



# Newton Park Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 17, 2021 – 6:15 pm

Electronic Meeting was held via Zoom at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86255869103?pwd=MWoxaHVSy0t3VnBjQTZrK2ZkRHNEZz09>

or

Website Streaming at <https://www.newtongov.org/CivicMedia>

(Pursuant to Iowa Code section 21.8) This electronic meeting was held because a meeting in person is impossible or impractical due to concerns for the health and safety of board members, staff, and the public due to COVID-19. The public was able to participate in this meeting and comment on an agenda item by submitting via email to [brianl@newtongov.org](mailto:brianl@newtongov.org) before 5:00 PM the day of the meeting or, during the meeting, by calling 641-521-7137. Providing comment in person was not an option.

## Minutes

- 1) Meeting called to order by Board Chair Melanie Humphrey
- 2) Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance statement read by Humphrey.
- 3) Roll Call: present: Humphrey, Heitman, Osby, & Tipton; absent: Vandall
- 4) Certification of Iowa Open Meetings Law: Community Services Director Brian Laube confirmed that the meeting is being held in compliance with applicable open meetings laws.
- 5) Citizen Participation or Comments: This is the time of the meeting that a citizen may address the Park Board on matters that are not included on this meeting's agenda. After being recognized by the Board Chair, each person will be given three (3) minutes to speak. Comments and/or questions must be related to Parks and Parks-related issues and shall not include derogatory statements or comments about any individual. The Park Board cannot take formal action at the meeting, but may ask the Community Services Director to research the matter or have the matter placed on a subsequent Park Board meeting agenda.
  - a. Councilmember Randy Ervin thanked the splash pad committee for their recent presentation to City Council.
- 6) Review and approve minutes from January 20, 2021 meeting: Motioned by Board Vice-Chair Bryce Heitman, seconded by board member Jeff Osby; no discussion or comments prior to vote; motioned carried 4-0.
- 7) Sunset Park Update: Community Services Director Brian Laube
  - a. Laube screen shared an overall view of a master plan exhibit prepared a couple years ago by HBK Engineering. Laube highlighted the proposed Phase 1 and Phase 2

Park Board Chair – Melanie Humphrey

Park Board Members – Bryce Heitman, Jeff Osby, Rachele Tipton, and Adam Vandall

improvements.

- b. Laube shared that the proposed funding of some Phase 1 improvements has been moved from FY-22 to FY-24 in the soon-to-be approved Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). He continued that this project could be moved forward in next year's CIP, and that it's not locked into FY-24.
  - c. Laube continued that this project would be included in the Board's upcoming goal setting session, and that they could vote to recommend it as a higher priority to City Council when they do their goal setting in the fall of 2021.
  - d. Bryce Heitman asked the following questions:
    - i. Was there a committee to provide input on the preparation of this master plan? Brian Laube stated that he was not part of the parks and rec division at that time and had no direct involvement until the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the project, so he did not know who was all involved initially. Parks Operations Supt. Nick Cummins added that he was involved along with the Park Board and reps. from nearby Park Center, Newton Village, and Skiff Hospital.
    - ii. What did the master plan cost to prepare? Brian Laube stated that he did not have that figure available, but estimated it from \$5,000 to \$10,000 depending on the number of community input meetings held.
  - e. Melanie Humphrey added that at the time this was developed, this was one of the Park Board's desires to upgrade Sunset Park. She also commented that the proposed year-around toilet availability was a good feature there.
- 8) Board discussion and vote on a recommendation of support for the proposed Downtown Splash Pad Project at 224 W 3<sup>rd</sup> St N:
- a. Motion by Heitman to approve said recommendation of support for downtown splash pad project, seconded by Rachelle Tipton.
  - b. Discussion followed:
    - i. Melanie Humphrey stated that at the last Park Board meeting she had expressed her concerns with the proposed downtown location of this project, as prior discussions in past years had it being placed in Maytag Park or another park. Since that last meeting, she has visited with some Main St. business representatives and is now in support of the project. She continued by reminding the board that as we build new parks projects, we can't forget about the old stuff.
    - ii. Bryce Heitman shared that the intent of the splash pad committee that he's a part of is that this proposed improvement will be a public park that is privately funded. He said they understand the long wait if the City funds it, so having private donations could get it built sooner. He added that there is currently great interest in

this project by private donors.

