

Newton Parks & Recreation Commission

Meeting Minutes

Zoom On-Line Meeting

7:00 p.m. – Monday, Sept 20, 2021

DRAFT – NOT APPROVED BY COMMISSION AS OF 10/01/21

Attending: Chairman Magni, Commissioner Banks, Vice-Chair Byron Dunker, Randy Johnson, Melissa Sommer, Beth Wilkinson, Gloria Gavris, Jack Neville, Sam Figler

Meeting began 7:00pm

1. **Meeting Minutes** -June & August – Approved 8-0
2. **Commissioner's Report**
 - Albemarle Bridge – bridge was taken out by a vehicle. A temporary bridge will be installed in October. There will be road closures during school pick-up and drop-off
 - February 24, 2020 the Commission approved a proposal for the Newton Early Childhood Program at 687 Watertown Street, Albemarle Playground to expand the playground, the Commissioner is requesting that work to restore the grounds behind the playground be put on hold to allow the Gath Pool renovation evaluation to be completed. Chairman Magni stated that a vote is not required as it remains as status quo and any changes would be brought before the Commission for review and approval.
 - Levingston Cove Project- there is a meeting Thursday night, there is a small group that disagrees with fishing platform. An informational sheet is being prepared to answer the questions.
 - We are happy to announce Luis Perez Demorizi has been promoted to Director of Parks & Open Space and Mr. Demorizi is also in the process of hiring an Assistant Director of Parks & Open Space.
 - Mr. Perez Demorizi is working on the RFQ for a design engineer for the athletic fields improvement project.

3. **New Art Donation – Waban – Informational**

- Sallee Lipshutz, 24 Radcliff Rd, Waban is requesting permission on behalf of Waban Common Inc., to install a donated, commissioned bronze sculpture of a 7.5'x2' caterpillar. The sculpture would be installed on a concrete base in a shaded area of Waban Common.
- Ms. Gavis asked the timing of the installation. Ms. Lipshutz replied next spring.
- Ms. Wilkinson asked if this will be a fanciful sculpture or actual depiction of a caterpillar. Ms. Lipshutz replied it looks very similar to a black swallow tail caterpillar.
- Ms. Gavis asked as a new Friends group, will the group be responsible for maintenance or will the City? Ms. Lipshutz stated the group will work with the Law Department.
- Tom Elkind, member of the Friends group asked the ownership to be classified as a charitable contribution
- Commissioner Banks commented Paula Gannon, Director of Cultural Development will coordinate with the group and the Law Department regarding the ownership of the sculpture. Luis Perez Demorizi, Director of Parks and Open Space will work with the group on placement

Mr. Dunker made the motion to move the proposal to a public hearing. Mr. Figler seconded the motion. Motion passed 8-0

4. **Wellington Playground – Informational-** (see presentation slides below)

- Rose Micozzi & Amanda Kavalcik presented the attached proposal for a new playground in Wellington Park. The Friends of Wellington Park (FWP) have been working through the process of selecting a playground equipment vendor with Stephanie Lapham, Recreation Manager, CPSI. The Friends group and neighbors will be raising the money for the playground purchase and installation.
- Ms. Lapham commented the cost will be a little more than what is listed on the presentation
- Mr. Dunker asked about the maintenance of the playground and is there a formal acceptance of the equipment required by the city. Ms. Lapham commented the city owns the equipment and the maintenance. There is no formal acceptance required.
- Commissioner Banks commented:
 - Luis Perez Demorizi, Director of Parks and Open Space will work with the group regarding the placement
 - Stephanie Lapham will work with the group on surfacing and maintenance
- Commissioner Banks requested the FWP send a letter documenting their vote and approval of this proposal. And consider talking to kids in the neighborhood. Ms. Kavalcik commented she is at the park daily and has spoken with the kids. The kids are very excited, and a few wanted to join the FWP group.
- Ms Gavis asked if they are using a location that is underutilized. M. Lapham reported the area is 220'Lx75'W, this proposal is taking 59'Lx45'W.
- Chairman Magni inquired about the plastic toys being brought and left at the playground, is this issue being addressed? Ms. Kavalick responded yes, the area is being decluttered and hopefully the new structure will discourage these toys.
- Ms. Wilkinson requested feedback from other communities that may have used a similar apparatus. Mr. Dunker suggested the vendor should be able to assist with this request.

