



Newton Park Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 20, 2020 – 6:15 pm

Electronic Meeting via Zoom at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82369886176> or

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

MINUTES

Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance:

Is there anyone present that may require special assistance in being able to participate in this public meeting?

- 1) Call to order at 6:15 pm by Board Chair Michener
- 2) Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance: read by Michener
- 3) Roll Call: present - Michener, Heitman, Humphrey, & Price; absent - Vandall
- 4) Certification of Iowa Open Meetings Law: confirmed by Brian Laube
- 5) Review and approve minutes from February 19, 2020: since the last meeting was three months ago, the minutes were shared on the screen, and briefly highlighted, by Brian Laube. Discussion was held by all present on the results of the recreation options survey completed by the Board, and the lack of separation between the different ideas. Brian Laube reminded the board that this was due to how he had the survey set up, and this will be taken into consideration with future surveys. Since these were mainly ideas, and staff is on hold for the most part with acting on these due to the current Covid-19 situation, the consensus was there was no need to redo this survey at this time. Following no disagreement with any other items, Price motioned & 2nd by Heitman to approve said minutes. Motion carried 4-0.
- 6) Update on Parks related COVID-19 closures and cancellations: Brian Laube shared the following information:
 - a. July 4th - All events at Agnes Patterson Park are still on as scheduled, including the fireworks show, but the auxiliary events are being reviewed concerning cancelling them.

Park Board Chair – Levi Michener

Park Board Members – Bryce Heitman, Melanie Humphrey, Amanda Price, and Adam Vandall

- b. Summer Concert Series - at this time all events through June 18th have been cancelled. The remaining events are still on unless further cancellations are issued.
 - c. Maytag Pool - no decision has been made yet. Plans are in place to open if directed.
 - d. Newton Cares Classic Golf Tournament - decision to hold this event or cancel it should be made in the next several days.
 - e. Playgrounds, Skate Park, & Restrooms - these all remain closed at this time pending further direction.
 - f. Westwood Golf Course - this remains open, with the clubhouse locked to the public. Multiple restrictions are in place to avoid all points of contact.
- 7) 2020 Park Board Goal Setting: Brian Laube started this discussion by explaining that this is an annual exercise the park Board does, with the goals approved and shared with City Council for their consideration later in the year at their goal setting session. He then shared the draft of the proposed 2020 goals and projects document on the screen, with the 2019 projects and goals highlighted in yellow and the projects that made the recently approved FY21 through FY25 Capital Improvement Program noted with a red CIP. Brian also noted that other projects and goals that were considered last year, along with a few staff has recently added, are shown on the list for consideration. Brian then mentioned all the items on the list, with the related discussions noted after each item:

Potential Projects (Highlighted Projects on 2019 Approved List):

- a. **Westwood Clubhouse**: build a new club house for Westwood Golf Course to better serve golf customers and to generate more usage of the facility (downsized vision to seat 150 people for events). CIP (denotes project included in current 5-year Capital Improvement Plan) - Board Member Heitman inquired about this project. Brian Laube shared that staff has been exploring multiple cost-saving options on this, and that it was a couple years out in the latest CIP. Heitman then inquired if staff was exploring any options involving private management, to which Brian Laube replied that in the business plan numerous scenarios will be explored.
- b. **Hike & Bike Trail Loop**: complete the city-wide hike & bike trail loop. CIP Brian Laube shared that the remaining trail sections needed to complete the loop are the more difficult projects. He continued by sharing information on the upcoming Union Dr. reconstruction project, where if funds do not allow for actual trail to be built, staff plans to grade the ROW to allow for future trail construction under a different grant or funding source. Discussions were then had on the trail section that would run north from the trailhead at Hwy. 14 and S 12th Ave W. Brian stated that no firm route location is known. The board requested a map showing existing and proposed trails be shared with them. Brian Laube will email this to the board members soon. Bryce Heitman also inquired if the City was working with the County to connect their

Park Board Chair – Levi Michener

Park Board Members – Bryce Heitman, Melanie Humphrey, Amanda Price, and Adam Vandall

respective trail systems. Brian Laube shared that once the County has a plan to connect their system to the City, we will work on that portion inside the City limits. Brian went on to share that the City cannot be spending money on trail construction outside the City limits since it would not be supported.

