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## **Minutes of the Newburyport Parks Commission**

**April 11, 2023**

*Newburyport Public Library, Meeting Room*

Call to order: 6:00 p.m.

A quorum was present

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

Also in attendance: Parks Manager Mike Hennessey, Manager of Special Projects Kim Turner, Debbie Hart-Klein, Peg Brown, Jim McCarthy, Ashley Hammond, Mike Sabulis, Stacey MacMillan, Andrea Eigerman, Tarah MacGregor, Paul Goldberg

### **MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL**

**Tabled approval of minutes from Jan 23 and Feb 27 due to lack of quorum for vote.**

**Motion to approve meeting minutes from March 16 by Commissioner Griffin, second by Commissioner Ellsworth. So approved on a unanimous voice vote.**

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Fundraiser Dog Walk—The Karen Wellington Foundation for Living with Breast Cancer (*Debbie Hart-Klein*)

Debbie Hart-Klein stated this is a repeat event and it will be run the same as last year, on October 14<sup>th</sup> from 10-noon with approximately 75 participants. The location is along the rail trail from Washington St to Parker St. and it is a fundraiser for a breast cancer organization, during breast cancer awareness month. It is not a long walk, but has stations along the way including information about the organization, water for dogs, a raffle, snacks, and a photographer. The event worked well last year and they intend to repeat it as it was. Last year, the Commission suggested a staggered start time, which worked well, and they will do that again. Parking will be at Cushing Park. **Motion by Commissioner Griffin to approve dog walk as presented, seconded by Commissioner Ellsworth. So approved on a unanimous voice vote.**

Bartlet Mall Project Update—GEI & Aqueous (*Mike Sabulis, Ashley Hammond & Kim Turner*)

Chair Boretti stated that he and Commissioner Griffin have been following this project closely with MSP Turner, and wanted to provide an update to the rest of the Commission. He introduced Mike Sabulis, from GEI and Ashley Hammond, from Aqueous. MSP Turner presented the 4 changes to the overall master plan for the Mall which include: 1. The reinstallation of a connector path from the crosswalk on High St toward the CVS on Pond St, which was requested by a few residents, 2. The change from the elliptical walkway behind the courthouse to a straight walkway along the foundation, as phase 1, with

the ellipse being considered at a later date, 3. The addition of a free-standing utility shed for the wet well and pump instead of the embedded vault within the NW corner slope, and 4. A relocated dock across from the new free-standing shed, to align the pipes to the wet well and pump. MSP Turner then turned the presentation over to GEI and Aqueous to present the current plan for the restoration of the Frog Pond. Mike Sabulis explained that the Frog Pond at Bartlet Mall is a 200 plus year old eutrophic pond that has been a nuisance for the City for decades, if not centuries. We know it is glacially originated, but there is currently a nutrient problem at the pond. Phosphorous, which feeds harmful algae was found at depths to 12'. Groundwater was found 30' below the bottom of the pond, which means there is no evidence of hydrologic connection between groundwater and the pond, but rather this is a stagnant pond that is fed only by surface runoff, and the impermeable sediments are what keeps water in the pond. If we excavate the sediment, we will no longer have a pond. We will need a bedrock well to keep the pond fed. The design team is filing a Notice of Intent with the Conservation Commission to line the pond in order to encapsulate the high nutrients and improve the sediments for a benthic layer (3" of rounded armor stone to protect the liner and 3" of sand) to support a healthy ecosystem. Then, a water quality pump and well system, with aeration and water control will be used to biomimic the pond as a natural water system by keeping the water moving both vertically and horizontally and inputting nanobubbles to add oxygen to the water. A seat-height granite edge is also being proposed with gaps to allow wildlife to enter. The bedrock well will most likely, based on a fracture test analysis, be installed at the Pond/High St end of the pond, and will be tested for volume of water of 40-50 gpm in order to top off the pond at a 4' depth at all times and control the water level. The team is no longer proposing any dredging, but rather capping the muck in place, and elevating the edge of the pond to keep the depth the same. The plan also includes installing the granite edge outside the buffer zone, and installing a low, vegetated ring (2' strip of native vegetation) to increase the resource area and provide habitat, which was requested by Mass DEP. The low vegetation may not be continuous, to allow breaks for skaters to enter the pond. The design also includes trenching around the pond for a water line and electrical line. It is important to keep in mind that the goal is not to create a swimming pool quality pond, but rather to mimic a natural system to support a natural ecosystem. The next step is to file the Notice of Intent for a public hearing with the Conservation Commission in early May. **Motion to approve the 4 changes to the master plan for the Bartlet Mall as presented by Commissioner Ellsworth, seconded by Commissioner Griffin. So approved on a unanimous voice vote.**

