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Minutes of the Newburyport Parks Commission

August 17, 2023

Senior Community Center 1st Floor Meeting Room

Call to order: 6:00 PM

A quorum was present

Call to order: 6:00 p.m.

A quorum was present

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

Also, in attendance: Manager of Special Projects Kim Turner, Diane Wise, Parks Admin.; Michael Hennessey, Parks Manager; Nikolas Kedian, Mission Oak Restaurant.

1. REVIEW OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The minutes for July 20, 2023 were reviewed.

Motion to approve the minutes of July 20, 2023. So voted on a unanimous voice vote.

2. NEW BUSINESS

A) WEDDING AT BROWN SQUARE, MISSION OAK GRILL (NIKOLAS KEDIAN)

As weddings are reoccurring events at Mission Oak Grill and as long as all details remain the same, requests for approval will be added to the agenda; however Nikolas Kedain or representative of Mission Oak Grill does not have to appear. In inclement weather the event is taken into the restaurant and the park is not used.

Motion by Commissioner Greenwood to approve the current application and to adopt the future procedure for considering requests as long as there is no deviation from the original application. Seconded by Commissioner Griffin. So, voted on a unanimous voice vote.

B) FALL FEST – NO ONE PRESENT FROM CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Waterfront is not the jurisdiction of the Parks Commission. Request for the use of Market Square and Inn Street, Patrick Tracy Square. 8 hours each day, 50 vendors using 10 x 10 tents.

Motion by Commissioner Greenwood to approve Fall Fest application for Inn Street, Market Square, possibly Patrick Tracy Square. Seconded by Commissioner Griffin. So, voted on a unanimous voice vote.

Motion by Commissioner Griffin to take agenda out of order. Seconded by Commissioner Whelan. So, voted on a unanimous voice vote.

C). DISCUSSION OF COMMUNITY ART ON THE RAIL TRAIL (ANITA GREENWOOD)

Commissioners discussed having a designated place for community art on the rail trail., possibly, the fence space near Harrison St. Currently, there is art on display from the PEG center. Community art would remain until another application is received. This is a space for flat artwork only. All liked the idea and agreed to look for any other fence space which might be used before any policy is adopted. Commissioners also discussed the need for a city-wide committee which might approve the art placed in public spaces.

No Action Taken

D). LIMIT TENNIS BALL/DOG FETCHING TO THE FIELD BY THE ENTRANCE OF MOSELEY WOODS (NICOLE WHELAN)

Tennis balls are left in the woods and are a danger to other dogs. Concern that dogs will choke on the balls when they tear them apart. Proposed that an area is designated where fetch can be played which will be limited to the field at the entrance of Moseley Woods and stop at the Pavilion. Signs should be placed in the park at the beginning of season and information about this policy should be added to the website.

Motion by Commissioner Greenwood to restrict the use of tennis balls in Moseley Woods to the field area at the entrance. Seconded by Commissioner Griffin. So, voted on a unanimous voice vote.

E) SIGNAGE AND BARRIER FOR DOG PARK AT CASHMAN PARK (MIKE HENNESSEY)

To keep the dogs off the basketball courts at Cashman Park, it was suggested that two 90-100 ft long plant beds be planted, with signage to keep dogs off the courts. As plant beds require a lot of maintenance, other suggestions were a guard rail or wooden fence. Benches could be used as well, does not create a wall but does create a barrier. I was agreed to table this discussion in order for Mike Hennessey to propose a solution at a future meeting.

Motion by Commissioner Greenwood to table this discussion. Seconded by Commissioner Griffin. So, voted on a unanimous voice vote.

F) COMMUNITY GARDEN (KIM TURNER)

A trust has been established to honor the wish of a deceased Newburyport resident to build a community garden. There is enough money in the trust to create the garden and maintain it. The follow criteria need to be met. The Trust would:

1. have naming rights.
2. handle all administrative duties.
3. handle the lease of the land, it will not be for profit.
4. 1/3 of the food grown will go to food pantries.
5. handle the media on this project.

6. include a sound element in the garden, i.e. fountain.

A half-acre of land would be needed, fenced in but with access for bring in compost and water source. Some suggestions of locations are 1. 270 Water Street, owned by National Grid but City has a lease; garden would have to be raised garden beds. 2. Doe Run – Hale Street 3. Colby Farm Lane, this has easy access, old agricultural land. This would be the first community garden in Newburyport. Once a suitable place has been located, the project would go to the City Council for discussion and approval.

