



Programs & Services Committee Report

City of Newton In City Council

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

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

City Staff: Carol Stapleton, Rec Program Manager; Jonathan Yeo, Chief Executive Officer; David Olson, City Clerk/Clerk of the Council; Nadia Khan, Assistant Clerk of the Council; Nicole Banks, Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Culture; Patricia Schiavoni, Assistant Elections Clerk; Christopher Sullivan, Assistant Records Clerk; Nathan Giacalone, Committee Clerk

#430-20 **Appointment of Randall Johnson to the Parks and Recreation Commission**
HER HONOR THE MAYOR appointing RANDALL JOHNSON, 267 Upland Road, Newton, as an Alternate member of the PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION for a term to expire on September 30, 2022. (60 Days: 01/01/2021)

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

Notes: The Chair welcomed Mr. Johnson to speak and introduce himself and describe why he is interested in serving on the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC). Mr. Johnson said that he grew up in Newton and recreation has always been a large part of his life in the city as he has played on many rec teams and was also a lifeguard at the Gath and Newton North pools. Graduating high school, he earned the Officer Robert Braceland Senior Youth Award scholarship, something that he was very thankful to the department for. Now he is a parent and a dog owner, experiences which make him familiar with the city's recreational facilities both for people and pets. Mr. Johnson still coaches little league teams and is a member of the police reform task force. He is also an Eagle Scout.

Discussion:

Q: Will you be able to use your business and entrepreneurial background to help find more ways to raise money for the parks?

A: My career has been in sales with multiple large firms, so I hope to be able to put this experience to use for the city.

Q: What has been your experience with the off-leash dog areas?

A: Both good and bad as a lot depends on the behavior of each dog. Most of the other regulars at the dog parks are familiar with all of these issues. It would be great to see these areas expand.

C: It is good to have appointees from a range of different backgrounds as their perspectives will all complement each other.

Commissioner Banks spoke in support of Mr. Johnson and the other PRC appointees on the meeting agenda, saying that she has met with all of them via Zoom and has had an opportunity to get to know them and learn more about the skills they will bring forward.

Councilor Albright moved approval which carried 8-0.

#431-20 Appointment of Ellen Gibson to the Parks and Recreation Commission

HER HONOR THE MAYOR appointing ELLEN GIBSON, 41 Vernon Street, Newton, as the Ward 1 member of the PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION for a term to expire on September 30, 2023. (60 Days: 01/01/2021)

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

Notes: The Chair welcomed Ms. Gibson to speak and introduce herself and describe why she is interested in serving on the PRC. Ms. Gibson said that she has been a Newton resident for 23 years where she has raised her family. Her children have played sports in the various rec leagues and Ms. Gibson has volunteered in numerous roles within the school system, such as serving in PTO leadership and being a classroom aide. She worked with the Parks & Recreation Department to improve open space and safety conditions at the Underwood Playground. Ms. Gibson was also elected twice to the Newton School Committee. She voiced her agreement with Mr. Johnson about the state of Newton's dog parks and the issues they have which need to be addressed.

Discussion:

Q: If you are familiar with the conditions of Newton's tennis courts, will you make improving them a priority?

A: Yes, these courts need a lot of attention.

The Chair added that there is an ongoing conversation regarding athletic field rental fees that also requires attention.

Councilor Greenberg motioned approval which carried 8-0.

#432-20 **Appointment of Elizabeth Wilkinson to the Parks and Recreation Commission**
HER HONOR THE MAYOR appointing ELIZABETH WILKINSON, 14 Trowbridge Street, Newton Centre, as the Ward 6 member of the PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION for a term to expire on September 30, 2023. (60 Days: 01/01/2021)

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

Notes: The Chair welcomed Ms. Wilkinson to speak and introduce herself and describe why she is interested in serving on the PRC. Ms. Wilkinson said that she has been involved with open space projects in Newton for several years, including as a member of the Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee. She has also worked with the school system as a former PTO president and as a Library Director.

Discussion:

The Committee expressed its appreciation for the appointment of Ms. Wilkinson to the PRC. It also thanked her for the role she played in the acquisition of the Webster Woods property for open space preservation.

Councilor Noel moved approval which carried 8-0.

#451-20 **Reappointment of Arthur Magni to the Parks and Recreation Commission**
HER HONOR THE MAYOR reappointing ARTHUR MAGNI, 107 Mount Vernon, West Newton, as the Ward 2 member of the PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION for a term to expire on September 30, 2023. (60 Days: 01/15/2021)

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

Notes: Councilor Albright moved approval which carried 8-0.

#452-20 **Reappointment of Byron Dunker to the Parks and Recreation Commission**
HER HONOR THE MAYOR reappointing BYRON DUNKER, 10 Southwick Road, Newton, as the Ward 5 member of the Parks and Recreation Commission for a term to expire on September 30, 2023. (60 Days: 01/15/2021)

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

Notes: Councilor Humphrey moved approval which carried 8-0.

#453-20 **Reappointment of John Neville to the Parks and Recreation Commission**
HER HONOR THE MAYOR reappointing JOHN NEVILE, 68 High Street, Newton Upper Falls, as an Alternate member of the Parks and Recreation Commission for a term to expire on September 30, 2023. (60 Days: 01/15/2021)

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

Notes: Councilor Humphrey moved approval which carried 8-0.

#449-20 Request to set the date for a special election

PRESIDENT ALBRIGHT requesting the setting of a date for a special election to fill vacancies on the City Council in the positions of Councilor-at-Large, Ward 1 due to the death of Councilor Ciccone; and Councilor-at-Large, Ward 2 due to the resignation of Councilor Auchincloss.