- Mr. Neville asked how soon the funds will be available. Ms. Kavalick stated they are a third of the way there. Ms. Micocozzi stated the timing, if approved by the Commission, the Newton conservators will collect the funds for a build in 2022.
- Ms. Lapham commented depending on her availability the build may happen in 2023.

*Ms. Garris made the motion to move the proposal to a public hearing. Mr. Dunker seconded the motion.
Motion passed 8-0*

5. Dog Party at Hunnewell Off-leash Area – Informational

- Reginald Merome submitted a proposal for a Yappy Hour at Hunnewell Off-Leash Area. Sponsored by Big Dog Walking Company for their employees. There will be food, games, raffles, and music. Big Dog Walking Company will have a table set up to promote their services.
- Commissioner Banks asked if the event will be in the off-leash area or parks side. Mr. Merome commented the New Balance side. Commissioner Banks stated an off-leash permit will be required. Mr. Merome commented all dogs will be on-leash.
- Mr. Johnson asked how many are expected to attend? Mr. Merome stated 40-50 participants
- Ms. Stapleton commented parking is limited. Mr. Merome replied the participants will be parking in their garage down the street.
- Chairman magni commented a public hearing will be required. The date on the application of October 22, may not work. The public hearing will be scheduled October. Mr. Merome commented the date is flexible and can be pushed out to November.

*Ms. Wilkinson made the motion to move this proposal to a public hearing. Mr. Dunker seconded the motion.
Motion passed 8-0*

6. Fees

- **Building Rentals**
 - Sean Nickerson, Aquatics Director/Building Manager presented the proposed building rental fees.
 - PRC has four buildings that may be rented by the public or organizations when there are no other programs or events scheduled.
 - Pellegrini Fieldhouse
 - Albemarle Fieldhouse
 - Lower Falls Community Center
 - Emerson Community Center
 - Rental process:
 - The individual or organization must create an account in our reservation software "MyRec" The customer can access the information via our website. By creating an account, we capture all their information, and they can select the facility, date, and time desired.
 - The program manager gets an email notification with the request and it can be approved or denied.
 - Renters must have their own Liability Insurance and be able to name the "City of Newton" as additionally insured for their rental period.
 - Current Rental Fees: \$50.00/hour for gym space, \$35.00/hour for meeting rooms. These fees pay for building/cleaning staff
 - Commissioner Banks stated these fees are fair and equitable, they do not cover building improvements, only costs i.e., supplies and staff. The department is

creating a safe space with controlled access to provide programming and community access.

- Mr. Neville stated the Friends of Hemlock Gorge provide a service for the city they should not be charged.
- Commissioner Banks stated there are many different types of government agencies and it is difficult drawing a line on who should be charged.
- Ms. Gavis is sympathetic to the Commissioner, it is a slippery slope, there are a lot of people who do good in the community.
- Mr. Neville stated Emerson Community Center is in deplorable conditions and you want to charge money. Commissioner banks replied there will be a consistent structure for those who want to use the building.
- Mr. Neville asked if the building were rated. Mr. Nickerson replied no, they are all in different conditions.
- Mr. Dunker asked if a tiered structure would work better. Ms. Gavis commented there can be no favoritism.
- Chairman magni asked about a tiered structure, Commissioner Banks asked tiered by space or group, Chairman Magni replied tiered by space.
- Mr. Nickerson stated there are only a handful of organizations, this fee structure will simplify the process for individuals renting. Commissioner Banks stated that this fee structure will simplify the process to cover costs. The schools do the same and they are more expensive. The goal is to bring a consistent fee which hasn't been done in the past.
- Mr. Dunker stated the gym fee is fair.
- Mr. John Rice commented the Hyde Community Center is in high demand and has higher fees for non-profit and even higher fees for profit groups than what is proposed tonight.

Motion made to accept the proposed building rental fees. Motion seconded. Motion passed 7-1

- **Tennis Court Permits**

- Ms. Stephanie Lapham, Recreation Manger presented the tennis court permit fees. The fees were discussed and reviewed with the Friends of newton Tennis (FoNT)
 - Tier 1 - \$5.00 per court per hour
Newton Contracted Tennis Instructors
NCE Tennis Programming
 - Tier 2 - \$10.00 per court per hour
Private School Rentals (for now)
 - Tier 3 - \$15.00 per court per hour
Private instruction (including NCE)
Private School Rentals (possible for future)
Private Tournament Fundraisers
- Commissioner Banks stated the fees will help with hardscape maintenance.
- Tom Friedman from FoNT is holding a tennis tournament on October 3, 2021.