Motion by Commissioner Griffin to show support for the Community Garden. Seconded by Commissioner Greenwood. So, voted on a unanimous voice vote.

G) FITNESS EQUIPMENT (KIM TURNER)

Adult fitness on the Clipper Rail Trail, will be a public benefit. There will be cardio, stretching bar, elliptical, a combination of equipment to support a full workout.

The equipment is designed to be outside, like playground equipment. This is a real need and has been requested by resident .

Motion by Commissioner Boretti to add to list of projects for CPC funding. Seconded by Commissioner Greenwood. So, voted on a unanimous voice vote.

H) ROUNDUP USAGE (MIKE HENNESSEY)

Roundup use for weed control is the most effective tool to use in some situations. The EPA found that it is not likely to be carcinogenic for humans and it is still used widely. The parks have many hard to control areas and lack of staffing to manage weed growth. Every gallon of Roundup saves eight-man hours. The Parks Manager requested permission to use Roundup in specific, hard to control, places:

- Poison Ivy in the Parks
- Promenade of Bartlett Mall
- Infields of ball fields - Cashman, Perkins, Woodman
- Pathways of Atkinson Common
- Zinck Garden Cherry Hill Soccer Field
- Inn Street and Bullnose Cobbles and Tree Wells

Pesticide will be applied in compliance with Massachusetts Department of Agriculture Guidelines using a licensed pesticide applicator. Commissioners raised the issue that there may be a city ordinance preventing the use of Roundup anywhere in the city. The Parks Manager will ensure that usage is in compliance with any city ordinance.

Motion by Commissioner Greenwood to support the Parks Manager's request to use Roundup in the specific areas in the city unless a city ordinance banning its use is in place. Seconded by Commissioner Griffin. So, voted on a unanimous voice vote.

I) PRIORITIES FOR BOOKING COURT TIME DISCUSSION (ANITA GREENWOOD)

This item was discussed in tandem with an Old Business item "Signage for Cashman Park."

Park signage states that parks are open from 8:00AM – 8:00PM. While there is no city ordinance stating that parks cannot be used earlier, the MyRec system should align with park signs and no reservations can be made before 8 a.m. or later than 8 p.m. Diane Wise to align the systems. If a reservation is requested for the Cashman Multi-Sport court which is not Tennis or Pickleball, Diane will ascertain whether the activity could be accomplished in a different space.

No vote necessary.

J) BROWN SCHOOL PLAYGROUND – NO DOGS ALLOWED (MIKE HENNESSEY)

Signs attached at the Brown School Playground to state that there are no dogs allowed in the playground.

Motion by Commissioner Greenwood to place signs at the Brown School Playground. Seconded by Commissioner Whelan, So, voted on a unanimous voice vote.

3. OLD BUSINESS

A) BARTLET MALL PUMP HOUSE – CHARLES GRIFFIN

Charles Griffin presented an overview of Bartlet Mall history and renovation. There exists a full set of plans that is in Bulfinch's own handwriting. There was an arcade with arch points that allowed people to come out of the rain. Looking at the Courthouse today and one can still see where the arches were. The elements, i.e an arcade, brick, string courses, narrow marble pilasters and a slate roof. This original design, along with the current budget, should guide us as to how to proceed. The goal now is to restore Bartlet Mall to its original design and recreate the access road entrance to the park on Auburn Street. However, the restoration of the pond indicates that a pump house is needed.

- Should the Pump house be free standing?
- Should the pump house be modern, or does it need to recall the courthouse which is of Bulfinch style.?

Planning board, had concerns about the pump house's suggested design. First design had no stringcourse. Terra Cotta and fiberglass column capitals could be added. The suggestion is to dress the building down since it is an accessory building. Charles Griffin would like to work with any builder to ensure that the Pump House aligns with the goal of returning to Bulfinch's design elements.

Motion to adjourn. So voted on a unanimous voice vote.

Adjourned 7:25 PM.

List of documents viewed at Parks Commission Meeting

- Minutes from July 20, 2023 Parks Commission Meeting
- PowerPoint for Design Build Solution.
- Wedding at Mission Oak – Brown Square
- Application for Fall Fest from Chamber of Commerce
- Moseley Woods Tennis Ball/Dog Area
- Public Art Spaces Discussion
- Maps for Community Garden – 3 options
- Quotes and picture of the equipment for the Fitness Path exercise equipment.