

Newton Parks & Recreation Commission

Meeting Minutes

On-Line Meeting

7:00 p.m. – Monday, November 16, 2020



Attending: Chairman Magni, Commissioner Banks, Byron Dunker, Patty Kerwin Derrick, Melisa Sommer, Midge Connolly, Jack Neville, Sam Figler

Also Attending: Michael Clarke, Carol Stapleton, Beth Wilkinson, Randy Johnson, Gloria Gavis, Ellen Gibson

Meeting began 7:00pm

1. Meeting Minutes

- October 2020 – Approved 7-0

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

- Beth Wilkinson, Randy Johnson, Gloria Gavis, Ellen Gibson have been selected to be members of the Parks & Recreation Commission. Their applications are going to the Council for review and approval.

Programs & Events

- Supporting Partners
 - Daycare and afterschool program licenses, local businesses operating in parks and Al Fresco sites
- Tennis season extension
 - Lights at South courts kept on through Nov. 15 through 8pm
- Winter Farmers Market
 - Pre-orders are available for contactless pickup at Cold Spring Park, Tuesdays 3-5pm
- Orienteering
 - Orienteering course being installed at Cove. The Boy Scouts volunteered to complete the project.
 - Orienteering maps for parks allow participants/families to visit multiple destinations/levels
- Aquatics
 - Swim team registration is full, returning team members prioritized
- Ice Skating
 - Indoor ice-skating lessons with Bay State Skating School delayed due to rink closure. Rinks have reopened
- Athletes Unlimited
 - Winter season operating virtually with weekly themes and full schedule
- Culture
 - Time for Partners – indoor sessions with singing are not allowed under current guidelines
 - Holiday Lights at City Hall – Tuesday, December 8, 5:30-6pm, this is a drive by event
- Spring/Summer Planning has begun

Facilities/Parks

- NSHS Lights
 - Project complete. NSHS had their first game under the lights. Delays were unfortunate, Eversource was digging out of a backlog of storm related work. Light quality is amazing.

- Gath Memorial Pool
 - Season end facility preparations completed. Topped up with water and cover secured.
 - Renovation project – writing RFQ for design/engineering to be posted first week in December. Friends of group ready to assist.
- Bullough's Pond
 - Bullough's Pond Association (BPA) is working with P&R and Conservation to rectify erosion issues resulting from construction of a retaining wall. BPA will write an educational piece notifying abutters that clear cutting/vista pruning is not allowed.
- Levingston cove
 - P&R staff have completed review of all bids received. Conservation is completing their review. Interviews will be scheduled with contractors to review bid details.
 - Topographic survey has been completed and will be provided to winning consultant.
- Haywood house
 - P&R Commission approved project in 2019. Staff provided input and details on our needs and requests. (ex. Bench style)

3. Committee Reports

- Athletic Fields Committee
 - Mr. Dunker reported the group is developing a mission statement. The group will be reviewing fees and fee structure. Sheila Butts, Permit Manager has put together a report for review. Derek Mannion the Superintendent of Maintenance gave a presentation at the meeting on the fields and maintenance involved.
 - Funding and funding options will be reviewed and discussed. If CPA funds are going to be requested the group will need a plan and a partnership
 - Representatives from each league have been invited to the December meeting.
- Community Preservation Committee
 - Mr. Dunker reported the CPC has been busy with the steeple request from the church in Newton Corner, gutter request for the Kenrick house and the fence at the Jackson Homestead.
 - Chairman Magni stated Mr. Dunkers term on the CPC has expired and asked if anyone would like to nominate Mr. Dunker as representative.

Mr. Neville nominated Mr. Dunker as the CPC representative for the P & R Commission.

Ms. Connolly seconded the motion.

Motion passed 5-0

- Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee
 - Position for Open Space representative needs to be filled. Commissioner Banks recommended waiting for the new members to be confirmed before filling the position.
 - The Open Space plan has gone to the State for approval, which means the City can now apply for grants. However, the state is asking for an inventory of all parks with accessibility issues. Luis Perez Demorizi, Open Space Coordinator is working with Jini Fairley, ADA Coordinator to complete the inventory.
- Farm Commission
 - Ms. Kerwin-Derrick reported the Farm Commission has a new chairperson, Michael Goldin.
 - The Farm lost between \$80-\$90 thousand dollars this year due to COVID-19
- Commonwealth Golf Course
 - Mr. Neville reported the maintenance building project is in process. The questions Mr. Neville has is regarding the fire suppression system, the type, wet

- or dry, and who is paying for the maintenance of the system, the management company, or the city.
- The current management contract heavily favors the management company and should be reviewed and updated by the city. Commissioner Banks will check on contract, when it is to be renewed and establish a committee to review the contract.
- Off-Leash Area Working Group (OLAWG)
 - Hunnewell Park Off-leash Area upgrade: Collecting input from users of the park and neighbors about additional fencing in the park. OLAWG will review and decide which plan will work at the Park and then be presented to the Commission.
 - Carol Stapleton has been doing a great job with the group and assisting Peter Mazzapica the Off-leash Recreation Specialist. The Commissioner asked Ms. Stapleton for an update. Ms. Stapleton reported Mr. Mazzapica has been issued an iPad with the dog license database included to help him when he is out at the parks.
- Crystal Lake Working Group (CLWG)
 - The group will meet after the RFP for Levingston Cove has been reviewed by staff and a decision has been made.

4. New Business

- Michael Clarke, former alternate P & R Commission member made a motion to rename Newton Highlands Playground the “DeRubeis Field & Woods”.
- Mr. Dunker reminded Mr. Clarke a policy could not be created and put in place for the naming of parks because determining the criteria was too difficult
- Chairman Magni commented the deeds would have to be reviewed and the Council would be involved on any recommendations
- Mr. Clarke state there is a naming policy in place
- Ms. Connolly stated she has known Commissioner DeRubeis for a long time and respects him and the job he has done, but there are many other holes to be filled.
- No action was taken on the motion, as the comment was not recognized as a motion
- Mr. Clarke also requested and volunteered to create a database on what locations/parks are named and what could be named. No action taken, as the comment was not recognized as a motion.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:08pm

Robin McLaughlin
Commission Secretary

