

Newton Parks & Recreation Commission

Meeting Minutes

Zoom On-Line Meeting

7:00 p.m. – Monday, Oct 18, 2021

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

Also Attending: John Rice, Paula Gannon, Luis Perez Demorizi

Meeting began 7:00pm

1. **Meeting Minutes -September – Approved 8-0**
2. **Commissioner's Report**
 - The Council will be voting on the Levingston Cove Project tonight
 - The Fields project presentations are scheduled Wednesday Oct 20 and Oct 27 via Zoom Webinar, you can sign up on-line to attend
 - An offer has been made for the position of Assistant Director of Parks & Open Space Director
 - The Maintenance, Beautification and Forestry Division did a great job preparing for the Marathon
 - Paddy's Road race was a huge success
 - The Indigenous People's Day event was well attended and a successful event
 - Harvest Fair was also a great event this past weekend
 - October 2nd was the 1st annual Round Robin Tennis Tournament. Tom Friedman, Friends of Newton Tennis will provide an update later in the meeting.
 - Holiday Window Painting is scheduled next weekend
 - The new later dismissal times for the schools has affected access to the NNHS pool/gym for indoor recreation programs. There will be no lap swimming program this year
 - Mayor announced the CIP update and there are several parks' projects
3. **New Art Donation – Waban – Public Hearing**
 - Sallee Lipshutz, 24 Radcliff Rd, Waban is requesting permission on behalf of the Friends of Waban Common, 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. Lipshutz also mentioned a new accessible game table has been installed in the park.
 - Paula Gannon, Director of Cultural Development commented she is very excited about this artistic sculpture. Ms. Gannon has been in contact with the City's Law Department to determine if this will be a donation to the City and establishing a long-term maintenance plan. Ms. Gannon requested Ms. Lipshutz write a letter to the Commissioner stating the intent to donate the sculpture.
 - Mr. Elkind, Friend of Waban Common, stated the donor will not donate the statue if it is not tax deductible and once the sculpture becomes property of the city no further agreement is required.
 - Commissioner Banks commented the groups should work together to have a written agreement. Some maintenance issues that may occur; the sculpture breaks or comes loose, there is vandalism or for some reason the statue needs to be removed/relocated.

- Chairman Magni opened the meeting to public comments. Rena Getz, abutter commented she is in complete support of this proposal, this is a great opportunity for Waban Common.

Motion was made to accept the proposal contingent on working with the Law Department on ownership and a maintenance plan. Mr. Dunker seconded the motion. Motion passed 8-0

4. Commission- Proposal- two meeting process discussion

- Ms. Gavis commented on the two-meeting process for proposal brought before the Commission. The onus should be on the applicant not the City/department. Can the process be more efficient?
- Commissioner Banks is requesting time before this is discussed. Currently the department is reviewing the special event process and the process for accepting art/permanent structures on park land. Commissioner Banks would like Chairman Magni to advise during the review.
- Chairman Magni commented sometimes a concept is flawed or controversial and is not ready for a public hearing.
- Ms. Gibson commented it is wise to really see what the parameters are regarding the Open Meeting Law
- Mr. Dunker commented the Commission did update the process a few years back, any reoccurring event with out significant changes only had to attend the Public Hearing. Mr. Dunker likes the two-meeting process, not all proposals are approved.
- Ms. Wilkinson commented we should require as much info up front as possible, if it is a simple proposal maybe only one meeting is required, if it is a big change, we may require more time.
- Commissioner Banks commented we are having the same conversations internally. We will create a Special Event packet for review.

5. Committee Reports

- Athletic Fields Committee – *B. Dunker/Commissioner Banks*
 - No report
- Community Preservation Committee -*B. Dunker*
 - Recent discussion on 400k for design and engineering for historic buildings
- Urban Tree Commission – *B. Wilkinson*
 - Received 250K of ARPA funding for pruning
- Farm Commission – *B. Wilkinson*
 - Adrianna Rodriguez, staff contact for Commission has left the city. New staff contact will be appointed. Next meeting is scheduled in November
- Commonwealth Golf Course – *J. Neville*
 - Golf Course is doing well financially. Meeting cancelled in September, next meeting should be in October
- Commission Manual Update – *M. Feldhusen*
 - Making good progress. Working on park inventory, Stephanie Lapham, Recreation Manager has been very helpful.
 - Working with Marie Lawlor in the Law Department, updating laws and ordinances. Ms. Lawlor suggested creating links to current information
 - Plan is to bring to the November meeting for review
- Off-Leash Area Working Group (OLAWG) – *Commissioner*
 - No report
- Arts & Culture – *G. Gavis*

- Commissioner provided a great update, there is a bit of a lull now the Harvest Fair is over.

6. New Business

- Ms. Gibson requested Tom Friedman; Friends of Newton Tennis (FoNT) provide an update on the recent tournament.
- Mr. Friedman reported the first tournament in over 20 years took place at NSHS on Saturday October 2, 9am-4pm. This was the 1st Annual Round Robin Tournament.
- There were over 130 players, 150 rounds of tennis, ranging in age from 8-92
- The tournament was well received, 80% of the participants will return next year.
- \$15K was raised towards repair of the tennis courts
- Chairman Magni commented a public/private partnership is a good idea

Meeting Adjourned at 08:04pm

Respectfully submitted by

Robin McLaughlin

Commission Secretary