



Newton Park Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 – 6:15 pm

Electronic Meeting via Zoom at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81407516152> 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 by Board Chair Levi Michener
- 2) Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance - compliance statement read by Community Services Manager Brian Laube
- 3) Roll Call: Present - Michener, Heitman, Humphrey, & Price; Absent - Vandall
- 4) Certification of Iowa Open Meetings Law - compliance confirmed by Brian Laube
- 5) Review and approve minutes from May 20, 2020: no discussions held. Motion by Humphrey, 2nd by Price, 4-0 vote approving minutes.
- 6) Update on Parks operations and restrictions related COVID-19
 - a. Brian Laube shared the following updates:
 - i. Westwood Golf Course has been open for business for some time - still restricting the number of people in the clubhouse along with no seating or gathering areas provided.
 - ii. Maytag Pool open and operating under Phase 2 Covid Guidelines (60 guests max. capacity with open swim reservations taken for 2 hour time windows)
 - iii. Park shelter reservations open, with no back-back reservations taken on the same day by different groups.
 - iv. Summer Concert Series - three events still scheduled beginning tomorrow night. Social distancing recommendations in place for these events.
- 7) 2020 Park Board Goal Setting - Brian Laube began by stating that the draft document provided for board members to review and consider is the proposed 2020 Goals of the Newton Park Board, and the discussions to be had are on what the board decides to include as their projects, goals, and visions. Brian continued that this document, when approved by the board, gives guidance to staff and City Council in their CIP and budget process. Brian also shared that the document includes the point values that each item scored based on the results of the online survey that board members had recently completed. Following this introduction, Brian then turned it over to the board for

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

discussion. The following are discussions that ensued:

- a. Board member Heitman asked how a certain project could have scored 13 points with five board members having voted. Brian Laube shared that in the online survey, board members assigned point values to each item which essentially had each member ranking all the items in order of their preference. Point values could only be used once. After all members had ranked the items, the survey figured the average ranking for each project based on the input of the five board members. So for example, Maytag Pool Upgrades scored 13 points, so its average ranking was 13 (not a cumulative 13 points).
- b. Board member Heitman asked how much money City Council budgets for park projects each year. Brian Laube explained that there is no set amount or percentage budgeted, but in fact the proposed park projects compete with projects and equipment purchases from all other departments and divisions to secure funding. Brian went on to share that in the City's annual Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), there are sometimes 12 to 14 different funding sources for projects. In the parks area, there may be as many as 5 to 7 different funding source options called out.
- c. Discussion on the Westwood Clubhouse project followed. Board member Price stated that she wants to see this project happen soon, since it's been in the CIP and goals list for several years and nobody is doing anything to make it happen. Brian Laube added that staff continues to work on more cost-effective and efficient ideas and plans to make this project easier to fund and promote. Board member Heitman voiced his opinion that he didn't understand why there was so much support for this project, and wasn't sure that it was needed. Board member Price questioned Heitman as to if he had ever visited the clubhouse. Heitman went on to voice his concerns with spending money at the golf course when it loses so much money. Brian Laube added that when comparing certain parks and other City things as quality of life items, the golf course is a lot closer to self-sustainability than the pool or the library for example. Discussion continued between Price and Heitman as to the proposed scale of the project and whether it was worthy. Brian Laube added that staff, in continuing to work on concepts for this project, have been following up on some new ideas that could be 1) be more affordable upfront on the initial construction, 2) require less staff to operate than current needs, and 3) be something that could meet the golf course's needs while also providing a rental space for non-golfers in the community. Brian stated that staff will have more to share soon, but did not want to elaborate on the details tonight. Council member Randy Ervin also weighed in the importance of this project. Board member Heitman voiced his concern that City Council should understand that it does not have the full support of all Park Board members, even though it scored high. He continued that we need to explore the possibility of a public-private partnership or even private management of the course.
- d. Discussion on the Splash Pad project then followed. Brian Laube stated that only one board member had included a proposed location of where this should be located. Brian continued by saying that the board did not need to decide on a location tonight, and that they could simply decide that it should either be adjacent to Maytag Pool or somewhere else. Bryce Heitman stated that as a community member, he feels that this would be good to be located in or near downtown so families can use it along with visiting downtown businesses. He continued that this could increase the tax revenue with an increase in businesses and business activity. He also stated that maybe it could be put in the DMACC green space. Amanda Price cautioned that we shouldn't be

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building projects downtown that would duplicate what DMACC has included in their plan. Questions were also raised as to if placing the splash pad away from Maytag Pool would be detrimental to the pool budget and if entrance fees would be charged. Brian Laube stated that the initial thought was that if it were built at Maytag Pool there would not be a noticeable increase in revenue, but if it were built elsewhere we'd expect it to affect Maytag Pool revenue and attendance somewhat. Bryce Heitman shared that a recent Facebook survey of a local mom's group concluded that a splash pad and indoor playground were the two things they wanted most. He then restated his stance that these things were more important than the clubhouse at Westwood. The discussion on this item concluded with all agreeing that the public's input is needed on the location of this project should council decide to fund it.

- e. Discussions then occurred on the top scoring project in the Visions/Goals section - connecting Newton to the Central Iowa bike trail system. Council member Randy Ervin shared that he recently visited with some local cycling enthusiasts, and they were pushing for the City to join forces with the County connect the City's bike trail system to the Central Iowa Trail system. Board member Heitman completely agreed with that, and said that he had spoken with Keri Van Zante with Jasper County on this issue. She had shared that the county has no current plans to connect a trail to the City of Newton.

At the conclusion of the above discussions, Board member Humphrey made a motion to approve the 2020 Park Board Goals document leaving the point values shown and also listing the Splash Pad project location as to be determined - motion 2nd by Michener - approved by 4-0 vote.

8) Old Business

- a. Board member Humphrey asked about the status of the proposed lot sale in the SW corner of Hillcrest Park. Brian Laube stated that council had only approved an option to sell and that the lot had not sold to-date. Brian also added that there may be some misinformation on the extent of this proposed lot, and that it would not cut off the south access to the park nor would it affect the sledding area along the east side of the park. Brian added that whether or not council decides to sell this lot, the park will still continue to operate in the same way it has for the last 45 years. Brian also stated that City Council will be having a discussion item on this issue at the end of the agenda on July 20, 2020; and that the Community Development Dept. is the lead on these property disposals. Council member Ervin added that he'd heard from concerned citizens not wanting it sold, and that he'd already visited the site.
- b. Board member Humphrey asked about how the July 4th fireworks show went. Brian Laube stated that he did not see the show, but has only received positive comments on it.

9) New Business

- a. Brian Laube reminded the board that if they want to change the meeting times, they can discuss that. Other boards and commissions meet at different times, so there is no requirement they must meet at 6:15 pm.
- b. Brian Laube also shared that excavation work has begun on the pond in the Arbor Estates development, and that this is the pond that will become part of the parks system.

10) Meeting adjourned at 7:41 pm.