Motion made to accept tennis permit fees as proposed. Motion was seconded. Motion passed 8-0

7. Committee Reports

- Athletic Fields Committee – *B. Dunker/Commissioner Banks*
 - There have been no meetings, a meeting will be scheduled to discuss projects and tier 2 grass fees

- Reappoint a new member – Sam Figler is leaving the Commission, a new member will need to be appointed to the committee. Mr. Rice commented he has applied to be a member of the Commission and is interested in being on this committee.
- Mr. Dunker commented the late start time at the schools has thrown the field schedule into turmoil
- Community Preservation Committee -*B. Dunker*
 - No report
- Urban Tree Commission – *B. Wilkinson*
 - No report
- Farm Commission – *B. Wilkinson*
 - Saturday is the Farm’s 15th anniversary
- Commonwealth Golf Course – *J. Neville*
 - Profitable year.
 - Met with Purchasing to discuss management RFP
- Commission Manual Update – *M. Feldhusen*
 - Chairman Magni provided report for Mr. Feldhusen. Mr. Feldhusen is working with the Law Department to update the ordinances, laws, and regulations
- Off-Leash Area Working Group (OLAWG) – *Commissioner*
 - No reports
- Arts & Culture – *G. Gavis*
 - No report

8. New Business

- Paula Gannon Director of Cultural Development reported there will be a feasibility study for a pavilion in Newton Centre Playground in the grassy area behind the building known as “the bowl”. A pavilion would be a great asset and in high demand.
- Ms. Gavis commented Newton Community Pride recently did a study the showed art events brought \$19 million dollars into the Newton community.
- Chairman magni asked if there will be public input to the study. Commissioner Banks replied yes there will be public meetings and public hearings.
- Ms. Wilkinson recommended the study group speak with open space advocates in the beginning. When the study was announced in the Mayor’s newsletter Ms. Wilkinson received a lot of questions and comments.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:24pm
 Respectfully submitted by
 Robin Mclaughlin
 Commission Secretary

Wellington Playground

WHY ANOTHER PLAY STRUCTURE FOR WELLINGTON?

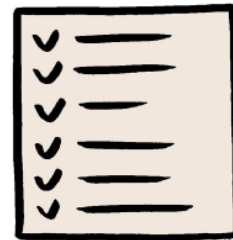
- Current facilities are ideal for toddlers/young children
- Kids 5-12+ outgrow the tot lot and need more play options
- COVID-19 has increased park use
- Location is underutilized space in the park
- Nothing like the proposed structure in the surrounding area
 - Fully ADA accessible and inclusive
 - Sensory-focused play
 - Fosters social/emotional development
- Community members support a larger, accessible structure



2

PROCESS

- Invited community to participate in **Friends of Wellington Park (FWP)**; formed core working group
- Introduced to Stephanie Lapham, Recreation Manager
- Playground Sub-Committee met with Stephanie to measure the space and discuss project requirements
- Contacted pre-approved vendors requesting designs
- Narrowed vendors down to top 3 through a FWP vote
- Interviewed top 3 vendors with Stephanie and FWP group
 - Asked standard list of questions
- FWP voted and selected Kompan as vendor
- FWP voted on top structure design



3

Wellington Playground

3D VISUALS



DRAFT

LOCATION OF PROPOSED STRUCTURE WITHIN THE PARK



8

Wellington Playground

COST BREAKDOWN

Subtotal - Product: \$72,224.10
Subtotal - Installation (community build): \$24,879.00
Subtotal - Freight: \$4,161.22
Total: \$101,264.32

Surfacing: \$73,548 (\$27/sq foot, 2,724 sq. feet)

Grand Total: \$174,812.32

Details:

- Custom Sensory Dome: \$59,900.10 (after 35% discount)
- Net Twister: \$9,620 (after 35% discount)
- Shell Swing: \$2,704(after 35% discount)
- Installation (community build): \$24,879
 - Contractor laying out site, digging holes, pouring footers for the sensory dome in preparation for the community build
- Surfacing: 50/50 mix, standard colors, aromatic binder plastic borders, no stencils, subject to 5% increase if material cost increases with documentation provided