

Newton Parks & Recreation Commission

Meeting Minutes

Zoom On-Line Meeting

7:00 p.m. – Monday, September 19, 2022

Attending: Chairman Magni, Vice-Chairman Byron Dunker, Deputy Commissioner Welch, Jack Neville, Beth Wilkinson, Midge Connolly, Ted Chapman, Gloria Gavis, John Rice, Mark Feldhusen

Meeting began 7:00pm

1. Video Recording of Commission Meeting

- Requests have been made, to the PRC department/staff, for the P & R Commission Zoom webinar meetings be recorded and posted to the website.

Ms. Gavis made the motion to approve this request. Ms. Connolly seconded the motion. Motion passed 8-0.

2. Meeting Minutes – June 27, 2022

- Approved 8-0

3. Waban Historic Interpretive Signs -Lisa Dady, Director Historic Newton, Laura Foote

- Historic Newton has been working with community members in Waban on the outdoor educational sign project. The sign will be a 2'x3' sign on a cantilever frame. There are two signs, one will be posted on the corner of Beacon St and Collins Rd, the second will be posted on the corner of Beacon St and Woodward Rd.
- Many hours of research have gone into collecting the information on the signs and the group has worked with a graphic designer on the sign design.
- The project and signs have been approved by DPW, PRC and Historic Newton.
- Ms. Gavis asked if this project will rollout to other locations. Ms. Dady replied yes, in 2-4 years, it will depend on funding and research time. The Friends group and private donations funded these signs.
- Ms. Gavis asked if the signs would be gifted to the city. Ms. Dady replied yes, they would be owned by Historic Newton and would work with the PRC department for any maintenance. Like the burial grounds, PRC manages the grounds and Historic Newton maintains the gravestones.
- Ms. Wilkinson commented the signs are wonderful, but hopes it is not limited depending on a friend's group to fund the signs. Ms Dady commented no, it is not dependent on a friend's group, going forward a comprehensive plan will be made.
- Mr. Rice commented there is a similar sign at Hyde Community Center, many people stop and read the sign, it is a big success.
- Ms. Foote commented there is also a QR code at the bottom of the sign if a person wants additional information, the QR code will take them to a website.
- Mr. Chapman commented there are so many buildings mentioned on the sign, could the actual building be numbered with a description. Ms. Foote commented there is limited space on the sign, the QR code provides additional info.

Mr. Rice made the motion to approve the project and the signs. Ms. Gavis seconded the motion. Motion passed 8-0.

- Mr. Dunker asked where the caterpillar sculpture gifted to Waban Common, is in the process. Ms. Gavis commented the caterpillar is in the foundry being made.

4. Commissioner's Report

- Events: Deputy Commissioner Welch
 - Indigenous Peoples Day – October 10
 - Paddy’s Road Race – October 16
 - Harvest Fair – October 15 -16
 - Halloween Window Painting – October
- Projects: Luis Perez Demorizi
 - Gath Pool Phase II design – approved by Finance & Programs & Services committees. In front of the full council tonight.
 - Fields projects are on-going. A public hearing is scheduled for the Commission in October for McGrath Field
 - Held a community meeting for Crystal Lake Park & Beach last week
 - Spears Park Community Gardens is in the design phase, a site visit with the abutters is scheduled
 - Levingston Cove: received all the required state permits for the fishing platforms and plantings. Bids are due this Thursday, construction could begin later this fall.
 - Brandies lights are on-going, hope to have a game under the lights by mid-October
 - NN Lights – on-going
- OLAWG: Carol Stapleton
 - Walker Park, Washington St. project will be part of the road improvement community outreach discussion coming soon (managed by the Planning Dept).
 - Claflin Park refresher, new fence

5. Committee Reports

- Community Preservation Committee -B. Dunker
 - The Newton Affordable Housing Trust was awarded 1.9 million to evaluate the housing needs in Newton. Ms. Gavis asked how the awarded total was determined. Mr. Dunker replied 30% of available funds goes towards housing.
- Urban Tree Commission – B. Wilkinson
 - There are two proposed changes to the tree ordinance, the first is submitted by Marc Welch and presented by the Mayor. The second was submitted by Councilor Malakie, proposing a moratorium on tree removals in the city. The Tree Conservancy voted 5-1 in support of Councilor Malakie’s proposal. Ms. Wilkinson stated she was the one who voted against the proposal, and she would be happy to discuss her reasoning, just reach out to her.
- Farm Commission – B. Wilkinson
 - Farm Commission met in August all is going well
- Off-Leash Area Working Group (OLAWG) –
 - Update above
- Arts & Culture – G. Gavis
 - PR&C Summer Concert series was a big success. The stage in the Newton Centre Bowl was moved around to different locations to address and observe some of the proposed outdoor performance pavilion concerns. Depending on weather, attendance ranged upwards to 300.
 - Newton Community Pride’s Linda Plaut Festival of the Arts was held at 4 village locations. Two of which in city public spaces - Hyde Playground & Newton Centre Village Green. Despite the heat, attendance city wide was approximately 1,600 people.
 - Newton Community Pride’s Village concert series are scheduled in 4 village locations - 1 in a city public space, Farlow Park.

6. New Business

- Abutter Notification Distance: Events, Projects
 - Deputy Commissioner Welch commented the questions has been brought up if abutter notification should be standardized.
 - Ms. Gavris asked if notification is sent to residents or owners of the property and is the mail sent certified. Deputy Commissioner Welch replied the notification is sent to property owners and is sent by regular mail.
 - Mr. Chapman asked if the state has any regulations. Deputy Commissioner Welch replied, PRC staff can check the state regulations.
 - The 600' distance is a suggested distance.
 - Chairman Magni asked if this would impact the budget. Deputy Commissioner Welch replied, it may but the department could manage this distance.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:46 pm

Respectfully submitted by

Robin McLaughlin

Commission Secretary