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Minutes of the Newburyport Parks Commission

February 27, 2023

Senior Community Center First Floor Room A

Call to order: 6:00 p.m.

A quorum was present

In attendance: Chair Ted Boretti, Matt Ellsworth, Nicole Whelan

Also in attendance: Manager of Special Projects Kim Turner, Nikki Vazeos, Ann Haaser, Paula Estey, Debbie Hart-Klein, James Jones

MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL

Motion by Commissioner Ellsworth to approve the minutes of the Jan 19 Parks Commission meeting, seconded by Commissioner Whelan. Approved on a unanimous voice vote.

Tabled approval of minutes from Jan 23 due to lack of quorum for vote.

NEW BUSINESS

Motion to take items out of order Ellsworth, second Whelan. Vote approved unanimously.

Kona Ice at Parks—*(Nikki Vazeos)* Nikki said she is seeking approval once again to vend at parks in the same manner as last year. The parks she is requesting are Cherry Hill, Fuller Field and Cashman Park. She said that 18.2% of her total sales last year were made at these three parks and that she returned 20% of those profits back to the community. There is no application for this request, since she would be vending from the adjacent roadways, but she is asking for a formal opinion (letter) from the Commission that she can then provide to the City Council, who will give the ultimate approval. **Motion by Commissioner Ellsworth to allow Kona Ice to continue to operate at the three specified parks in the same manner as last year. Second by Commissioner Whelan. Approved on a unanimous voice vote.**

Planting 5 River Birch and installation of sign at the CCRT—PEG Center *(Paula Estey)* Paula presented on behalf of the PEG Center with a request to install 5 River Birch and a sign on the CCRT in commemoration of those lost at Uvalde. Parks Manager Hennessey provided a map showing the location between the locomotive and the Austrian Pines behind the Enpro property. Estey said the Huddle began having events to educate the community about gun violence and start a conversation about what the community would like to do to show support. They recently completed the 'Heart to Heart' event to make cards, but wanted to create a longer-term garden. Estey said she worked with Parks Manager Hennessey and FONT member Miller to locate a suitable location for the trees and sign.

She stated that the sign can be temporary and that longer-term the sign could be replaced with 2 memorial benches at a later date. Chair Boretti stated his concern about long-range signs on the CCRT. He said with the number of tragic events occurring and requests for memorials, that the parks are at risk of having too many commemorations. He prefers that signs are temporary. Estey stated that the intent is to form a long-term relationship with Uvalde and that Newburyport might become a sister city with them, pending the Mayor's approval. She feels that honoring one honors all. Parks Manager Hennessey said the tree species is perfect for this site based on the conditions and that he too was hesitant about the sign. He suggested the 12"x18" sign could go on the fence behind the planting, and be temporary, for 1-2 years. Chair Boretti stated that if the sign is temporary, for one year, it could be up front. He asked if, once the benches are installed, a plaque would be needed. Commissioner Ellsworth stated that he is ok if sign is up for one year. Would be ok with a plaque on bench per the recently adopted memorial bench policy. Ann Haaser asked if the plaque could be similar to benches at Moseley. Chair Boretti explained the memorial bench policy, posted on City's website. Commissioner Whelan suggested that the Commission revisit whether all of the names should be listed on the bench once a bench is ready to be installed, and that it would be powerful to list all the names of those lost at Uvalde. She suggested additional language 'to those who were lost *and those who survived*'. Manager Hennessey suggested securing the sign to the fence so there would not be a need to construct a post.

Motion by Commissioner Ellsworth to approve a temporary sign and garden as presented, with the sign installed for one year on fence, location subject to approval by Parks Manager Hennessey, and future benches to be installed with final location approval by Parks Manager. Second by Commissioner Whelan. Approved on a unanimous voice vote.

Bartlet Mall & Lower Atkinson Common playground color approval—(*Kim Turner*) MSP Turner presented the color options from ME O'Brien. She stated that several scenarios were reviewed, and they were narrowed down to two. One option is a tan and green, neutral color scheme and the other is a blue and grey color scheme. Commissioner Ellsworth stated his preference for the tan & green scheme because he felt it was the most neutral and least likely for people to find offensive. He stated his concern about heat with the blue and grey scheme. Commissioner Whelan stated she is also concerned about heat, but that she prefers the blue and grey scheme for the Bartlet Mall playground. She prefers the tan & green scheme at Lower Atkinson.

Motion by Commissioner Whelan to approve the green and tan color scheme at Lower Atkinson Common playground and the grey and blue scheme at the Bartlet Mall playground. Second by Commissioner Ellsworth. Approved on a unanimous voice vote.

