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Minutes of the Newburyport Parks Commission
May 18, 2023
NEWBURYPORT PUBLIC LIBRARY MEETING ROOM

Call to order: 6:00 p.m.

A quorum was present

Commissioners in attendance: Chair Ted Boretti, Matt Ellsworth, Charles Griffin, Anita Greenwood

Also, in attendance: Manager of Special Projects Kim Turner, Diane Wise, Parks Admin.; Dan Logan, Cub Scout Leader; Erik Scorgia, Cub Scouts; Kathy Scanlan, GNOCA; Nikolas Kedian, Mission Oak; Bob Uhlig, Halvorson; James Jones, Newburyport Pickleball; Karen Clagett, Resident; Andrea Eigerman, PPA.

1. REVIEW OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The minutes for January 23rd, February 27th and April 11th, 2023 were reviewed.

Motion to approve all minutes as presented. So voted on a unanimous voice vote.

2. NEW BUSINESS

A) GNOCA LANTERN FESTIVAL @ BARTLETT Mall – Great Newburyport Ovarian Cancer Awareness presented by Kathy Scanlan

Kathy Scanlan requested the rescheduling of the Lantern Lighting event at Bartlett Mall from the usual September date, to July 2nd, in light of the pond renovation work that will start in the fall. Rain date is July 3rd. 2023.

The appropriate paperwork was submitted.

Fee to be charged follows the established policy for special events Group H (\$100/hour). The Commissioners agreed that GNOCA would not be charged for the set-up hours, and just for the three hours of the event.

Motion by Commissioner Greenwood to approve with a fee of \$300. Seconded by Commissioner Ellsworth. So voted on a unanimous voice vote.

B) BOYS SCOUTS CAMPING AT CASHMAN PARK – NEWBURYPORT PACK 21 CUB SCOUTS, PRESENTED BY ERIK SCORCH AND DAN LOGAN

Request was made for use of the Baseball Diamond at Cashman Park for a cub scout camping event on Friday 15th September 2023. The event will be held in tandem with an

NYS movie night. Number of attendees 40. Should the Baseball Diamond be unavailable, the camp will take place on the soccer field.

The appropriate paperwork was submitted.

No fee to be charged as this event is for a non-profit in conjunction with a city department (NYS)

Motion to approve the camp at Cashman Park with no fee. So voted on a unanimous voice vote.

Additional request was for a fire during the camp. The applicants have and will work with the Fire Department to ensure that any fire is set up in an appropriately safe manner.

Motion by Commissioner Greenwood to approve the use of a fire pit providing the Newburyport Fire Chief has overseen the arrangements. Seconded by Commissioner Ellsworth. So voted on a unanimous voice vote.

c) WEDDING AT BROWN SQUARE – NIKOLAS KEDIAN FROM MISSION OAK RESTAURANT

Request was made for the use of Brown Square for a wedding ceremony on June 24th 2023. The park will be used from 4-5 p.m. Chair delivery and removal to be completed immediately before the after the wedding ceremony.

The appropriate paperwork was submitted

Fee of \$100 for one hour use of the park.

Motion to approve the use of Brown Square by Mission Oak with \$100 fee for one hour on June 24th, 2023. So voted on a unanimous voice vote.

D) TREE REMOVAL & FIT COURT AT CLIPPER CITY RAIL TRAIL – PRESENTED BY BOB UHLIG AND KIM TURNER

Presentation and discussion of a revised plan for MINCO property abutting the rail trail at the old Haley's Ice Cream shop. In order to provide a safer off-ramp from US Route 1 the developer requested permission to remove four oak trees. The developer is also will also undertake to create a more leveled regrading where the property meets the rail trail. There is a swale which will be leveled and replanted to maintain the appearance of the rail trail.

The developer also offered to regrade an area for fitness equipment and lay a concrete slab. (This meets one of the strategic goals of the parks commission). The particular fitness equipment presented at the meeting was of concern to the commissioners who did not consider the appearance to be appropriate for this site. The equipment is part of a grant from Blue Cross Blue Shield and would require an application to be submitted. While the commissioners did not wish to go forward with the particular BCBS grant application, a return to a discussion of the developer's proposal for a site for fitness equipment will be welcomed at a future meeting.

Motion by Commissioner Ellsworth to approve the plan for tree removal and ground regrading, as submitted. Seconded by Commissioner Greenwood. So voted on a unanimous voice vote.

E) PETITION AGAINST MULTI-USE COURT AT LOWER ATKINSON COMMON - PHIL COOTEY, NOT IN ATTENDANCE.

This petition was previously presented at City Council and the Community Services Committee and was received and filed by the latter. While no action was required to be taken by the Parks Commission, a brief discussion ensued.

