

Newton Parks & Recreation Commission
Meeting Minutes-On-line Meeting
7:00 p.m. – Monday, March 20, 2023

Attending: Arthur Magni, Chair, Byron Dunker, Vice Chair, Commissioner Banks, Beth Wilkinson, John Rice, Midge Connolly, Gloria Gavis, Randy Johnson, Mark Feldhusen, Jack Neville, Ted Chapman

Meeting began: 7:00pm

1. Meeting Minutes – February 27, 2023 – Approved 8-0

2. Lion’s 5K- NSHS – May 21 – NSHS -Public Hearing

- Teri Ginsburg & Lars Dietrich of the Newton South Booster Club presented the application for the May 21, Lions 5K Fundraiser event at NSHS on February 27, 2023.
- Ms. Connolly asked why this application is before the Commission. Commissioner Banks replied this event affects the use of courts and fields. At last years event there were issues with parking and traffic.
- There were no public comments.

Ms. Gavis made the motion to approve the event as presented. Ms. Connolly seconded the motion. Motion passed 8-0

3. Nonantum Village Day-June 4- Coletti-Magni Park – Public Hearing

- The 11th Annual Nonantum Village Day is scheduled June 4th. There are no significant changes to the event this year, other than the auxiliary police are not available, NPD will be present at the event. Ms. Wilkinson asked why this has changed, Mr. Rice replied it is a state law.
- Mr. Rice asked how many vendor booths are scheduled. Ms. Domonique stated there was not a great response this year, there are only 15-20 scheduled. Mr. Rice will send a list of vendors from Highlands Village Day.
- Ms Sauro commented new this year is a puppet show.
- Ms. Gavis asked if all village days are approved by the Commission. The village days are approved only if the set up includes park land.

Ms. Gavis made the motion to approve the event as presented. Ms. Wilkinson seconded the motion. Motion passed 8-0.

New Business (Moved up from Item 7 on the original agenda)

- Outdoor Special Event -Requests to serve alcohol on park land.
- Commissioner Banks commented in June 2001, the Commission approved a process for allowing alcohol at the Auburndale Cove picnic area and is asking if the Commission will follow this process for the Outdoor Special Event Applications:
 - Applicant must receive a permit from the License Commission
 - A Police Detail
 - Follow all other parameters.
- Mr. Rice commented the License Commission has the expertise. Ms. Gavis commented she served on the License Commission and the staff are professional, all information is checked and approved.
- Ms. Wilkinson asked about liability. Ms. Gavis replied the applicant is required to submit a Certificate of Liability Insurance.
- Chairman Magni stated a motion is not required; the process is already in place for outdoor special events.

4. 8th Annual Linda Plaut Festival of the Arts-July 22-Hyde Playground- Informational

- Ms. Gavris representing, Newton Pride and John Rice, representing the Hyde Community Center, both private 501C non-profit groups are sponsoring the 8th Annual Linda Plaut Festival of the Arts event at Hyde Playground. Free performances are scheduled and at 4pm alcohol will be served in the backstop area. The festival previously was a month-long event but has now changed to a one weekend event.
- Chairman Magni stated a motion is not required; the event organizers will follow the Outdoor Special Permit Application process.

5. Commissioner's Report

- The Override vote approved two new schools, but the operating budget portion of the vote failed. The department will be reviewing and updating policies and fee schedules.
- The Gath Pool project funding was approved by the CPC. The City is working on bonding. The Design Review Committee requires a site plan for approval if approved bids will go out in May.
- Field Projects plan goes before the CPC in April for Albemarle, Burr School, and McGrath Park, then back to the City Council.
- Marathon is scheduled April 17; PRC Maintenance crew are involved with the event.
- Artificial turf construction at NSHS is scheduled this summer. We are waiting for the test on the materials. Grass field needs will be reviewed with the Council.
- Mr. Neville asked about the depth of the Gath Pool. Commissioner Banks commented this is still being discussed. The pool has a tight footprint, the tennis and basketball courts are being relocated, trying to make the most of the space. The 4' end counting on the shallower end for shallow end needs.
- We have met with the swim team who has an alternate design, but this design does not meet the needs of both sides. Also having to meet with the state codes regarding the slope would leave the pool with only one dive lane and no shallow access.
- Ms. Connolly asked why the recreational pool cannot be used for shallow access. Commissioner Banks replied because of the zero entry the deepest part of the recreational pool is 2-2.5 feet and for swim lessons and other activities 3-4 feet is required. Ms. Connolly commented the person should be required to take a swim test if the water is over their head. Commissioner Banks stated this would not be enough to service all the needs during the day, a divider rope would separate the two activities. Ms. Connolly stated the divider should be a buoy type divider.
- Mr. Feldhusen asked the timeline for the project. Commissioner Banks stated construction would begin Fall 2023 and open June 2024.

6. Committee Reports

- Community Preservation Committee -*B. Dunker*
 - Gath Pool funding approved 5.8 million.
 - Field Projects is on the agenda, the recent discussion regarding the artificial turf is creating concern, support from the athletic groups may be helpful. Mr. Rice agreed, when the request for the NSHS lights was discussed, the meeting was packed with people from both sides of the issue.
 - Commissioner Banks commented the NSHS fields were recommended for use 10-12 years, the field is 13 years old. Annual GMAX testing is done to ensure they are safe. NNHS turf should be replaced next summer and NPS requested a second field for NNHS.
 - Mr Chapman asked about the state law and artificial turf. Mr. Dunker replied, the CPA funds cannot fund artificial carpet. Commissioner Banks commented the CPA funds may be able to fund infrastructure. Ms. Wilkinson commented this was a compromise when the legislation was passed. Ms. Wilkinson suggested the group be nuanced on how they present the proposal. PFAS is not good for us and is running into the environment as it breaks down, new fields will get more pushback. Commissioner Banks commented, PFAS is in many materials we encounter, the state is looking at banning items that purposefully have PFAS added to them, most companies are moving away from adding PFAS, but it is a byproduct of when materials are being made.

- Urban Tree Commission – *B. Wilkinson*
 - Because the override did not pass for the operating budget there will be no extra trees
 - The Council continues to review the changes to the tree ordinance.
- Farm Commission – *B. Wilkinson*
 - No report
- Off-Leash Area Working Group (OLAWG) – *Commissioner*
 - There is a proposal for Walker park on Washington Street. The group reviewed a preliminary sketch. There is a request for a long dog run. PRC is adding a second Off-leash Specialist.
- Arts & Culture – *G. Gavrís*
 - No report

7. New Business

- Mr. Feldhusen stated there was a site visit to Commonwealth Golf Course a few years ago when the management contract went out to bid, is the contract up for renewal? Mr. Neville stated the contract is in the second year.

Meeting Adjourned 8:24 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Robin McLaughlin

Commission Secretary