- c. **Skate Park**: construct new skate park in Aurora Park. CIP
- d. **Maytag Pool Upgrades**: install new play features in the pool (includes removal of existing mushroom fountains and concrete structure in the shallow end), an inclusive spray/splash pad, lazy river, or other large scale attraction. CIP Brian Laube shared that this project is not completely defined in the CIP, and it includes several possible ideas. Brian then shared that most of these features would be very costly on their own, and that staff is not currently working on these as there is no money budgeted for them and they are a couple years out in the CIP. Discussion then turned to the splash pad, and Brian shared to pros and cons of having the splash pad at Maytag Pool. Pluses included the available treated water that could be reused, and the financial benefit having it inside the pool. Negatives included having it elsewhere could reduce pool attendance, and the wasted water in having it away from the pool. (More discussion is noted later on this same splash pad item - BJL)
- e. **Sunset Park**: complete park improvements per recent planning and design efforts. CIP Brian Laube shared that this project has a concept prepared, but is a couple years out in the CIP. Amanda Price stated that we should look into Pickleball courts here. Brian Laube shared that the basketball court at the north end of Sunset Park will be considered for a Pickleball court in the short term.
- f. **Hike & Bike Trail to Interior Parks**: construct spurs to City parks not currently connected to the trail system. CIP
- g. **Inclusive Park**: construct handicap accessible and inclusive playground equipment. CIP Brian Laube shared that the City had paused on seeking a grant for some inclusive equipment due to lack of matching funds available. Staff will continue to pursue other grant opportunities.
- h. **Hike & Bike Trail to 30-Acre Park**: complete a trail spur to 30-Acre Park. CIP Discussion on this item ended with the consensus feeling that an off-street trail from the end of E 23rd St S would be preferable to putting a trail along S 13th Ave E from E 19th St S. Bryce Heitman asked if this could be extended to the south side of I-80 to where the County plans to build their conservation learning center. Brian Laube stated that it is possible, but getting across I-80 may be very difficult. Bridges and tunnels are very expensive, so the current thinking is that the trail would need to cross beneath I-80 at Iowa Speedway Dr. if the space is suitable to allow a trail.

Park Board Chair – Levi Michener

Park Board Members – Bryce Heitman, Melanie Humphrey, Amanda Price, and Adam Vandall

- i. Ice Rink Lighting - install lights for nighttime skating at the ice rink. CIP Amanda Price questioned this project's need since the City put up some decorative lighting there last year. The consensus was to remove this project from consideration as a project goal.
- j. 30-Acre Park - Develop park to attract outdoor recreation enthusiast by expanding the current trail to allow for mountain biking and hiking, better management of native prairie and timber areas, improving access to the park, and installation of shade structure with picnic tables. Brian Laube explained his progress so far on developing a master plan for biking and hiking trails in 30-Acre Park. Levi Michener stated that he didn't want staff or the board to focus on this project. Amanda Price said that the City does not need to add another park to our system that will increase maintenance costs and duties, and Melanie Humphrey voiced her concern about destroying natural ground. The consensus of the board was to remove this project from consideration as a project goal.
- k. Splash Pad - Install an interactive splash pad somewhere in the park system. Discussion on this potential item included suggestions by Bryce Heitman to look at installing this and the dog park in the downtown area, and Amanda Price suggested that we explore partnering with DMACC for some of these improvements in Legacy Plaza. Brian Laube shared that staff has some concerns that locating the splash pad away from Maytag Pool could negatively affect attendance at the pool. Brian also stated that operation of a splash pad at the pool could be more cost effective by utilizing the treated pool water and cycling it back into the system instead of wasting fresh water. Brian shared too that staff has discussed pursuing a grant for inclusive playground features, and that this splash pad project could be part of said project. The board requested that the project goals survey include an option to enter a desired or suggested location for this.
- l. Playground Equipment - complete a substantial upgrade to all older or outdated playground equipment.
- m. Construct a downtown dog park. CIP Amanda Price said that with more people living downtown, the need is there for a downtown dog park. Brian Laube added that staff is aware of this, and the project is included in the current CIP. Brian also shared that a possible location for this would be near the Community Gardens on N 5th Ave W, as the City owns a lot of property there.
- n. Croquet Court - a request has been received from the public concerning constructing a croquet court in Maytag Park. The caller said there is interest in large tournaments. Brian Laube shared that staff feels that the construction and maintenance of a regulation croquet court may be very pricing, as it appears similar to a golf putting green.