Earth Day Rally at Market Sq.—City of Newburyport (*Mayor Reardon*)

Mayor Reardon presented his idea for an Earth Day Rally in Market Sq. Because this is a City-sponsored event, no formal approval is needed, but the Mayor wanted to come speak to the Commission about the event. The Earth Day Rally at Market Sq. will take place on April 2 from 11-3 pm. The concept is to present eight things anyone can do now to help our planet. Ten 6' long tables will be set up and focus areas will include subjects such as composting, solar energy, and Mass Save. Residents with experience in one of the eight subjects will host the tables to speak about their experiences, and encourage others to join. This will be a first-time event, and details are still being worked out with ACES and the Chamber of Commerce, as well as the City. Chair Boretti asked if volunteers would be manning the tables. Answer: yes, this will not be a vendor-based event, but rather a resident-based event, including youth involvement. **No action was taken.**

Garden Tour at Atkinson Common—Museum of Old Newbury & Port Parks Alliance (*Andrea Eigerman*)

Andrea Eigerman from the Port Parks Alliance stated that folks from the MOON could not attend tonight's meeting due to a conflict, and presented the request to have Atkinson Common be part of the Museum of Old Newbury's Garden Tour this year. The event takes place on June 10-11 from 10-4 pm. She asked two questions of the Commission: 1. Does the MOON need to present a formal application for

a permit from this event or would this be considered a Commission-sponsored event that is mutually beneficial and supports the education and advocacy of our parks?, and 2. The PPA is happy to coordinate volunteers, but does the Commission want to highlight anything in particular during the tours such as history or horticulture? After some discussion, the Commission determined that no formal permit or fee would be required for this event because the Parks Commission would be a co-sponsor of the event. Chair Boretti asked who was going to run the event. Answer: the PPA would find the volunteers. Commissioner Ellsworth offered to volunteer. Andrea Eigerman suggested that stations would be the easiest rather than formal tours, with perhaps 5 stations, each with one theme that could be experienced in sequence. She suggested working with Commissioner Ellsworth and Parks Manager Hennessey to identify stations. She also suggested highlighting fundraising for specific events such as the Tower Restoration and the coping around the Lily Pond. **No action was taken.**

Update from Port Parks Alliance—(*Andrea Eigerman, Stacey MacMillan & Jim McCarthy*)

The PPA announced that they are officially a recognized 501.c.3 at the State level. They will be prioritizing volunteer coordination and fundraising to start. They requested that the Commission help them identify the top fundraising priorities. They were deliberate in their bylaws to require alignment with the Parks Commission on priorities so they do not get pulled in a million directions, are not being directed by donors, and do not become a 'holding place' for dollars that are donated that do not have immediate intention of being spent. On the website, there is a drop-down menu for restricted funds, and they would like to identify what those restricted funds projects are. Unrestricted funds are not a problem and can be used in whatever way the Parks Commission desires for gaps in funding of capital projects. The PPA has requested that the Finance Director at the City set up two separate accounts, one for restricted PPA funds and one for unrestricted PPA funds. Restricted funds would need a \$500 minimum and must be aligned with pre-determined projects. Chair Boretti suggested that restricted categories might include individual parks, playgrounds and courts, trees, etc. The PPA stated they would like a list of prioritized projects, perhaps 3-5 total, for the next meeting. **No action was taken.**

**Motion to take items out of order by Commissioner Griffin, seconded by Commissioner Ellsworth. So approved on a unanimous voice vote.**

Newburyport Pride Parade—NYS (*Tarah MacGregor*)

