



**Newton Parks & Recreation Commission
Meeting Minutes
Newton City Hall, Room 209
Monday, February 23, 2009**

Attending: Francis J. Rice, Chairman, Kathleen Heitman, Lee Mottard, Arthur Magni, Peter Johnson, Jack Neville, Alternate, Fran Towle, Commissioner, Robert DeRubeis, Deputy Commissioner, Carol Stapleton, Manager, Robin McLaughlin, Secretary.

1. The Minutes from the January 26, 2009 Commission Meeting were accepted 5-0.
2. Reports of Program, Maintenance and Forestry by Commissioner Towle
 - The February 3 Camp Fair has become very popular with the community and was a success this year. Chairman Rice asked if the camp fees were being raised this year. Commissioner Towle confirmed the weekly camp fee has been raised this year.
 - The Department continues to work on the \$340,000.00 appropriation for snow removal this year. The appropriation was requested from the Finance Committee on January 26, 2009.
 - The Department continues to work on the budget. The budget cut right now is 3%. The Commissioner has a meeting with the City Administration this week and will have additional budget information for the Commission at the March 16 Commission meeting.
 - February 24, there is a meeting with the Newton West Little League regarding the Lyons lighting project. The Commissioner stated there should be an estimated start date for next month. Chairman Rice asked if the people purchasing the lights have any experience with the installation of the lights. Commissioner Towle was going to verify the qualifications and verify some one will be aboard to assist with installation, at the scheduled meeting. Chairman Rice suggested the sales person selling the lights should be able to help. Chairman Rice inquired if the Commissioner is working with the Traffic division regarding this project and the displaced parking caused by the project? Chairman Rice stated working out the traffic issues is key to the Commission in seeking approval for this project. Commissioner Towle will contact the Traffic division.
 - The Forestry Division continues to inventory the City trees and reports no unusual issues this month.
 - The Maintenance division continues to gear up for snow removal and is preparing for turf maintenance in the Spring.
 - Chairman Rice asked if the Commission Members had any questions or comments for the Commissioner. There were no questions. Kathleen Heitman commented that she is pleased with the exciting programs provided by the department.
3. Crystal Lake Task Force Presentation- Janice Bourque, Crystal Lake Task Force Chairperson, began the presentation stating this presentation was an informational presentation only; the Task Force was not requesting a vote. Chairman Bourque reviewed the issues faced by the task force such as, runoff and the slope of the area and explained the planning considerations; year round use, cost efficiency and going green, the flexibility issues going forward, the beach and the slope issue and making the area handicap accessible. The goal is to keep the building low for an unobstructed view, minimize asphalt and maximize open space. A tree inventory was done by the City, and the plan is to keep as many existing trees as possible and plant additional trees.

- Option 2A is a plan to renovate the existing building, approximate cost is \$4.2 million
- Option 3C is a plan for construction of a new building, approximate cost is \$4.8 million

Option 3C is the option favored by the community. This option provides more beach area, and the building is wider. The following questions and comments were addressed after the presentation:

Q1. Chairman Rice asked how a bus enters into the parking area. Chairman Bourque responded, currently the buses drop the passengers off further down the street and the passengers walk to the beach. This process will remain in place. Chairman Rice asked if this causes congestion at the intersection by 20 Rogers Street. Chairman Bourque responded, this does not cause traffic congestion because the buses do not remain parked at the location.

Q2. Resident Doris L. Fuse commented the handicap accessible pathway to the Crystal Lake building from Rogers St is a very long way to walk for a lot of handicap individuals, and asked if this is the time the pathway should be re-evaluated. Chairman Bourque explained, because of the topography and the steep slope, the length of the path was the only way to keep the path handicap accessible.

Q3. Chairman Rice asked if a second entrance could be created to make a loop in the driveway. Chairman Bourque stated the slope in that area is 26% and is too steep for an entrance. Alderman Parker commented the circular driveway pattern dominated the vista, and the community wanted to keep the beautiful vista of Crystal Lake. Jack Neville commented there is wasted space next to the driveway by Rogers St that could be utilized.

Q4. Peter Johnson asked if there will be sidewalks along the new driveway because he is concerned the pedestrians will use the driveway entrance. Chairman Bourque and the task force will take this concern into consideration.

