ambulance service is taking patients. The city should also offer more authoritative guidance to city staff and first responders, as well as to the public regarding where and when COVID-19 tests are available.

Is there a certain tipping point where Newton switches from free cash to the rainy-day fund?

Presently, City Hall is hoping not to have to use the rainy-day fund anticipating many related challenges moving forward. The disruption from the virus has led to near-zero interest rates, rooms/meals tax revenues almost eliminated, and a declining car consumption which means few excise tax revenues next year. Ms. Lemieux said that these few reasons demonstrate why the rainy-day fund should be left alone for now. She further said that in the 10 days since being docketed, COVID-19 conditions have changed rapidly.

You mentioned that City Hall is currently operating with minimal staff with lots of jobs curtailed, is City Hall planning on laying off any employees or furloughing others?

There is no final answer on this yet but appropriate city staff members are hard at work trying to come up with a response. Currently, they are trying to establish the clear lines between full and part time employees along with emergency ones and those who cannot perform their jobs under social distancing practices. The City wants to avoid creating any further financial distress for its employees. Besides the library and schools, many departments are still trying to work at or near-capacity through various means such as rotating staff, telecommuting, and inner-office social distancing.

With the schools closed, is there a policy concerning what to do with the hourly workers?

Talks are currently underway with their union but there is no final decision yet.

Is Newton's purchasing department having trouble obtaining supplies?

Mr. Morse said that conditions are tough right now as supplies such as gloves, masks, sanitizer, and other pieces of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) are in high demand. While big suppliers are having trouble keeping up, Mr. Morse has said that he has met success in reaching out to smaller ones. The City is also working to obtain high-level credit cards for key purchasing individuals to have more agency to acquire the necessary supplies.

Councilor Albright moved approval which carried 8-0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:17pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Josh Krintzman, Chair