Tarah MacGregor presented the application for Newburyport's first pride parade. She stated that they are still going through the process to get a permit from City Council, but that she needs approval from the Parks Commission first. They have identified two possible locations for the parade: 1. From the Bartlet Mall down Green Street to City Hall and 2. Clipper City Rail Trail. She stated that she has spoken with the Mayor's office, and that the Mayor supports the event. Chair Boretti stated that the first route would require Parks Commission permission only for the Bartlet Mall and the second route would require Parks Commission permission for the entire route. Tarah suggested that the CCRT is not as desirable due to the lack of visibility and narrowness of the route. She also stated that she would like permission from the Parks Commission for both locations so she can go to the City Council for their final approval. Parks Manager Hennessey asked how many people would attend. Answer: this is the first event, and they estimate about 50 people. PM Hennessey asked if they would communicate with the attendees about parking, etc. Answer: yes. PM Hennessey asked if the Commission would be concerned with groups congregating at the Bartlet Mall. Answer: no. **Motion to approve both options for the Pride Parade contingent upon liability insurance and the group notifying the Parks Commission of the final location by Commissioner Griffin, seconded by Commissioner Ellsworth. So approved on a unanimous voice vote.**

9<sup>th</sup> Annual Harborside Half Marathon & 5K at Cashman Park—Loco Races, LLC (*Evan Dolecki & Eric Boucher*)

MSP Turner stated this is a repeat event and all the paperwork is in order. She also stated that they have reached out to Harbormaster again, as was requested last year. Parks Manager Hennessey asked that they be sure to pay the \$150 security deposit, per the recently approved ordinance change.

**Motion to approve contingent upon reaching out to the Harbormaster and paying the \$150 security deposit by Commissioner Ellsworth, seconded by Commissioner Griffin. So approved on a unanimous voice vote.**

Tree Planting at Cashman Park, Atwood Park, and Atkinson Common—(*Mike Hennessey*)

Parks Manager Hennessey presented images showing the locations for each of the trees. Two Red Maples will be planted at Atwood Park across the walkway from the two Norway Maples that were taken down last season. These were donated by Jim McCarthy. One Ginkgo will be planted at Cashman Park in the off-leash dog lawn near the bench with no plaque, but in honor of Cris Miller. One Beech will be planted in Atkinson Common across from the circle garden as a successional tree for the existing Beech that is in decline. This tree was donated by Joe Texiera in memory of his wife, and the money was donated to FONT. One Japanese Maple will be planted at Atkinson Common at the ornamental circular bed once the central ornamental grass is transplanted elsewhere. **Motion to approve all trees as presented by Commissioner Ellsworth, seconded by Commissioner Griffin. So approved on a unanimous voice vote.**

## **OLD BUSINESS**

Lower Atkinson Master Plan update—(*Kim Turner*)

MSP Turner presented the updated master plan. The plan shows a proposed extension of the gravel parking lot behind Founders Field, which will need Conservation Commission approval as well as Parks Commission approval. The plan also eliminates the parking to the west of the clubhouse and extends the curb and sidewalk in that location for pedestrian and traffic safety. The parking configuration to the east of the clubhouse, which takes cars off Merrimac Street into a one-way parking lot would remain the same from prior designs. The new playground and future location of a multi-sport court also remains the same from prior designs. **Motion by Commissioner Ellsworth to approve the plan as presented, seconded by Commissioner Griffin. So approved on a unanimous voice vote.**

Stone wall at Moseley Woods amendment—(*Mike Hennessey*)

Parks Manager Hennessey presented images of fieldstone walls for the Commission to consider. He noted that the stone wall does not address the issue of cars striking the wall again. Commissioner Griffin introduced other images to the Commission of monolithic antique granite. He suggests placing one monolithic antique stone at the right side of the entry where the wall would be most likely struck by a car and keeping the left side of the wall as is, with the name plaque. Chair Boretti asked if this would look odd and asymmetrical. The Commission considered keeping a good amount of the existing wall and adding stones where needed, as well as a cap. Commissioner Ellsworth stated he would like to look at the wall again, and suggested everyone look at it again before the next meeting. MSP Turner suggested scheduling a site walk which could be noticed. **No action was taken.**

**Motion to accept a late file by Commissioner Griffin, seconded by Commissioner Ellsworth. So approved on a unanimous voice vote.**

Runway for Recovery—(Olivia Boger)

MSP Turner stated this is a repeat event from before Covid, and all the paperwork is in order. This is a fundraiser for breast cancer to be held on May 18 from 6:30-8:30 pm, which will require approval from the Licensing Commission for the serving of alcohol, contingent on PC approval. **Motion to approve the application as presented by Commissioner Griffin, seconded by Commissioner Ellsworth. So approved on a unanimous voice vote.**

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

*Adjourned 7:47 pm.*