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Minutes of the Newburyport Parks Commission

December 15, 2022

Senior Community Center Second Floor Boardroom

Call to order: 5:30 p.m.

A quorum was present

In attendance: Chair Ted Boretti, Charles Griffin, Matt Ellsworth

Also in attendance: Parks Manager Mike Hennessey, Manager of Special Projects Kim Turner, Planning Director Andy Port, Senior Project Manager Geordie Vining, Ken Irwin, Anita Greenwood, Jane Snow

MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL

Motion by Commissioner Griffin to approve the minutes of the October 20 Parks Commission meeting, seconded by Commissioner Ellsworth. So voted on a unanimous voice vote.

Motion by Commissioner Ellsworth to approve the minutes of the November 1, November 7 and November 15 special Parks Commission meetings, seconded by Commissioner Griffin. So voted on a unanimous voice vote.

NEW BUSINESS

Bartlet Mall Black History Interpretive Panel location approval—(Geordie Vining)

Ted Boretti introduced the agenda item, stating that the Commission had already reviewed and approved a few other Black History initiative panels at other parks. Geordie Vining stated that this panel was originally considered for the Nock-Molin School, but the team developing the panels preferred a location that was closer to downtown, and as near as possible to the site featured in the sign. Geordie stated that the sign would be installed in such a way that it could be relocated once construction begins at the Bartlet Mall, should the location need to be adjusted. He offered to work with Parks Manager Hennessey on the final location. Commissioners reviewed the map that was presented by Geordie Vining showing two alternative locations within the Northwest Corner of the Bartlet Mall. **Motion by Commissioner Griffin to approve the installation of an interpretive panel in the Northwest Corner of the Bartlet Mall as presented, seconded by Commissioner Ellsworth. So voted on a unanimous voice vote.**

Bartlet Mall inclusive playground donation acceptance—Rotary Club (Kim Turner)

Kim Turner presented the agenda item. The Rotary Club, as part of its 100-year anniversary, reached out to the City to donate a piece of inclusive playground equipment. MSP Turner worked with the

Rotary Club to identify an appropriate location, and the Club decided upon the Bartlet Mall, because of the larger inclusive playground project that is slated to begin construction there in 2023, and also because the matching grant funding from the State meant the Rotary Club's donation would be stretched further. The Rotary Club is proposing a donation of \$6,182 to pay for the ReviWheel Spinner, which is an element of the Commission-approved playground plan. The Rotary is asking for a memorialization of the gift, and Turner stated that the Rotary emblem can be DigiFused directly onto the playground equipment as an alternative to a bench or plaque. Once the donation is accepted by the Parks Commission, it will also require acceptance by the City Council. Parks Manager Hennessey asked if the donation would also cover the cost to install the equipment. Answer: no, but the budget for the full project includes all installation. **Motion by Commissioner Griffin to approve with gratitude the donation of \$6,182 for the installation of the ReviWheel Spinner at the inclusive playground at the Bartlet Mall as presented, seconded by Commissioner Ellsworth. So voted on a unanimous voice vote.**

Cashman and Perkins Park rules for court play signage—(Anita Greenwood & Kim Turner)

Anita Greenwood introduced the agenda item, stating that the City does not currently have any signage at any of the courts with rules. Newburyport Pickleball was notified over the summer that people who are not part of their group were using the courts as early as 6 am, and Newburyport Pickleball was afraid residents who were aggravated by the noise would assume their group was utilizing the courts at that early hour, which they are not. Greenwood passed out suggested signage wording that could be considered by the Commission, and stated that the Commission should take its time to carefully deliberate the wording and come up with the best and most comprehensive terms. Kim Turner added that the wording could be considered as the Parks Commission's policy on court usage in the City's parks that could be posted on the Commission's website. Commissioners deliberated about appropriate wording, and added that 'no pets' should be added to the terms. Greenwood also suggested that 'no unauthorized, paid athletic services' should also be added to the terms. Chair Boretti suggested the Commission continue the deliberation at the next Parks Commission meeting after a draft policy is circulated. **No action taken.**

Cashman Park multi-use court addition of pickleball lines, wind screen, backboard, fence segment and gate—(Anita Greenwood & Kim Turner)

Kim Turner presented the agenda item. A CPC application was written for this year to resurface the tennis and basketball courts at Cashman Park, as it was identified as a priority project by the Commission. The Parks Commission approved Newburyport Pickleball to use the tennis courts for pickleball play, and approved the temporary striping of the court for pickleball. Newburyport Pickleball would like approval from the Commission to include permanent painting of pickleball lines, a translucent wind screen, a backboard, installation of the missing fence segment and addition of a wheelchair accessible gate at the multi-use court. The wind screen would be installed along the long side of the court closest to the river and the backboard would be installed along the short side of the fence closest to the tot lot. Anita Greenwood asked if the views would be obscured by the wind screen. Answer: it is translucent, and an example image was presented that showed that one could see partially through it. It can also be removed when not in use. Parks Manager Hennessey asked if the sound from the backboard would be an issue. Answer: it is far from residences in that location, and would only be in use if individuals wanted to play. **Motion by Commissioner Ellsworth to approve the installation of pickleball lines, wind screen, backboard, fence segment and gate at the Cashman Park multi-use court as presented, seconded by Commissioner Griffin. So voted on a unanimous voice vote.**