Dog Bash event at Cashman Park—(*Eli Bailin*) Eli presented his application for June 3 with rain date of June 4. He showed last year's map for the event and said some of the vendors may change. Commissioner Ellsworth asked if there will be a barricade. Answer: Yes, a crowd control barricade will be set up that morning. Chair Boretti asked if this event is a repeat from last year. Answer: Yes. Chair Boretti asked if there were any issues last year. Answer: No. Bailin stated this is a fundraiser for Sweet Paws Rescue. They would charge \$5-6 per ticket and last year they broke even with cost of vendors, and were able to raise \$3,500 for Sweet Paws, which was considered a success. He is asking for a 50% discount, or the non-profit rate. Commissioner Whelan asked if people would be bringing dogs to the event for adoption. Answer: Yes. Bailin stated he will be working with the Harbormaster, will be obtaining a liquor license, and a police detail. Commissioner Whelan asked if this is truly a non-profit if the vendors are making a profit. Chair Boretti asked where the food trucks are going to be located this year. Answer: They will be lined up along Pop Crowley Way. Bailin offered to adjust the map and shift the stage to the north, closer to the trees. Parks Manager Hennessey suggested the food trucks be parked behind the chain by the basketball courts, near the restrooms. He asked how the trash will be handled. Answer: applicant will take care of all trash. Commissioner Whelan stated that Kona Ice

donates a portion of profits back to community, and hopes Barewolf Brewing would also consider doing the same. **Motion by Commissioner Ellsworth to approve the plan as submitted with the two food trucks located adjacent to the basketball court on asphalt right of way. Second by Commissioner Whelan. So approved on a unanimous voice vote.**

Clara de Windt signage at March's Hill—*(Mary Baker Eaton)* Chair Boretti presented the item. He said Mary Baker Eaton has been doing research on the donor of the park land to the City, Clara de Windt. She is suggesting that a small sign be hung from the main March's Hill sign in honor of de Windt. Commissioner Ellsworth asked what the sign should say. Chair Boretti suggested 'this land was graciously donated to the city by Clara in 1954 to 'know that Newburyport children will be able to play...' Commissioner Whelan suggested that someone draft some more concise wording. Chair Boretti asked if the Commission would like Mary to draft the language. Commissioner Whelan: yes, she would like the hanging sign to be shorter and longer than what is at Atwood. Chair Boretti stated that he would go back to Mary and ask her to draft the language. He asked if this should be an interpretive panel instead of a small sign. **No action was taken.**

Approval of Master Calendar of Annual Reviews—*(Kim Turner)* Chair Boretti reviewed the draft calendar and listed all the recurring business the Commission does on an annual basis. Chair Boretti asked if there are smaller items that should also be added in such as annual volunteer events, Yankee Homecoming events and/or other annual events that always ask for permission too late. Project Manager Hennessey stated that those items are more for the administration and applicants to handle. Commissioner Ellsworth asked if a legend could be added so people know what some of the abbreviations stand for. Answer: yes. Chair Boretti said he likes the calendar. **No action needed, a request from the Administration to post the calendar on the Parks Commission website.**

Review of Parks Master Plan and CIP—*(Kim Turner & Mike Hennessey)* MSP Turner presented the list of projects and how they were identified through prior reviews with the Commission and the Administration. She stated this tool is used to help compile the annual CIP and Budget for the Parks Division annually. Chair Boretti asked the Commissioners to review the Master Plan to make any suggestions and additions. **No action was taken.**

Review of Parks Reservation Policy—*(Kim Turner & Mike Hennessey)* Commissioners reviewed the policy, in particular the highlighted changes. Changes discussed: #1. prohibit inflatable equipment, ground stakes to anchor equipment, confetti, open flames, parking or driving on lawn areas, #4. non-profit organizations will receive a 50% discount on reservations, with proof of non-profit status, #6. a refundable security deposit of \$150 is required for all events with over 50 attendees. #7. add *signage* to the line: Decorations may be secured by tape only. Nails, screws, staples, and glue are prohibited, #17. increase group size for Commission review to 50+ attendees instead of 25. James Jones asked if Newburyport Pickleball would fall under Group D since they don't charge end users. Answer: yes. **Motion by Commissioner Ellsworth to accept the changes as discussed. Seconded by Commissioner Whelan. Approved on a unanimous voice vote.**

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Ellsworth, seconded by Commissioner Whelan. Approved on a unanimous voice vote.

Adjourned 8:12 pm.