

Approved 11/6/14

**TOWN OF WELLESLEY  
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
October 21, 2014, 7:30 PM  
NRC Office, Town Hall**

Attending: Heidi Gross, Chair, Stephen Murphy (departing at 8:50 pm), Vice Chair, Joan Gaughan, Lise Olney, Raina McManus, Brandon Schmitt, Janet Hartke Bowser

Guests: David Murphy, Board of Selectmen Liaison to the NRC, Thomas Purcell, 60 Grove Street, Apt. 6214, Katherine Babson and Thomas Olfelder, Town Government Study Committee; Lucy Kapples, Advisory Committee Liaison to the NRC, Paul Cramer, William Cramer, High School Student, Jack Sezleck, High School Student.

**Public Voice**

Paul Cramer, a former NRC Commissioner, stated that he appreciated that the DPW filled a large hole that was in the Fuller Brook Park path. He also voiced concerns that several trees in Phillips Park are dying and asked if the NRC and DPW could develop a long term plan for tree management and care in the park. Ms. Gross stated that there's no tree management plan for the park at this time, but that the NRC will follow-up with the DPW regarding his concerns. Mr. Cramer asked if the State Street Pond (aka the Skating Pond) will be dredged as part of the Fuller Brook Park Project. Ms. Gross confirmed that dredging the pond is part of the project and that it is scheduled to be dredged over the winter.

Ms. Olney asked about the extent of the DPW's mowing in Boulder Brook Reservation and whether the mowing of the reservation's meadows may have a negative impact on wildlife habitat. Ms. Bowser stated that pursuant to the NRC's "Basic Annual Maintenance Standards for Conservation Land" as outlined in the NRC's Handbook, only the area's entrance, path and trails are to be mowed and kept open and not the meadows.

William Cramer stated that he plays on High School Football Team and that the practice field is in bad shape and that it has many ruts and needs regrading and asked if the NRC could address these concerns. Ms. Gross stated that they will follow-up with Mr. Quinn at the DPW and with John Brown the HS Athletic Director regarding these concerns.

**Resident's Proposal Re: Bandstand in Town Hall Bowl/Hunnewell Park**

Mr. Thomas Purcell, a resident residing at 60 Grove Street, distributed a number of detailed site plans related to his proposal for a bandstand in the Town Hall bowl area located in Hunnewell Park. He also distributed a listing of potential bandstand users that included a number of town cultural and civic organizations. Mr. Purcell stated that his proposed design includes an enclosed wall on one end of the bandstand to improve the acoustics and has an ADA accessible ramp. Ms. Gross stated that tonight's discussion is conceptual only and not design focused. She outlined the history of the previous bandstand proposal located in Simon's Park and sponsored by the Wellesley House and Garden Club, which was approved by the NRC, but was denied a special

permit from the ZBA. She stated that the NRC had recommended the Town Hall area as an alternative site for the bandstand, but the House and Garden Club felt the area did not have the required visibility and did not pursue the project. Mr. Purcell stated that he has presented the project to the Planning Board and they suggested that he meet with the NRC since they have jurisdiction over the parkland. As outlined in Mr. Purcell's design plans, he is proposing that a projector booth be built-into the aqueduct to allow for films to be viewed. He's also proposing a building for concessions that looks like an old-fashioned horse stable. Ms. Gaughan asked if he had been in contact with any organizations in Town, including the schools, to determine if they would use an enclosed bandstand in the bowl area. He stated that he had not yet been in contact with any potential users of the bandstand besides the Recreation Department Director, who indicated that they prefer to use the temporary open trailer/stage that they currently use for the summer concerts in the bowl.

Ms. Gross stated that her main concern is the funding for the project and indicated that all funding would need to be raised privately. Mr. Purcell estimated that it will cost approximately \$150,000 to construct the proposed bandstand and he is aware that he'll need to raise all the funds privately with no contributions from the NRC.