Action: Programs & Services Approved 8-0 to set the special election for Tuesday, March 16, 2021 with nomination papers to be available beginning on December 29, 2020

Notes: The Committee was joined for this item by Mr. Olson, Ms. Khan, Ms. Schiavoni, and Mr. Sullivan. Mr. Olson said that these three staff members will be running the special election. He said that an amendment to the state's recent budget bill allows Newton to use mail-in voting and to eliminate the checkout table in the election. However, early in-person voting will not be offered. Mr. Sullivan said that after discussions with Councilors Albright and Krantzman, the two optimal dates for the special election are either March 9 or March 16, 2021, both of which fall on Tuesday. He and Ms. Khan said that while there is a minimum amount of time before an election by which nomination papers need to be available, the Council can make them available earlier as soon as it takes a final vote on the date. The papers need to be returned to the Clerk's Office at least 35 days before the election. The earliest possible date to make papers available would be December 29. Mr. Olson also provided a chart of pertinent information for each possible date (attached).

Discussion:

C: It would be better to choose the later date to allow for COVID vaccination and to give extra flexibility to the Clerk's Office. It also gives the public more of an opportunity to meet the candidates.

Q: What is the latest date possible to hold the election?

A: March 23.

Q: What happens in the case of a blizzard or snow emergency in which residents are ordered to stay off the roads?

A: In the case of such a snow emergency, a judge would need to postpone the election. This situation is more common in western Massachusetts so there is a process in place, but it has never happened in Newton. The election would be postponed to the soonest possible date.

Q: What is the status of early voting?

A: It was asked to get early in-person voting but it was too late to add this to the budget bill. However, Newton's Home Rule petition regarding early voting is still pending so it has not been completely shut down. While there has been broad support among communities for mail-in elections it has not been as much for early in-person voting. It is projected that the special election will run fine without early in-person voting.

C: The earlier date in March would be better as in the event of a snow emergency it would not alter the schedule too much.

Q: If the election was held on March 16th, when would nomination papers be available?

A: They would have to be available by January 5 at the latest, but the Council is able to make them available earlier.

It was clarified that one must be a resident of the appropriate ward on the date that papers are made available in order to be eligible to run.

Mr. Olson said that the signature gathering process could be done electronically, but wet signatures needed to be collected so that they can be scanned or photographed. This is possible due to the ongoing state of emergency from COVID.

Councilor Baked moved to set the date for the special election to March 16 with nomination papers available on December 29, 2020 which carried 8-0.

Nomination papers must be returned to the Clerk's Office by January 26, 2021.

Referred to the Programs & Services, Zoning & Planning & Finance Committees

#487-20

Request to transfer Weights & Measures inspector position to ISD

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting to transfer the Weights & Measures inspector position from the Health and Human Services Department to the Inspectional Services Department to more accurately reflect the nature of the position, to add one temporary full-time employee (to be funded by existing ISD funds available due to vacancies). Additionally, requesting that City Ordinance Section 12-18 €, which details the position of Weights & Measures Inspector, be moved to Section 5-16 which covers ISD responsibilities. To fund the last half of FY20, this request includes a transfer of forty-three thousand five hundred dollars (\$43,500) from H&HS Weights & Measures Acct #0510110-511001 to Inspectional Services Full Time Salaries.

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

Notes: Mr. Yeo joined the committee to present item. He said that with the current Weights & Measures Inspector, Mitch Baker retiring, both HHS and ISD think that the Weights & Measures inspector position should move to ISD. The reason is because the current plan is to have HHS focus on health issues and ISD is a better fit for this office as it is facility and equipment oriented. Mr. Yeo said that the office is self-sufficient and Commissioner Lojek was comfortable with the move. This is a similar setup to other surrounding communities. This item moves the money and the ordinance over to ISD's jurisdiction. Mr. Yeo said that a temporary FTE is requested to cover the overlap with the new inspector.

Councilor Albright moved approval which carried 8-0.

Chair Krintzman said that with no pressing business, the scheduled meeting on December 23 will be cancelled before resuming the regularly scheduled meetings in January.

The meeting adjourned at 7:58pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Josh Krintzman, Chair

TIME DESCRIPTION			LEGAL
12/29/2020	1/5/2021	Nomination Papers available.	21 DAYS TO COLLECT
1/19/2021	1/26/2021	5:00 PM Election Commission Last hour and day to file Nomination Papers and a statement of candidacy (on nomination papers) with the	MGL Ch. 53 § 7 14 DAYS PRIOR TO FILING WITH CITY CLERK
2/2/2021	2/9/2021	Election Commission files papers with City Clerk.	MGL Ch. 53 § 10 35 DAYS BEFORE ELECTION
2/2/2021	2/9/2021	Mailed Ballot Applications available	
2/4/2021	2/11/2021	5:00 PM Nomination Papers. Last hour and day for Objections to and/or Withdrawal of	MGL Ch. 55B § 7 2 DAYS AFTER
2/4/2021	2/11/2021	5:15 PM Election. Drawing for Ballot Positions for the City Preliminary Drawing to be held in the City Clerk's Office.	Charter 8-3(c) 2 DAYS AFTER
2/11/2021	2/18/2021	Ballots printed and mailing begins	7 days after drawing
2/17/2021	2/24/2021	8:00 PM Election. Last hour and day to register to vote for the Special	MGL Ch. 51 § 26 20 DAYS BEFORE
03/01 - 03/05	03/08 - 03/12	8:30 am - 5:00 pm Early In-person voting	5 weekdays
3/8/2021	3/15/2021	12:00 PM Last hour and day to apply for an Absentee Ballot.	MGL Ch. 54 § 89 1 DAY BEFORE
3/9/2021	3/16/2021	7:00 am – 8:00 pm CITY SPECIAL ELECTION	
Tuesday	Tuesday		