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**Minutes of the Newburyport Parks Commission**

**February 15, 2024**

Senior Community Center – Second Floor Board Room

Call to order: 6:00 PM A quorum was present.

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

Also, in attendance: Manager of Special Projects Kim Turner, Renee Ward, Parks Admin., Michael Hennessey, Parks Manager, Ben Iacono, Andrea Eigerman, Nikki Vazeos and Brian Denis.

**1. REVIEW OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

The minutes for January 22, 2024 were reviewed.

*Motion to approve the minutes of January 22, 2024. So, voted on a unanimous voice vote.*

**2. NEW BUSINESS**

1. **NEWBURYPORT RECREATION POTENTIAL COLLABORATION WITH PARKS**

**Postponed until a future meeting.**

1. **NEWBURYPORT RECREATION APRIL ECLIPSE WATCHING EVENT- KIM TURNER**

The Department of Recreation and Youth Services requested permission to host a ‘Total Eclipse at the Park Event’ at Cashman Park on Monday April 8, 2024, from 2PM-4PM. This is event will be free to all and there will be prepackaged moon pies sold. The event is family focused with arts and crafts along with free eclipse glasses. The eclipse will occur at 3:29PM. There shouldn’t be an issue with parking at the park. Commissioner Boretti questioned whether the Harbormaster should be contacted to make sure parking on the boat ramp won’t interfere with any harbor business. Michael Hennessey will contact Harbormaster.

*Motion by Commissioner Ellsworth to approve the Eclipse event. Seconded by Commissioner Greenwood. So, voted on a unanimous voice vote.*

1. **TRUCK AT CHERRY HILL – NIKKI VAZEOS**

Kona Ice ownerVazeos sought approval to vend at parks in the same manner as last year. The parks requested are Cherry Hill, Fuller Field, Mosely and Cashman Park. This is her third-year vending at those locations. Michael Hennessy made a comment that there is never Kona Ice trash at these locations. There is no application for this request, since she would be vending from the adjacent roadways, but she is asking for a formal opinion (letter) from the Commission that she can then provide to the City Council, who will give the ultimate approval.

*Motion by Commissioner Greenwood to allow Kona Ice to continue to operate at the four specified parks. Second by Commissioner Griffin. Approved on a unanimous voice vote.*

*Motion by Commissioner Ellsworth to take the agenda out of order, seconded by Commissioner Greenwood. So, voted on a unanimous voice vote*

C) **PORT PARKS ALLIANCE MAY EVENT- PORT PARKS ALLIANCE – ANDREA EIGERMAN**

A chalk art event at Inn Street was proposed to help educate and engage the public and community members about the historical parks in the city. PPA suggested May 11th as the date for the event which would be free for all and would have an information table on the Port Parks Alliance and Parks Commission. Several concerns were raised by commissioners about the site for this event and its appropriateness. PPA will continue to research the idea and is open to other location suggestions as well as engaging a professional chalk artist.

*Discussion, no action taken.*

D) **FOURTH ANNUAL LOVE LOCAL BREAST CANCER EVENT- OLIVIA BOGER**

Olivia Boger asked permission to host a Love Local event at Inn Street Park on May 9th from 3:00PM-9:00PM. Love Local is an event in its 17th year to benefit families impacted by breast cancer. The event is designed to bring the community together and to fundraise for Runway for Recovery. The event occurs throughout the city at shops during the week and culminates with speakers and fundraising on Inn Street, by the fountains. They will be serving alcohol which will be in a roped off area for those over 21 with the police detail making sure all drinks stay within the designated area. The Inn Street fountain will be shut off. Trucks arrive at 2 p.m. for set-up.

*Motion by Commissioner Greenwood to approve the Love Local event. Seconded by Commissioner Griffin. So, voted on a unanimous voice vote.*

E) **BARTLET MALL BENCH FUNDRAISER- PORT PARKS ALLIANCE – ANDREA EIGERMAN**

Andrea Eigerman proposed a fundraiser to add 4 benches at the playground as there are currently none. PPA is looking to fundraise the total cost of 4 benches which comes to $20,000 and looking to start this initiative in April/May after they have about 30-40% of the funds secured. Jim McCarthy will match funds raised with $1,000. PPA is hoping to launch this initiative with a celebration at the playground with temporary signage acknowledging the donors.

*Motion by Commissioner Greenwood to approve the Bartlet Mall Bench plan. Seconded by Commissioner Griffin. So, voted on a unanimous voice vote.*

**3) OLD BUSINESS:**

**A) SIGNAGE POLICY FOLLOW-UP – COMMISSIONER BORETTI**

Commissioner Boretti believes there should be two separate policies; temporary signage and permanent signage. There is no plan in place to include maintenance of signs and plaques. The Parks Manager should have the authority and discretion to remove the signage if it is not maintained or is at the end of life. Public comment from Ben Iancono- historcal signs/plaques should not be removed, but updated. A condtions scale was recommended which would help determine the quality of the sign and determine what end of life is. The Parks Commission vision statement should be followed when constructing a signage policy while also referencing the City Ordinances.

1. **MOSELEY DOG ISSUES & POLICY FOLLOW-UP- COMMISSIONER BORETTI**

Commissioner Boretti has received emails with mixed reviews regarding Moseley and the off leash area in the woods. The off leash area at Moseley starts at the tree line and goes into the woods. Unfortunetly, there are some dog owners who are unleashing their dogs prior to the tree line, resulting in dogs in the playground area near children. The City Ordinance states that playgrounds do not allow dogs. Parks Manager stated that there will be increased presence oft he Animal Control Officer (ACO) at Moseley to encourage the off leash rules at the tree line. A sign will be posted with the ACO’s contact information in case of any incidents, which can be reported immediately. A public comment was made by Brian Dennis who stated that there is a problem with signage, but there are also a few irresponsible dog owners. Parks Manager stated that he thinks people are just not aware or the regulations. Commissioner Boretti stated that it is a safety concern. There needs to be more signage prior to entering Moseleywhich will specify where the off leash area is. Moseley is a mixed use park for everyone to enjoy. Parks Manager plans on more pressence to encourage the rules along with the pressence of ACO.

1. **BARTLET MALL UPDATE- KIM TURNER**

Manager of Special Projects Kim Turner stated that the bids received were more than the bond. As of right now the restoration is on hold as the bond is about $1-1.5 million dollars short. Fortunately, all the permits are good for 3 years. Kim Turner has sent a letter to the CPC to formally release the bond for the project and is looking into alternative funding sources for the project.

*Motion by Commissioner Greenwood to adjourn Parks Commission meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Griffin. So, voted on a unanimous voice vote.*

**ADJOURNED 7:54 p.m.**

**List of documents viewed at Parks Commission Meeting**

* Minutes from January 22, 2024 Parks Commission Meeting
* Total Eclipse at the Park flyer with sun path
* Kona Ice Letter of Support