

**Minutes of the Newburyport Parks Commission
November 21, 2016**

Call to order at 6:06 p.m.

A quorum was present.

In attendance: PARKS COMMISSIONERS: Ann Dykes , Ann Lagasse, Karen Popken, Stephen Sawyer, Kim Turner; BARTLET MALL COMMISSIONERS: Andrea Eigerman, Joanna Fernandez, Ellen Hanick, Karen Johnson

Also In attendance: Lisë Reid, Mike Hennessey, Kristen Jackman, Richard England

NEW BUSINESS

Issues

Bartlet Mall Commission

Chair Andrea Eigerman presented the commission's communication regarding maintenance of the Bartlet Mall (attached).

Parks and Bartlet Mall Commissioners discussed the points raised by the communication. Of note is that the Bartlet Mall Commissioners would like to maintain natural grass length along the slopes with no more than two mowings per year, and perhaps as few as one mowing every other year. They asked that the stones be removed and not replaced on the asphalt drive from the upper level to pond level at the northeast corner of the pond.

Commissioners answered questions raised by Energy Advisory Committee member Richard England about the use of Ocean Pure Water System in the Frog Pond.

Bartlet Mall Commissioners asked Parks Commission permission to create a "Tree of Hope" from an existing tree that stands at the top of the stairs at the northeast corner of the park. Parks Commissioners were amenable to the idea.

Commissioners discussed adding electrical outlets to lampposts along the High Street promenade in order to promote sponsorship of adding lights to the tree allée. Director Reid said she would solicit a quote for the work.

Lower Atkinson Common Tree Removal

Commissioners discussed removing a tree near the entrance to Pioneer Fields at Lower Atkinson Common. Commissioners did not approve removal but recommended removal of bituminous material surrounding roots and mulching root zone with Agresoil.

Zagster at Cushing Park

Commissioners discussed the city's proposal to place a *Zagster* bike rental station at Cushing Park. They asked Director Reid to communicate that near the bathrooms at Cashman Park and also at the northwest end of Joppa Park would be better locations than Cushing Park based on proximity to destinations such as Cashman Park recreation facility and boat ramp, Clipper City Rail Trail, Tannery Marketplace, etc.

Walkway Materials at Joppa Park

Commissioners discussed using bricks instead of the previously approved permeable pavers as the surface for walkway improvements along the seawall at Joppa Park.

Motion to approve using bricks for the seawall walkway surface and replacing the central garden pavers with bricks by Commissioner Turner, seconded by Commissioner Sawyer. So voted on a unanimous voice vote.

Commissioners added that the bricks should match those used by resident John Morris for the sidewalk that crosses the Joppa Park boatramp.

PARKS DIRECTOR UPDATES

Permitting

Fuel River Run, May 7, 2017 - Commissioners reviewed Fuel Training Studio's application to use Cashman Park basket ball and tennis courts and the Clipper City Rail Trail on May 7, 2017 from 6 a.m. to 3 p.m. for a running race and post-race activities. Commissioner's approved the permit contingent on City Council approval, and in adherence to the following provisions:

"Event organizer is responsible for re-moving all trash from site and leaving site as they found it. Do not block rail trail with any obstructions. This permit does not give permit-holder exclusive use of the Clipper City Rail Trail. Please inform participants and employ adequate staff or volunteers to ensure that the trail is open to the general public for regular use at all times during your event. Posting signage is not allowed."

Commissioners recommended a \$1,500 donation to the Newburyport Parks Conservancy to support parks maintenance.

Ladies Night Out, December 3, 2016 – Commissioners reviewed B&S Event Management's application to hold Ladies Night Out at Cashman Park and the Clipper City Rail Trail. Commissioner's approved the permit contingent on City Council approval, and in adherence to the following provisions:

"Event organizer is responsible for re-moving all trash from site and leaving site as they found it. Do not block rail trail with any obstructions. This permit does not give permit-holder exclusive use of the Clipper City Rail Trail. Please inform participants and employ adequate staff or volunteers to ensure that the trail is open to the general public for regular use at all times during your event. Posting signage is not allowed."

Commissioners recommended a \$500 donation to the Newburyport Parks Conservancy to support parks maintenance.

Troop 21 Boy Scouts Community Wide Yard Sale – Bartlet Mal Commissioners approved a permit application to use the Bartlet Mall Basketball Court area to host a yard sale fundraiser on April 29, 2017 or raindate April 28, 2017.

Maintenance

Motion to approve purchase of a leaf vacuum contingent on available funding by Commissioner Turner, seconded by Ann Dykes. So voted on a unanimous voice vote.

BUDGET/EXPENDITURES REVIEW

Commissioners approved bills for 11/1 and 11/15 warrants.

Meeting adjourned 7:35 p.m.

Newburyport Parks Commission
60 Pleasant Street
Newburyport, MA 01950

DRAFT

November 11, 2016

Dear Chair Turner and Commissioners:

The Bartlet Mall Commission (BMC) thanks you for the great time and energy you expend in maintaining and improving our city's parks. It is not easy to balance needs against available funding. It is with this balancing in mind that the BMC advocates for the Frog Pond and the Bartlet Mall. Today, we call your attention to two plans that we feel are absolutely necessary to protect the resources under our charge.

