

Minutes of the Newburyport Parks Commission
April 16, 2020
VIA REMOTE COMMUNICATION

Call to order: 6:00 p.m.
A quorum was present

In attendance: Kimberly Turner, Matthew Ellsworth, Charles Griffin

Also In attendance: Michael Hennessey, David Jurgelon, Lisë Reid, Richard Pacella, Stephanie Danielson, Geordie Vining, Councilor Christine Wallace, Councilor Heather Shand.

REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES

Motion to approve minutes for January 2020 by Commissioner Ellsworth, seconded by Commissioner Griffin. So voted on a unanimous voice vote.

NEW BUSINESS

Project Staging at Cushing Park

Motion to allow staging of materials for the Safe Routes to School Project according to schematic provided by Office of Planning & Development by Commissioner Ellsworth, seconded by Commissioner Griffin. So voted on a unanimous voice vote.

GNSA permit fee barter agreement

Commissioners discussed a proposal by the Greater Newburyport Softball Association (GNSA) to perform infield maintenance in exchange for use of Cashman softball field in lieu of paying a permit fee. Parks Director Reid stated that the Department found it too cumbersome to coordinate partial ball field maintenance by volunteers in combination with staff and recommended the Parks Department be solely responsible for an increased level of maintenance at city ball fields. **Motion to deny GNSA fee barter proposal by Commissioner Ellsworth, seconded by Commissioner Turner. So voted on a unanimous voice vote.**

Open Space & Recreation Plan Update & Public Hearing

Stephanie Danielson of the Beta Group and the City's Senior Project Manager Geordie Vining presented the city's project to update its 7-year Open Space & Recreation Plan (OSRP). They invited public comment. Comments recorded by City's consultant, Beta Group, are attached.

Atkinson Common Bike Trails

Commissioners listened to concerns from Councilor Christine Wallace about damage to the environment including wetlands caused by children riding bikes at Atkinson Common near the Chase Street entrance extending through the woods to Lower

Atkinson. The commission agreed to post more temporary signage at Lower Atkinson discouraging bike riding and to seek counsel of the City's Conservation Agent to determine whether the activity is endangering the wetlands.

Inclusive Playground sponsor program signage

Commissioners considered options for recognizing donors to the Bartlet Mall playground project. One suggestion included a single obelisk that would give a brief history of the Mall's significant personages and also recognize donors. Commissioners asked for a more complete proposal to consider at a future meeting. Commissioner Griffin offered to assist by providing an image of a possible obelisk.

"Newburyport Strong" signage in Market Square

Commissioners considered to proposal by the Chamber of Commerce to place lighted lettering in Market Square spelling out the words, "Newburyport Strong." They expressed concerns about vandalism, electrical connections, maintenance and particularly about the signage conflicting with Newburyport's character. **Motion to deny proposal to erect temporary "Newburyport Strong" signage in Market Square by Commissioner Griffin, seconded by by Commissioner Ellsworth. So voted on a unanimous voice vote.**