

Newton Parks & Recreation Commission
Meeting Minutes-On-line Meeting
7:00 p.m. – Monday, January 23, 2023

Attending: Arthur Magni, Chair, Commissioner Banks, Byron Dunker, Vice Chair, Beth Wilkinson, Randy Johnson, Mark Feldhusen, Jack Neville

Also Attending: Stephanie Lapham, Recreation Manger, Joseph Smith, JXS Tennis, Dr. Michael Richardson

Meeting began: 7:01pm

1. Meeting Minutes – December 19, 2022 – Approved 6-0

2. Commissioner’s Report

- Summer Camp Fair January 29, 12pm-3pm at NNHS
- Annual Conservation Restriction reports have been received from the Newton Conservators. Grounds Maintenance staff and the Parks & Open Space staff will review the reports. Chairman Magni asked the status of the Nahanton Park conservation restriction. Ouida Young is working on this, currently a survey needs to be completed before continuing the process.
- Gath Pool project is moving to the CPC for the funding request. Mr. Dunker asked if the proposal is for the pool only, Commissioner Banks confirmed yes, the proposal to CPC is for the pool only, the fields request would be going to CPC soon thereafter.
- Winterfest hosted by Newton Pride is scheduled January 28th at the Hyde Playground and January 29th at Newton Centre Green
- Newton Serves Project registration opens February 1. Newton Serves is scheduled Sunday May 7

3. Tennis – Clay Court Fees, Rules & Regulations

- Stephanie Lapham, Program Manager & Joseph Smith, JXS Tennis
- Ms. Lapham introduced Mr. Smith and commented JXS Tennis has been awarded the contract for the City’s tennis program and Newton Centre clay court management.
- Mr. Smith reviewed the rules, regulations, and fees for 2023. One update to the rules:

A MAXIMUM OF ONE (1) HOUR MAY BE BOOKED FOR SINGLES. ONE PERMIT HOLDERS NAME IS REQUIRED TO BOOK THIS COURT. A MAXIMUM OF 1.5 HOURS MAY BE BOOKED FOR DOUBLES PLAY. ~~TWO~~ THREE PERMIT HOLDERS’ NAMES ARE REQUIRED TO BOOK THIS COURT.

- Fees have increased:

	<u>SEASON PERMIT RATES</u>	
	<u>SEASON PERMIT FEES ARE NON-REFUNDABLE</u>	
	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
Resident Adult	\$285.00	\$300.00
Resident Student (under 18)	\$150.00	\$160.00
Non-Resident Adult	\$335.00	\$350.00
Non-Resident Student	\$200.00	\$210.00
	<u>HOURLY RATES*</u>	
Resident Adult	\$30.00	\$20.00
Resident Student (under 18)	\$15.00	\$15.00
Non-Resident Adult	\$45.00	\$20.00

- Mr Feldhusen asked if the rules are the same as in the past. Ms. Lapham responded the rules and regulations have been the same for many years, with a few updates as needed.
- Mr. Neville asked why the clay courts are closed for three hours during the day for maintenance. Ms. Lapham replied those hours are during the heat of the day and it also saves on the expense of a court monitor.
- Mr. Neville asked why the clay courts open at 9am and not 7am which would allow more time for play. Ms. Lapham replied there is a plan for additional marketing to attract members. Once the membership numbers are up the courts could open at 7am.
- Dr. Richardson asked if there is a reduced rate for low-income residents. Commissioner Banks commented we have a scholarship program for the summer camps. The department will work with Mr. Smith to develop a program, Mr. Smith is a contractor with the city and is managing a business, so the situation is different than the summer camp programs managed by the department.
- Ms. Wilkinson commented a scholarship program is a must and asked how it could be funded. Ms Wilkinson, also a member of the Newton Conservators commented the Conservators donated to the Environmental Science program to provide scholarships. The Environmental Science program has moved from the Planning Department to the Parks, Recreation & Culture Dept (PRC) and asked if PRC can accept the donation. Commissioner Banks confirmed PRC can accept the donation for the Environmental Science Program.
- Mr. Feldhusen asked the amount of money provided for families. Commissioner Banks replied around \$30,000.00. The department applies for the Community Development Block (CDBG) Grant for summer camps.
- Mr. Smith commented the clay court fees collected in past seasons are not enough to pay for the maintenance and upkeep of the clay courts. We will work together to get the word out that the clay courts are available for play.
- Commissioner Banks recognized Tom Freidman, Friends of Newton Tennis (FONT) in attendance. FONT has been a great supporter to the City's tennis facilities and programs.

Mr. Neville made the motion to accept the proposal as presented. Mr. Feldhusen seconded the motion passed 6-0.

4. Committee Reports

- **Community Preservation Committee -B. Dunker**
 - CPC has been quiet since the housing trust has been set up.
 - Developing a plan to let the public know about CPC funds.
- **Urban Tree Commission – B. Wilkinson**
 - Programs & Service Committee is reviewing proposed revisions to the tree ordinance.
 - The override would help the Forestry Division budget.
- **Farm Commission – B. Wilkinson**
 - Next meeting is Feb 2.
- **Off-Leash Area Working Group (OLAWG) – Commissioner**
 - Fencing at Claflin Park is complete.
 - Next meeting is Feb 24. On the agenda is developing an 8th Off-Leash Area (OLA)
 - Dr. Richardson asked if Forte Park is an option for an OLA. Commissioner Banks commented the Forte play equipment is being refreshed in the spring and the athletic field and lighting is on the list for an upgrade.

- Commissioner Banks commented Walker Park on Washington Street is in discussion as well as a few other locations. Mr. Feldhusen mentioned there are a couple of old oak trees in Walker Park and asked if they would be protected. Commissioner Banks stated that the fencing would be installed so as not to impact trees.
- **Arts & Culture – G. Gavis**
 - No report

5. New Business

- Mr. Feldhusen asked the status of water fountains in the parks. He has contacted several city departments and was referred to PRC. Having working water fountains with drinkable water is a good sign in a community, non-working fountains sends the wrong message.
- Commissioner Banks reported there are no current projects to bring water fountains back online in the parks. There are many different types of fountains, most are very old and in poor condition, water quality would have to be monitored regularly.
- Mr. Dunker commented the fountains have been off for a long time and nobody in the little league is asking for the fountains. A suggestion was made that the fountains be removed if they will not be repaired and reactivated.
- Commission Elections:
 - Chairman Magni re-elected P & R Commission Chair 5-0
 - Vice-Chair Dunker re-elected P & R Commission Vice Chair 5-0

Meeting Adjourned 8:30pm

Respectfully submitted,
Robin McLaughlin
Commission Secretary