

Newton Parks & Recreation Commission

Meeting Minutes

Zoom On-Line Meeting

7:00 p.m. – Monday, June 21, 2021



Attending: Chairman Magni, Vice-Chair Dunker, Commissioner Banks, Randy Johnson, Beth Wilkinson, Ellen Gibson, Gloria Gavis, Jack Neville, Midge Connolly

Also Attending: Luis Perez Demorizi, Open Space Coordinator, Carol Stapleton, Recreation Manager

Meeting began 7:00pm

1. **Meeting Minutes -May-** Accepted 8-0
2. **Commissioner's Reports on Programs, Forestry and Maintenance**
 - Today was the opening day of the pool and lake. Commissioner Banks wants to thank the Public Buildings department for preparing both facilities for the opening.
 - Work is being done on the left beach at Crystal Lake where there is some erosion. Ms. Connolly asked if the timbers were being removed without a plan for the erosion. Commissioner Banks commented we are working with the Conservation Commission the area will be kept in its natural state for now.
 - Gath Pool has been approved for analysis to refurbish or build new
 - Working on the plan for a splash pad with Northland, our team will review the plan and manage the splash pad.
 - Grounds maintenance is piloting an alternate trash receptacle. Phil Arpino, Assistant Superintendent of Beautification presented the proposal to the Sustainable Waste Commission.
 - The IPM plan public information sessions were held the beginning of June. Five athletic fields are scheduled for treatment. Mr. Dunker commented, overall, the feedback was positive.
 - The department budget has been approved. There were some cutbacks but also additions (+800K) in Forestry, Culture, and athletic fields. Playground funding has also been restored.
 - Deputy Commissioner Welch is working on a tree canopy master plan
 - July 4th activities are posted on-line
 - The Fields sub-committee is working on tier 2 fees. Mr. Dunker commented Ms. Butts is creating a model. Ms. Connolly commented this is a complex issue; the group needs to come to a good conclusion.
 - Ms. Gibson asked for a tennis court update. Commissioner Banks reported staff has a plan for crack sealing. FONT, Friends of Newton Tennis has submitted recommendations. The High school courts are heavily used. We must prioritize the courts.

3. St. Mary of Carmen Festival- Public Hearing

- Chuck Proia, Festival Chairman presented a proposal for the 86th annual festival. The dates of the festival are July 14-July 18.
- One emailed comment was received concerning crime and alcohol. Mr. Proia responded there are police on site every night of the carnival, and the crime rate is not related to the carnival.
- Ms. Gibson commented Mr. Proia addressed the emailed comments thoroughly and quickly.
- Ms. Gibson asked if the amusement vendor is the same as in past years. Mr. Proia replied yes.

Mr. Dunker made the motion to accept the proposal as presented. Ms. Connolly seconded the motion. Ms. Gavis recused herself from the vote. Motion passed 7-0-1

4. Indigenous People Day – Informational

- Kerry Prasad presented the proposal for the indigenous People Day event scheduled Monday October 11, 9am-6pm at Albemarle Playground. This is a cultural and ceremonial event including Indigenous artists and performers.
- Mr. Johnson asked the expected attendance. Ms. Prasad replied the group expects around 200 people. Mr. Johnson asked why so few. Dr Flores replied this is the first event and the Boston Marathon is scheduled the same day, so the group wanted to keep it limited.
- Mr. Dunker stated his concern regarding any field damage. Commissioner Banks commented, Derek Mannion the Superintendent of Maintenance will meet with the group to discuss the location of irrigation and the best areas to set up.

Ms. Gibson made the motion to move the proposal to a public hearing. Ms. Wilkinson seconded the motion. Ms. Gavis recused herself from the vote. The motion passed 7-0-1

5. Committee Reports

- **Athletic Fields Committee – B. Dunker**
 - Luis Perez Demorizi, Open Space Coordinator presented the Athletic Fields Capital Improvement Plan.
 - Chairman Magni asked this is a broad vision each project will come to the Commission over time. Mr. Demorizi replied yes
 - Ms. Gavis asked when the community input would be heard. Mr. Demorizi replied as each area becomes the focus the public will have input.
 - Ms. Wilkinson asked if there is a budget for sand. It was mentioned at the IPM meeting that sand is a good base. Commissioner Banks commented we would look at that option during the design phase of the project.
 - Commissioner Banks commented artificial turf at Forte Park is the first choice, but we need to maintain the existing artificial turf fields we already have.
- **Community Preservation Committee -B. Dunker**
 - Levingston Cove project is approved. Once the construction documents are complete, they will be presented to the Conservation Commission
- **Urban Tree Commission – B. Wilkinson**
 - More than 900 trees planted
 - Budget looks good
 - Looking into restoring the planting program
- **Farm Commission – B. Wilkinson**
 - No report
- **Commonwealth Golf Course – J. Neville**
 - Contract renewal will be going out to bid in Sept/October
- **Commission Manual Update – M. Feldhusen**
 - Currently working with the Law Department
- **Off-Leash Area Working Group (OLAWG) – Commissioner**

- Working on the Hunnewell off-leash area expansion project
- **Arts & Culture – G. Gavis**
 - Working on the 4th of July activities and summer concerts

6. New Business

- Mr. Johnson asked the status of lifeguards. Ms. Stapleton replied currently there are 12 lifeguards at Crystal Lake, usually there are 22. Commissioner Banks commented there is a rolling hiring process and there are no camps or swim lessons at Crystal Lake this season.
- Commissioner Banks commented the Community Centers are opening back up and the department is reviewing the fee structure. The goal is to keep fees consistent but low enough but cover building costs.
- Mr. Dunker suggested comparing fees for other buildings, schools charge fees. Commissioner commented current fees are around \$25-\$50. Mr. Johnson replied those fees seem low. Ms. Connolly commented we need to take care of the facilities.
- Mr. Neville commented The Friends of Hemlock Gorge contacted the area council and feel they should not be charged due to the work they do in the community.
- Commissioner Banks suggested a special meeting in August for the Indigenous People Day proposal public hearing. All present agreed.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:48pm
Respectfully submitted by
Robin McLaughlin
Commission Secretary