Cashman Park flood lights—(Mike Hennessey)

Parks Manager Hennessey presented the agenda item. He proposed two small, LED light fixtures to be affixed to two of the existing light posts at the Cashman soccer fields that would shine a soft light onto the field, allowing kids to travel on and off the field in a safe manner. The lighting would not be strong enough for play and would set on timer that would turn the lights off at 7:30 pm. The lighting would not be operational during the winter months when soccer is not played, but only during the beginning of the spring soccer season and the end of the fall soccer season. NYSA has offered to pay for the lighting, and their gift will be presented to City Council. **Motion by Commissioner Ellsworth to approve the installation of the LED lights on a timer at the Cashman Park soccer fields as presented, seconded by Commissioner Griffin. So voted on a unanimous voice vote.**

OLD BUSINESS

CPC application prioritization— (Kim Turner)

Kim Turner provided an update on the CPC applications that have been written for the 2023 season (due December 16), based on the Parks Commission's priorities. Updates by project are listed below:

1. *Upper Atkinson stone tower restoration (+/- \$100K):* The CPC application was written to request \$59,950 based on a recent quote obtained by Commissioner Ellsworth. The application has been submitted to the CPC.
2. *Upper Atkinson tennis court resurfacing (\$49,557):* The application has been submitted to the CPC.
3. *Cashman Park: resurfacing of tennis and basketball courts for multi-sport use (\$61,271):* The application has been submitted to the CPC.
4. *Bike Park Feasibility Study (\$5,750):* The application has been submitted to the CPC.
5. *Brown Square: remove decking, remove Black Cherry, renovate lawn and install stabilized stone 'patio' (\$55,000):* This application was not submitted due to a lack of time and based on a conversation with Parks Manager Hennessey, who believes he can tackle many of the improvements in-house.
6. *Inn St/Patrick Tracy Sq: resetting of brick pavers and rehab of post lights for LED (+/- \$280K):* The administration altered this application to a full downtown rehab of all existing post lights to LED fixtures. A request for resetting brick pavers was postponed until next year, considering the amount of construction work the downtown will be enduring next season between Market Landing Park, utility work on State Street, and Bartlet Mall. The new request is for \$115,957 to pay for 290 total light fixtures. This application has been submitted to the CPC.
7. *Woodman Park: accessibility and edging for playground (\$50,000):* The CPC application was written to request \$57,570 based on a recent quote by Parks Manager Hennessey. The application has been submitted to the CPC.
8. *Moseley Woods: remove stone wall and install granite posts/plantings similar to Joppa (+/- \$180K):* This CPC application was not submitted due to lack of time and based on the fact that the Parks Commission has not approved a formal design plan for this work.

Commissioner Griffin asked why the original estimated request of upwards of \$1M had been reduced so greatly. Answer: the formal quotes received, which need to be submitted with the applications, showed lower cost, there were several private donations that came in for some of the projects, and the Administration requested a reduction in asks for Parks in order to reduce the impact on the downtown by so many construction projects and in order to allow other applications to be considered. Geordie

Vining asked why the Mayor requested that he revoke his application to design a new rail trail along the old I-95 corridor. Answer: Market Landing Park and Bartlet Mall are two substantial parks that will be under construction over the next season, another new park is not a priority right now, when there are needs for deferred maintenance at some existing parks/project sites. Parks Manager Hennessey stated he cannot take on another new park at this time. **No action was taken.**

Memorial Bench policy—(Mike Hennessey)

Parks Manager Hennessey presented the agenda item. He stated that this draft bench policy is a combination of several policies that he liked. He proposed benches cost \$5,000 for 10 years, and can be renewed after the 10-year lease is up. He explained that there are 173 benches (110 with plaques) currently within the City, and roughly 10 of them are in dire need of renovation. He stated that the policy proposes that all existing benches would sunset in 5 years, and would need to be renewed if the owners could be located, but suggested that these sunsetting benches may be considered on a case-by-case basis. For example, if a bench was purchased in 2020, it should probably be allowed to remain until 2030 instead of sunsetting in 2028. Ken Irwin stated his concern about folks who have paid for a bench thinking they would have the bench forever and now being told that would not be the case. Commissioner Griffin stated that he was never comfortable with that notion, and likes this new policy as setting a clear understanding moving forward. Jane Snow stated that she thought the bench policy should be posted on the City website, so people are aware of it. Chair Boretti stated that a dollar amount for the benches is not specified in the policy, but that he thought that could be worked out at a later date with the City Council. **Motion by Commissioner Griffin to accept the bench policy as presented, seconded by Commissioner Ellsworth. So voted on a unanimous voice vote.**

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Griffin, seconded by Commissioner Ellsworth. So voted on a unanimous voice vote.

Adjourned 6:44 p.m.