Stephen Murphy said that state law places limits on the size of structures on parkland and Mr. Purcell believed that the proposed structures fall within the limits. Ms. Gaughan requested that he reach-out to High school and other civic organizations to determine if they would use a bandstand at this location. Ms. McManus stated that the sweeping open space in this area has real value to park users and any proposal for change in the area will require careful consideration. She asked if the bands that now perform as part of the Recreation Department summer concerts could use the bandstand and Mr. Purcell responded in the affirmative. Ms. Olney stated that this is an interesting idea that the NRC has supported in the past and that her major concern is funding and feels that it is an interesting and creative idea that's worth pursuing.

David Murphy, the NRC's liaison from the Board of Selectmen stated that it is likely that the PBC would need to get involved since the cost of the structure is over \$100,000 and that the MGL Chapter 30B Procurement requirements would apply. In addition, the proposal would need to be reviewed by the Design Review Board and receive a ZBA Special Permit since this land is zoned as single-family residence.

After further discussion, the NRC stated that they are open to considering the proposal, but need the following additional information prior to further review and discussion:

1. Pro-bono professional architectural renderings of the proposed bandstand;
2. an outline of the project's cost estimate and a fundraising plan; and
3. letters from Town civic and cultural organizations, including the schools, indicating their interest in using the proposed bandstand.

The NRC thanked Mr. Purcell for attending the meeting and for his presenting his proposal for a bandstand in the Town Hall Bowl.

### **Discussion Re: Art in Fuller Brook Park Subcommittee Composition and Charge**

At the NRC's October 2, 2014 meeting, the NRC voted to form this subcommittee in large part due to residents' concerns regarding two Silver Maple 13 foot tree trunks located in Fuller Brook Park that remain in place after the majority of these two trees were cut down due to failing health approximately a year ago. Commissioners Lise Olney and Joan Gaughan were appointed to serve on the subcommittee to examine the broader question of appropriate "art in the park" and to seek public feedback on this topic. Ms. Olney and Ms. Gaughan met recently and discussed the subcommittee's charge as well as expanding the subcommittee and they reported that Herb Nolan and Laura Fragasso have agreed to provide feedback to the NRC on this topic. Ms. Olney and Ms. Gaughan recommended the following charge for the subcommittee:

1. To consider if art of any kind may be installed as permanent display in Fuller Brook Park;
2. To consider if art, or art installations, proposed as temporary displays on a limited timeline may be exempted; and
3. After the subcommittee's findings are received, the NRC Board will discuss the issues, which may serve as the basis for a future "Art-in-the-Park Policy."

**After a motion was made and seconded, the NRC voted 5-0 to approve the charge as outlined above.**

### **New Business/Continuing Business/Liaison Reports**

#### Update on Outdoor Lighting and Noise Study Committee

Ms. McManus stated that the results of the Study Group's findings will be compiled and presented to the Planning Board at an upcoming meeting for possible zoning bylaw changes.

#### Update on North 40 Steering Committee and Potential Acquisition by the Town

Mr. Murphy, from the Board of Selectmen, briefly updated the NRC on the status of the North 40 land. He stated that the Steering Committee's final report has been completed and that the College's timetable has slipped, so that the upcoming Special Town Meeting will not address this matter since there will be no agreement between the Town and College by that time. Mr. Murphy stated that the Selectmen continue to meet with the College to discuss a revised timetable and that it appears that the Town's bid to acquire the land, which has not been publically disclosed, is still under consideration by the College. If the Town's bid is not accepted and it does not acquire the land, the Town will need to request approximately \$150,000 at Town Meeting for legal and consulting fees related to the assessment and possible remediation of the former landfill on the site that had been operated by the Town.

#### Update on NRC's Initiative to Reduce Single Use Plastics

Ms. Olney provided an update on the research she has conducted to examine the reduction of single use plastics in Town. She stated that she and Ms. McManus will continue to gather information from other Towns that have or are considering plastic bans and will keep the NRC updated on their progress. Ms. Olney circulated a draft Letter to the Editor in support of Ballot Question 2 regarding the expansion of the current Bottle Bill for the NRC's review and approval.