Comments made by commissioners during discussion:

- o There is not unanimous opposition to the multi-use court as claimed by the petitioner.
- o Pickleball and Basketball would be the two uses and pickleball would not be played at a time that interfered with baseball practices and games.
- o Parks are not just for one age group - they are for children through older adults.
- o Some informal conversations with petition signers indicated that they mistakenly thought that basketball was being removed
- o Any renovation of the court will probably not be until fall of 2024

No action. Petition received and filed.

F) BIKE FEASIBILITY STUDY - PRESENTED BY KIM TURNER

5 locations to be considered in addition to March's Hill

- March's Hill feasibility study has already been done. The hill itself has old gravel and trees and bike trails would not be detrimental to the ecosystem. Some concern about access for emergency vehicles. Opposition from the abutters who are concerned about safety and overuse of the area impacting the neighborhood.
 - Even though the other sites will be evaluated, there is no funding at present for any building.
- Location 1 - Woodman Park (Crow Lane), children are already making trails. There is a lot of housing nearby.

Location 2 - the swath of land, near Hale Street and 95, it still has a bike path.

Location 3 - Colby Farm Lane

Location 4 - Fulton pits, off Greenleaf St. near the firehouse,

Location 5 - Ferry Road near 95 and Moseley Wood

Motion by Commissioner Ellsworth to hire of a consultant, contingent upon receiving a grant for funding. Seconded by Commissioner Griffin. So voted on a unanimous voice vote.

G) SHADE STRUCTURE AT PERKINS PLAYGROUND - PRESENTED BY KIM TURNER.

Previously, a CPA grant was awarded for \$1200-\$1500 for a shade structure at Perkins Playground, which is sitting in a city account. Discussion centered on need for the shade structure and longevity structure that could be purchased for the price. Commissioners considered that trees would provide more adequate shade.

Motion by Commissioner Greenwood for a reallocation of the funds to plant trees instead of purchasing a shade. Seconded by Commissioner Ellsworth. So voted on a unanimous voice vote.

3. OLD BUSINESS

A) CLARA DE WINDT SIGNAGE @ MARCH'S HILL – PRESENTED BY KIM TURNER ON BEHALF OF MIKE HENNESSEY

Mary Baker, historian, would like to recognize Clara de Windt for donating the land at March's Hill.

Motion by Commissioner Griffin to approve signage recognizing Clara de Winds, similar to the small white sign at Atwood Park. Seconded by Commissioner Greenwood. So voted on a unanimous voice vote.

B) MORRILL FOUNDATION REQUEST- PRESENTED BY KIM TURNER

Projects which align with the Commission's master plan include:

Granite edging for Bartlett Mall

Rock Tower at Upper Atkinson Common

The Morrill Foundation request would be for between 100 and 150K

Motion by Commissioner Griffin to request from the Morrill Foundation, monies for granite edging at Bartlett Mall. Seconded by Commissioner Ellsworth. So voted on a unanimous voice vote.

C) STONE WALL AT MOSELEY WOODS - PRESENTED BY KIM TURNER ON BEHALF OF MIKE HENNESSEY

Three bids have been received to repair the wall and plaque. Low bid was from Frontier Landscape for \$4920

Motion by Commissioner Griffin to repair the stone wall once the receipt of the money from the insurance company payment is received. Seconded by Commissioner Ellsworth. So voted on a unanimous voice vote.

D) PORT PARKS ALLIANCE ALLOCATIONS – PRESENTED BY TED BORETTI AND ANDREA EIGERMAN

Andrea presented the plans for restructuring the PPA website. Discussion of restricted and unrestricted donations

- Unrestricted donations can be used for whatever is needed, but above and beyond what the parks and city have budgeted. Not park maintenance as that is in the Parks budget.
- Restricted would be for a specific use - general discussion about what these should be and alignment with Parks Commission Strategic Plan one idea was to prioritize flagship parks Bartlett Mall, Atkinson, the Rail Trail, Cashman Park, maybe the downtown corridor. A second suggestion was to list a specific project such as the Byron Court, granite edging at the Bartlett Mall, pond repair at Upper Atkinson Common. A third suggestion was restricted funds for trees and pollinators.
- Questions raised for further consideration: How often should the campaigns change? When does the campaign begin and when does it end?
- Chair Boretti suggested three campaigns that we can start with, Byron Court repaving, Bartlett Mall granite edging and Atkinson Common tower restoration. If restricted people can
- If someone wants to donate money to a specific park project that is not part of the campaign, then the gift can be made through the City Council and not through PPA.

Motion by Commissioner Greenwood to update the PPA website and prioritize the formation of unrestricted and restricted giving. Restricted will be for Byron Court repaving, Bartlett Mall Frog Pond Granite Edging and the Atkinson Rock Tower. Seconded by Commissioner Ellsworth. So voted on a unanimous voice vote.

Motion to adjourn. So voted on a unanimous voice vote.
Adjourned 8:04 pm.