Watershed Management Plan

As you know, potential contractor Phoenix Revolution has proposed to install a new technology to improve the water quality in the Frog Pond. The key to this proposal is the award of an outside grant.

However, if the City does not control the major sources of potentially contaminated storm water run-off into the Frog Pond, and conduct basic regular maintenance, no technology, no matter how brilliant, can produce long-term improvements to water quality. It would be another wasted effort.

The BMC urges the Commission to implement a simple, but rigorous, Watershed Management Plan for areas surrounding the Frog Pond. Without this, any progress in cleaning the water will be undone. Please find attached a table outlining actions that we believe any such plan should include.

Bartlet Mall Maintenance Plan

In addition to implementing – and adhering to – a Watershed Management Plan, the BMC believes that the City should adopt a set of basic maintenance tasks for the overall Bartlet Mall park. During recent years, the failure of the City to undertake even these basic tasks has led to a visible and substantive decay in the recreational value of the resource. We feel that the City simply must give these basic tasks priority. Please see the attached table outlining the highest-priority maintenance needs that we believe any maintenance plan should include. The BMC is ready to fill some of these needs through volunteer efforts.

Sincerely,

Andrea Gaut Eigerman
Chair, Bartlet Mall Commission

cc: Ellen Hanick, Bartlet Mall Commission
Constance Maas, Bartlet Mall Commission
Joana Fernandes, Bartlet Mall Commission
Karen Johnson, Bartlet Mall Commission
Lisë Reid, City of Newburyport Parks Director

Watershed Management Required (consistent with the *Bartlet Mall Management Plan*, 2005-2010, and the *Bartlet Mall Master Plan*, dated September 1998)

- Weed treatment within the Mall should be mechanical and/or any sprays should be organic, other methods like burning should be considered.
- Maintenance of the Frog Pond should include the removal of debris along its edge and shallows and better control of invasive plants. When organic matter is left in the pond to decompose, it adds to the levels of phosphorous already contained in the sediments, and thus increases the frequency and severity of algal blooms. Debris, such as trash, leaves, and twigs, should be collected and removed. Invasive plants (primarily *Phragmites* along the north edge) should be eradicated to the extent possible, with both mechanical and hand harvesting. Reduce, but do not eliminate, water lilies, and maintain desirable wetland and shoreline vegetation along approximately half of the shoreline in three distinct places. Removal of too much vegetation can impact pond fauna. Check on how to reduce water lilies, as “pulling” them may stimulate growth.
- Gutters that lead from the courthouse roof to the Frog Pond should be re-plumbed to the sewer system or a filter installed to remove bird feces.
- Conduct continued management of water fowl in the Frog Pond to avoid feces contamination. Deterrents for geese may need to be installed.
- Better management of dog feces pick up, particularly during the winter months, as in the spring all deposits drain to the Frog Pond. More frequent visits from an animal control officer or other method of enforcement would be helpful.
- Continue to avoid any dumping of plowed snow into the Bartlet Mall watershed. Salts and other road contaminants in the snow drain to the pond.
- Reconsider the use of aerators and consider the possible eradication of bottom dwelling fish in the pond. Both may be releasing pollutants from the sediments into the water column, making the pollutants more available to “nourish” the cyano bacteria present in the pond.

High Priority Maintenance Needs (consistent with the *Bartlet Mall Management Plan*, 2005-2010, and the *Bartlet Mall Master Plan*, dated September 1998)

Action	Locations	Notes
Weed control	Entire Mall, but particularly around the George Washington Statue, gravel pathways,	Weed control should be mechanical and/or organic to avoid further pollution of the pond. Pre-emergent weed preventers may be an approach to control seed germination of weed species.
Flower bed maintenance	Around the George Washington statue, flag pole, and courthouse.	We may be able to enlist volunteers and donations, if necessary.

Tree maintenance, particularly tree stumps ground down, and at least in one location, roots and stump excavated.	Entire Mall.	Basic maintenance such as removing deadwood from canopies, hazardous trees removed and replaced, and regular inspections are needed. Seven to eight tree trunks need to be ground down and removed. New trees should be planted. The stump and roots of the large willow tree removed east of the pond should be excavated so that another shade tree may be planted in this key location. Elms along the Elm Allee should receive additional attention to help them thrive. Perhaps better coordination between the BMC, the Tree Commission, and FoNT would help this maintenance proceed.
Maintenance of "Elm Allee" (High Street promenade)	Granite border along "Elm Allee" along High Street.	Grass has grown over the flush granite curbing.

Maintenance Appropriate for "Done in a Day" Volunteer Efforts Organized by the BMC

- The BMC may organize volunteer days to repaint stair railings and lamp posts, as well as sanding and re-varnishing benches.
- Volunteer days might also be used to ensure handicap ramps are cleared of leaf debris and weeds, and that the handicap accessible, asphalt trail on the east side of the Frog Pond has the pebbles removed from its surface.