**After a motion was made and seconded, the NRC voted 5-0 to approve the letter.** Ms. Olney stated that she has spoken to a Newton Alderwoman regarding Newton's upcoming vote to ban plastic bags and that the Alderwoman offered to come talk to NRC about the approach that Newton has taken on this matter. In addition, Ms. Olney recommended that the NRC expand the charge of this initiative to include banning Styrofoam in Wellesley. **After a motion was made and seconded, the NRC voted 5-0 to expand the scope of this initiative to include the possible banning of Styrofoam in Wellesley.**

### **Director's Report**

#### Update Re: Fuller Brook Park Preservation Project - Construction Schedule

Ms. Bowser provided a brief update on the status of the project and stated that work is currently focused on dredging and restoration of the brook and installation of the bio-retention areas in the segment of the park between Maugus Ave. and Paine Street. She will keep the NRC updated on the status of the project.

#### Update Re: New Director's Transition Plan

Mr. Schmitt provided an update on his transition efforts that have focused on working with staff and board members to become familiar with the NRC's policies and projects, developing internal policies, completion of the Open Space and Recreation Plan, encroachments and budgets.

#### Update Re: Wetlands Protection Committee Vacancy

Ms. Bowser stated that Wetlands Protection Committee (WPC) has a current vacancy for a full voting member and two alternate openings and that the WPC and NRC will coordinate an effort to recruit a new member. Mr. Murphy suggested checking with the State's professional registry for civil engineers for potential new members.

#### NRC to Co-Sponsor Dog Control Program with Sue Webb, Animal Control Officer

The NRC agreed to co-sponsor this program being organized by Animal Control Officer Sue Webb to be held on October 29, 2014 at 6 PM at the main library.

#### Recognition of Ms. Gross' Efforts Re: Health Effects of Synthetic Turf Infill

Ms. Gaughan recognized Ms. Gross' efforts to educate the public about the health concerns of using crumb rubber infill made of recycled tires for synthetic turf fields including why this material was banned in several European countries.

#### Discussion with Town Government Study Committee Representatives

The NRC met with Katherine Babson and Thomas Olfelder from the Committee and reviewed and discussed a list of 15 standard questions that the Committee is asking of all Town Boards. Ms. Babson stated that they have already met with the Wetlands Protection Committee and will be meeting with the Trails Committee shortly. Ms. Babson suggested that the NRC review its bylaw (Article 43) to make sure it's current and consider adding the Trails Committee as a standing committee and remove those standing committees that are no longer required.

Ms. Babson asked the board if they believe that there should be any changes to the NRC's functions and responsibilities and whether any consolidation or centralization is advisable. Ms. Gaughan replied in the negative and stated that because the NRC is sole protector of open space

in Town that it needs to remain an independent elected board. She also suggested that having regular inter-board meetings could be productive and allow boards to collaborate and communicate more effectively. Ms. Babson asked who should be responsible for taking the lead to coordinate such meetings and Ms. Gaughan replied that this should be the responsibility of the Selectmen. Ms. Gross stated that the NRC is under constant pressure to give up open space and that the NRC needs to remain an elected board to vigilantly protect natural resources and be accountable to the Town's residents. There was some discussion regarding how to best ensure that sustainability issues are effectively imbedded into the Town's overall functions, permitting processes and policies. Ms. McManus stated that the Town website should be evaluated and could be more consistent and user friendly and that the Town's abutter notification efforts could be expanded to provide more information to residents regarding projects. Ms. Olney voiced concerns regarding improving governmental transparency and how to best use social media to communicate more effectively with the public.

Ms. Babson and Mr. Olfelder thanked the NRC for their time and input.

**Adjournment**

**After a motion was made and seconded, the NRC voted 4-0 to adjourn the meeting.**

The meeting adjourned at 10:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

***Janet Hartke Bowser***

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