

Newton Parks & Recreation Commission

Meeting Minutes

Zoom On-Line Meeting

7:00 p.m. – Monday, December 20, 2021

Attending: Chairman Magni, Commissioner Banks, Randy Johnson, Midge Connolly, Beth Wilkinson, Gloria Gavris, Jack Neville, John Rice

Meeting began 7:04pm

1. **Meeting Minutes -November – Approved 7-0**
2. **Blue Bike Share Station – Informational -Nicole Freedman, Director of Transportation**
 - Director Freedman presented a proposal for the installation of a Blue Bike Share Station on the corner of Centre St & Comm Ave. The Bike Share program is a two-year pilot, several stations have been installed around the city. The stations are automated rentals, solar, modular, and mobile, no trenching is required to install.
 - There were 4 location options in the area. After feedback from neighbors, staff, and Councilors the corner of Centre & Comm was selected. Public Hearing notification has been sent to the abutters.
 - Mr. Johnson asked if the bikes are left outside at the stations all year round. Ms. Freedman replied yes, if there is a big storm they may be put inside.

*Ms. Connolly made the motion to approve the proposal as submitted. Ms. Gavris seconded the motion.
Motion passed 7-0.*

3. **Proposal by Newton Little League (NLL) to Light Murphy Field- informational**
 - Proposal presented by Doug Feldman, Gavin Gelinas, Rick Dinjian
 - NLL has 600 families involved in their program. Lights on Murphy field spring, summer, and fall. The lights would increase fall usage.
 - NLL met with Musco Lighting Company (same company used at NSHS Stadium) to discuss the types of lighting systems that would work best at Murphy field located on Albemarle Playground. The lights that are currently at NSHS is the system that will work at Murphy Field. There have been conversations with supporters of this project willing to donate financially to the project.
 - The benefits to add lighting:
 - Increased hours of play
 - Upgrade to current lighting
 - Low level of light spillage
 - Chairman Magni commented the new technology is so different than the past. The neighbors may be concerned by the expanding activity in normally quiet hours.
 - Mr. Neville asked if the donations cover the cost of the entire project. Mr. Feldman is confident there is financial support
 - Commissioner Banks commented fundraising is important over the next few weeks. A good partnership will help when going before the CPC for funding for the overall project at Albemarle Playground.
 - Ms. Connolly agrees with the need for additional lighting, but few girls will benefit from this project, and requested NLL keep this in mind when prioritizing.

- Mr. Feldman commented the addition of this project will free up other field for groups with girls.
- Ms. Gavis commented partnerships are important when fundraising, her concern is the capacity
- Mr. Rice asked how many little league groups are there in Newton? Mr. Feldman replied two, Newton Little League and Newton East Little League

Ms. Gavis made the motion to move the proposal to a public hearing. Ms. Wilkinson seconded the motion.

Motion passed 7-0

4. Commissioner's Report

- Field Projects – there is a bid for an on-call design consultant for a 5-year strategic plan for the following locations:
 - Brown Oak Middle School fields
 - Burr School
 - McGrath Park
 - Forte Park
 - Braceland Playground
 - Albemarle Playground
 - Lighting at NNHS & NSHS
 - There will be a public meeting in the new year for Forte Park & Braceland Playground
- Brandeis Field Lights
 - Site visit with Musco representative
 - Saw the different visual settings
- Gath Pool Project
 - Researching pricing for different options
 - Looking to move forward with outdoor pool replacement
 - Chairman Magni asked if funds can be requested from CPC. Commissioner Banks replied the feasibility study is funded by the CPC. The construction would be funded by a mix of City funds and CPC.
 - Ms. Wilkinson asked what the options are for indoor swim space. Commissioner Banks stated we are open to consider an indoor space. The issue now is the schedule change at NNHS has limited access to the pool. Ms. Wilkinson asked if a bubble could be added later to the outdoor pool. Commissioner Banks commented that would be a different project with a different funding source. Mr. Johnson commented if you move forward with the outdoor pool and add a bubble later significant changes would be required. Commissioner Banks agreed there would be a total change to support the structure.
 - Ms. Connolly commented currently scheduled at Albemarle is a significant school building renovation, the Murphy Field Lighting proposal, The Gath Pool Project, and Albemarle Playground renovation. The neighbors will be put out for years. Commissioner Banks agreed there is a lot of constraints with a lot of competing uses. Mr. Johnson asked the info will be communicated to the public. Commissioner Banks stated we are pulling together costs and data and that will take time. Staff has met with the consultant to prepare a schedule. And have met with the Friends of Albemarle after the last community meeting.

5. Committee Reports

- Athletic Fields Committee
 - Last meeting scheduled was postponed. Rescheduling the end of January to make recommendations on tier 2 grass field fees. \$10/person/season is being discussed.
 - Ms. Connolly stated some groups are impacted after contributing but every league has contingent, it is not a huge aske as it is the parent who has paid in. Groups paying for additional tasks, some tasks may be best managed by the department, some best managed by the leagues.
 - This will be a staged plan over a few years
- Community Preservation Committee
 - No Report
- Urban Tree Commission
 - Street Tree plan should be complete by the end of 2022
- Farm Commission
 - Nov 30th there was a unanimous vote to install solar panels
- Commonwealth Golf Course
 - Last meeting took place in October
 - RFP results are in and Sterling Golf Management was the only bidder
- Commission Manual Update
 - Almost complete, hopefully to be presented to the Commission during the January meeting
- Off-Leash Area Working Group (OLAWG)
 - No report
- Arts & Culture
 - All good – no report
 - Commissioner Banks commented Paula Gannon and Danielle Moriarty did a great job applying for ARPA Grants, \$75K has been distributed

6. New Business

- No new business

Meeting Adjourned at 08:07pm
Respectfully submitted by
Robin McLaughlin
Commission Secretary