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**Minutes of the Newburyport Parks Commission**

**November 21, 2023**

City Hall, Mayor’s Conference Room, 2nd Floor

Call to order: 6:00 PM A Quorum was present.

Commissioners in attendance: Chair Ted Boretti, Nicole Whelan, Charles Griffin, Anita Greenwood, Matthew Ellsworth

Also, in attendance: Manager of Special Projects Kim Turner, Diane Wise, Parks Admin.; Michael Hennessey, Parks Manager; Brian Dennis, Bill Benson, Dan Blair, Mary Krajci, Amanda Turner, Tim Desgraves, Carolyn Toloczko

**1. REVIEW OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

The minutes for October, 2023 were reviewed.

*Motion to approve the minutes of October 17, 2023. So voted on a unanimous voice vote.*

**2. NEW BUSINESS**

1. **NEW COMMUNITY GARDEN – KIM TURNER, DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL PROJECTS**

A trust fund is to be established by the estate of a Newburyport woman who wished to create a community garden. This will be not-for-profit project to benefit the community. The stipulations for creating the garden are that the estate has naming rights, the garden will feature a sound element, such as moving water, a third of the food produced would go to a food pantry and profit would go back into the garden maintenance. Cushing Park and Ayers Playground has access to water and parking facilities which are necessary for creating the community garden.

Public comments asked about fencing and whether trees would not be removed.

*Motion to instruct Kim Turner to further discuss and consider the Cushing Park location with the donor’s representatives. Proposed by Commissioner Ellsworth and seconded by Commissioner Griffin. So voted on a unanimous voice vote.*

1. **THE SEAN PERKINS FOUNDATION HAS OFFERED TO DONATE A NEW BATTING CAGE** – **TIM DESGRAVES**

It is a 6 post structure which will have a net that can be taken down. The foundation wants to put a sign of recognition inside the batting cage. The foundation also offered to pay for the upkeep, which will also be done by the Pioneer League. City Council must approve the donation and any change in a park must be presented to Redevelopment Authority.

*Motion by Commissioner Ellsworth to approve location and signage as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Whelan. So, voted on a unanimous voice vote.*

C) **SPONSORSHIP BANNERS/SIGNAGE – DAN BLAIR – PRESIDENT OF NEWBURYPORT YOUTH SOCCER**

Convenient MD has offered to sponsor the NYS, but in return they have requested that a sign 6.5 x6.5 feet be placed on the shed and or fence. Commissioners, while supportive of NYS and understanding of their need for funding to reduce the burden on parents, were concerned that commercial advertising is not allowed in the parks. It was noted that the Pioneer League displays sponsorship on buildings in Lower Atkinson Park without permission.

Public comment offered that this might result in many more requests for advertising in the parks.

*Motion made by Commissioner Ellsworth to approve the Convenient MD sign for one season. Seconded by Commissioner Greenwood. Vote was 1 in favor and 4 against. The motion failed.*

**3. OLD BUSINESS**

* **STATUS OF SCULPTURE DONATIONS – ANITA GREENWOOD AND TED BORETTI**

The sculptures are still with the sculptor. There has been some informal concern about the chosen placement of the thirteen feet tall Rabbit sculpture. Mike Hennessy will walk with the donors to find an appropriate site in March’s Hill.

* **STATUS OF THE COMMUNITY GARDEN INITIATIVE – ANITA GREENWOOD**

Already discussed above.

* **STATUS OF THE BIKE PARK FEASIBILITY STUDY – ANITA GREENWOOD**

Kim Turner reported that the contract has been signed with the group that will study the five suggested locations. We can expect a report back in late winter.

* **POLLINATOR PARK ON THE RAIL TRAIL - ANITA GREENWOOD**

Mike Hennessy reported that we have not heard back from the student and nothing has been done.

* **PUBLIC ART COMMITTEE - KIM TURNER**

The Community Services Committee discussed the formation of the committee and separated the new ordinance from the policy document. The CSC approved the new ordinance on first reading. The structure of the PAC is modeled on the Community Preservation Committee and will contain one member of the Parks Commission. A second reading of the ordinance is required.

**4. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Several members of the public attended the meeting to express concern about the policy to prohibit the use of tennis balls for playing fetch with dogs in Moseley Park. Dog owners who use the park had been surveyed and were almost unanimous in their request to rescind this rule.

The Commissioners agreed to place this issue on the December 18th 2023 Parks Commission Agenda

**Motion to adjourn voted on a unanimous voice vote**

**ADJOURNED 7:32 p.m.**

**List of documents viewed at Parks Commission Meeting**

* Minutes from October 17, 2023 Parks Commission Meeting
* Map of Cushing Park and Ayers Playground
* Picture of Pioneer park with the area circled as to where the batting cage will go.
* Picture of the fence at Cherry Hill Complex where the Convenient MD sign would hang.