- iii. Jeff Osby asked if the project was to be funded totally by private donations. Bryce Heitman answered that the group is collecting design quotes from a couple of firms for a \$400K to \$500K Phase 1 project that included just the splash pad. He stated that the additional park upgrades around the splash pad could come later in a second phase. He also shared that the funding is not in hand yet, but they will try not to seek any City funds for at least Phase 1.
- iv. Bryce Heitman also shared that the City, who would eventually own and maintain the splash pad, would have heavy input into the project design.
- v. Rachelle Tipton stated that she's taken kids to State Center to their splash pad, and thinks this would be something nice to add to the variety of places to take kids in Newton.
- vi. Bryce Heitman added that for the \$400K to \$500K they are trying to raise, they have an anonymous donor who has pledged matching funds up to \$200K raised by the group.
- vii. Jeff Osby stated that although he felt this project had momentum in talking to multiple people, he did have some concerns about the location related to parking and kids' safety being in the area.
- viii. Melanie Humphrey asked what the group's target is to break ground, to which Bryce Heitman answered that realistically it would be next spring.
- ix. Councilmember Randy Ervin answered Jeff Osby's question on off-season use by reminding the board of one of Council's questions following the recent presentation to council. Could this improvement be designed and built to support off-season activities such as ice skating and a winter market for example. Bryce Heitman stated that they would default to the design firm to come up with possible options for other uses.
- x. Bryce Heitman said other towns have a central meeting location, and that although Newton has the Courthouse, it is not really a meeting area such as a park could be for holding future events.
- xi. Brian Laube added that while the splash pad committee is pursuing cost estimates on design and funding options, City staff is meeting with their engineer and other consultants to get a better understanding of typical splash pad projects and their related costs to operate.
- xii. Jeff Osby questioned whether anyone on the committee had done a survey to see how the proposed splash pad might affect Maytag Pool. Bryce Heitman shared that although no formal survey was done, some assessments were received from some

individuals showing that normally splash pads serve two different groups of people.

- xiii. Jamie Murphy, Parks Operations Assistant Superintendent, shared that in her observations elsewhere splash pads do not take away much from pools. She also requested that the splash pad committee and City staff meet soon to discuss some design options. Brian Laube stated that this would be set up in the near future.
  - xiv. Brian Laube then shared the current timeline moving forward with a proposed discussion item on the March 1<sup>st</sup> City Council agenda, followed by a proposed resolution seeking approval to use the City-owned lot for this project on March 15<sup>th</sup>. Brian continued that he expects no resolution on possible financial commitment from the City on the March 15<sup>th</sup> agenda.
  - xv. Melanie Humphrey then asked if this improvement would increase the City's insurance costs. Brian Laube shared that all of the City's vehicles, facilities, and other amenities are covered through ICAP. Brian continued that he would have to inform ICAP when the splash pad opens, similar to what he had to do after the construction of Cardinal Pond.
- c. Board Chair Melanie Humphrey closed discussion on this item and asked for a roll call vote on the recommendation of support for the downtown splash pad project. Motion carried by 4-0 vote.

9) Old Business:

- a. Bryce Heitman asked for a clarification of what happened with the recent County Board of Supervisors meeting and their tabling the Westwood Urban Renewal Area request. Brian Laube shared that it appeared that the board had some questions they wanted answered, and that they may not have completely understood what the City was proposing. Brian stated that City staff and Administration will likely answer some of the board's questions ahead of the upcoming Board of Supervisors meeting on February 23<sup>rd</sup>, and that more info will be shared on this at the next Park Board meeting.

10) New Business:

- a. Brian Laube asked the Park Board members to please participate and follow the Parks and Recreation Facebook page to keep up on current social media discussions on parks-related projects.
- b. Nick Cummins offered tours of the Westwood Clubhouse to the board, particularly board members Tipton and Heitman who may not have ever been in the old clubhouse building.

11) By a 4-0 vote, the meeting was adjourned at 7:05 pm.

BJL

2-17-2021