Q5. Lee Mottard inquired how the aesthetic of the site were taken into consideration with RDA architect. Chairman Bourque replied the Task Force and the Architect met with the Community to determine the needs of the Community.

Q6. Michael Clarke commented he is pleased to see that bike racks will be available but is concerned about the cost of using the facility year round. Chairman Bourque commented there will be the flexibility to close off the utilities when the facility is not being used. Task Force member Schuyler Larrabee commented there will be a better heat system in the new building and the task force is looking into going green wherever possible with this project.

Q7. Peter Johnson inquired why the design cost for the renovation is 15% when the design cost for new construction is at 10%. Chairman Bourque stated designing around an existing building is more difficult and expensive than designing new construction.

Chairman Rice asked Commissioner Towle which option she believes is best for the Community. Commissioner Towle agrees with the Community, option 3C, the new building would be the best option. Carol Stapleton reminded the Commission there will be a Crystal Lake Task Force meeting on Wednesday 2/25/09 at 7pm at the Senior Center. Chairman Rice thanked the Task Force for the presentation.

4. 5K Walk/Run Fundraiser – Kristen St. Marten- This is the second meeting for Kristen St. Marten, President of the Paul St. Marten Charitable Corporation. She is requesting permission to hold a 5K walk/run fundraiser in memory of her father, Paul St. Marten. Ms St. Marten is

requesting the use of Week's Field on May 24, 2009 from 8:00am-11:00 am for this event. Set up for the event would begin at 6:00 am and clean-up would be completed by 1:00 pm. Notification of this event was sent to the abutters of Weeks Field February 9, 2009. An invitation was sent to the abutters, notifying them the Paul St. Marten Charitable Corporation would be available for questions or comments at the Commission meeting 2/23/09. Contact information was also included in the notification to the abutters. The Parks & Recreation department did not receive any questions, comments or concerns from the abutters of Week's Field. There were no abutters in attendance at the Commission meeting.

Arthur Magni made the motion to allow the Paul St. Marten Charitable Corporation to hold the 5K Walk/Run Fundraiser on May 24, 2009 at Week's Field. Kathleen Heitman seconded the motion. The motion passed 6-0.

5. Relay for Life – Amanda Starkel a representative of the American Cancer Society is requesting permission for a two day overnight fundraising event at Forte Field, 233 California Street on May 30-May 31, 2009. Teams of 18-15 people will take turns walking around the track for 18-24 hours. There will be portable toilets, if needed, tents, staging, tables and chairs. This event is in its 11th year in Newton. The Commission will notify the abutters of Forte Field of the event. Amanda Starkel and the American Cancer Society will come back to the Commission on March 16 to answer any concerns or questions from the abutters of Forte Field. *Note: This event usually takes place at Newton South High School, but field renovations are scheduled during the time this event is to take place.*
6. Off Leash Dog Park Review- Deputy Commissioner DeRubeis stated the trial is in limbo because the signs are in but have not been posted in the area due to the weather conditions. A true assessment cannot be done until the signs go up in the area. Commissioner Towle mentioned the e-mail from Dr. Soporta regarding the parking issues and uncontrolled dogs at Cold Spring Park. Kathleen Heitman suggested Amy Koel, Off-Leash Dog Park Chairperson respond to Dr. Soporta.
7. Commission Elections- Commissioner Towle asked for nominations for the Parks & Recreation Commission Chairman. Kathleen Heitman nominated Fran Rice. Arthur Magni seconded the nomination. Fran Rice was nominated as Commission Chairman with a vote of 6-0. Re-elected Chairman Rice asked for nominations for Parks & Recreation Commission Co-Chairman. Arthur Magni nominated Walter Bernheimer, Michael Clarke seconded the motion. Walter Bernheimer was nominated as Parks & Recreation Commission Co-Chairman with a vote of 6-0.
8. New Business-
 - Lee Mottard inquired about the P & R website. Deputy Commissioner DeRubeis stated the website is being updated. The general consensus in the department is to create our own website outside the City's website. This option is being researched.
 - Senior fees – Kathleen Heitman inquired if the decision has been made to raise senior's program fees. Commissioner Towle commented this issue will need to be addressed in the future.

The next Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting is scheduled for March 16, 2009 at 7:00pm

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Robin McLaughlin, Secretary