Park Board Chair – Levi Michener

Park Board Members – Bryce Heitman, Melanie Humphrey, Amanda Price, and Adam Vandall

- o. Pickleball Courts - requests have been received from the public to construct dedicated Pickleball courts. Brian Laube shared that staff will be looking at locations to install Pickleball courts once they return to work after the Covid-19 restrictions are lifted. Ideas include using existing basketball courts at Maytag and/or Sunset Park as possible locations for play. Staff has also discussed having some portable nets that can be rented or loaned as needed.
- p. Ball Field Lighting and Electrical Upgrades - NGS&A and Newton Little League have requested lighting and electrical upgrades at the six ballfields at Agnes Patterson Park. CIP Amanda Price also requested that placing or upgrading the lime on fields be added to this project.
- q. Archery Range - requests have been received from the public to construct an Archery Range in a location TBD.
- r. ADA Sidewalk & Parking Improvements - NASA has requested several extensions or new ADA-compliant sidewalks, parking areas, and paved concessions seating area to better serve the soccer fields at Agnes Patterson Park. CIP
- s. Soccer Field Fences - NASA has requested a 10' high fence at the east end of soccer field #1 at Agnes Patterson Park to keep errant kicks from ending up in a wet, swampy ditch. CIP
- t. Soccer Field Improvements - NASA has requested that soccer fields #1 through #4 at Agnes Patterson Park be improved by adding topsoil, re-crowning the field, and installing subdrain tile. Work will allow the fields to be playable sooner after rain events.

Potential Visions/Goals (Highlighted Projects on 2019 Approved List):

- a. **Parks Evaluations**: Evaluate the long-term needs or uses of all City parks.
- b. **Marketing**: Expand marketing efforts to recruit new park users, increase rentals of park facilities, and attract new events.
- c. **Non-Profit Support**: Establish and support a non-profit to raise money for park improvement projects, coordinate volunteer's activities, and raise awareness of parks activities.
- d. **Service Projects**: facilitate and/or coordinate Eagle Scout or other service projects in City parks.
- e. Hike & Bike Trails - Connect Newton to the Central Iowa bike trail system.
- f. Volunteer Opportunities - Create volunteer opportunities to encourage more ownership of the parks among citizens to discourage vandalisms and other unwanted activities. Discussions followed on this item, with Melanie Humphrey suggesting staff reach out to other groups who may be interested in these types of civic activities. Levi Michener shared an idea of Adopt-a-Park program similar to those seen on highways in some areas. Brian Laube agreed that this idea sounded interesting, and that staff would look into this sometime soon. Nick Cummins

Park Board Chair – Levi Michener

Park Board Members – Bryce Heitman, Melanie Humphrey, Amanda Price, and Adam Vandall

also touched on some recent corporate service days in the parks such as what TPI has done recently.

- g. Replacement of Maytag Pool (long-term goal).
- h. Reduced price pool admission passes - staff is exploring ways to offer free or reduced-price pool passes/admissions based on ability to pay or need.

Following the above discussions, Brian Laube stated that he would be sending out an email link to an online survey to Board members soon. Brian also stated that the survey would be prepared to provide a little more separation in scoring from top to bottom.

- 8) Discussion on disposal of a City-owned parcel - Brian Laube shared an exhibit showing a City-owned, platted parcel at 302 W 15th St N which is contiguous to the parcel listed as owned by the Newton Parks Commission and known as Hillcrest Park. Staff had identified this unused parcel as a candidate to dispose of to lessen mowing responsibilities. Since this platted lot is not used for any specific park use or equipment, and Community Development has received interest from a developer about building a house there, Brian Laube asked the Park Board for a vote of support in selling off this piece of property even though it is not technically "Park property". A motion was made by Michener and seconded by Humphrey for said vote of support, and vote passed 4-0.
- 9) Old Business - none
- 10) New Business
 - a. Brian Laube shared with the board that construction has now started at Arbor Estates on the large grading project, and as a result of this the bike trail has been closed along N 11th Ave E between Agnes Patterson Park and E 19th St N. He also shared that this project will construct a 2.9 acre fishing pond that will become part of Agnes Patterson Park, and also a sledding hill in the NW part of Agnes Patterson Park.
 - b. Brian Laube shared that staff still intends to hold the July 4th fireworks display, but is likely going to cancel all the side events at Agnes Paterson park leading up to the show. Brian also recommended that the board take some action on the fundraising efforts for this.
- 11) Adjourned at 8:16 pm

BJL

5-21-2020

Park Board Chair – Levi Michener

Park Board Members – Bryce Heitman, Melanie Humphrey, Amanda Price, and Adam Vandall