



**NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION REMOTE ONLINE
MEETING MINUTES**

JANUARY 6, 2022 – 6:30 P.M.

Approved 2-17-2022

Present: Raina McManus, Chair; Laura Robert, Vice-Chair; Allison Burson, Bea Bezmalinovic, Secretary; Jay McHale; Brandon Schmitt, Director of NRC

Guests: Linda Chow (School Committee), Jim Roberti (School Committee), Abraham Budson-McQuilken (Vice President Student Congress); Martha Collins, Sharon Gray, Thomas Stagliano, Jaden Crawford, Judith Barr, Marc Schectman, Mary Gard, Tom Ruddy, Ann Carter.

Public Speak on non-Agenda items

No one spoke on non-Agenda items.

Action/Discussion Items

- **Alcohol Licenses on Parkland** – As the Select Board is poised to update the Town’s regulations regarding alcohol sales, the National Resources Commission (NRC) was asked to consider its policy regarding potential consumption of alcohol on the NRC’s open spaces. Primarily on whether non-profit organizations would be eligible for one-day temporary Alcohol Licenses to serve alcohol on NRC’s spaces. Allison Burson spoke about insurance and Brandon Schmitt explained that the ins requirements would be the purview of the Selectboard not NRC. The NRC talked about possibilities of going parcel by parcel, or review of each permit individually on parklands. Raina McManus made a point to say she considered the NRC parklands comparable to schools and considers parklands as open for all, An event with alcohol would exclude people. It would be difficult to choose what and where the events would be deemed appropriate. Other issues were concerns for children, trash, the overall look of parklands, wear and tear and the implications of parkland sections being roped off. Bea Bezmalinovic asked what State of Massachusetts laws or regulations would apply to outdoor events with alcohol (open containers) with concern to parklands vs. restaurants. The NRC also discussed whether the change in rules for restaurants would need to be considered by the NRC. Additional information was requested to inform the NRC’s next deliberations. Raina McManus also invited the public to comment on the issue.
- **Hunnewell Track and Field Projects Discussion** –The discussion began from a presentation from the Vice President of the Senior Congress Abraham Budson-McQuilken. Budson-McQuilken expressed to the commission that the Wellesley High School students support lights on the field, the student body understands the concerns of those not in favor of the lights but they believe the lights will give the teams the ability to host games and practices later in the day, especially during the dark period, and winter months as needed to bring the school athletic programs to par with surrounding towns. The School Committee followed with a presentation from Linda Chow and Jim Roberti. Linda Chow presented updates
 - The School committee responded to the presentation neighbors on December 14, 2021 by meeting again other neighborhood residents who had volunteered by responding to the School Committee’s neighborhood survey. This group met on Jan. 4, 2022. There is concern from the neighbors the

lights on the field will be reserved for school use only and not to outside programs. The Committee reviewed lighting usage policy, noise level as pertains to the PA system, traffic and parking concerns, trash and ways to address the “slippery slope” on future lighting usage. Other concerns included the sustainability, impact on wetlands, accountability, impact on property values, process of reviewing policies and the reduction of lights. There are plans for another meeting with the neighborhood advisory group to which a member from the NRC is invited. She talked about the next steps along with NRC approval, Wetlands, Select Board, Design Review Board and the Zoning Board of Appeals.

- The public spoke on the issues following Linda Chow’s presentation. Nine community members spoke about lights. Each member was given three minutes.
- First speaker stated that more than 109 stakeholders that are most impacted are opposed, the process has been unfair, representatives were not chosen by the neighborhood, and meetings are not transparent. Lack of parking, Riverfront wetland, 30 yards from neighbor’s door, NRC needs to decide on natural resources not public sentiment. Also trees, vegetation, insects, amphibians, birds, mammals, scientific references. Also Senator Creem’s proposed legislation to keep Kelvin 4000 vs the proposed 5700. Explore field rental or rental lights, smaller number of nights, consider any opportunity at Sprague.
 - Second speaker spoke in favor of lights, was an elected School Committee official at time of HT&F renovation and also when NRC first asked SC about priorities for HT&F a year ago. ZBA permitting process guards against slippery slope. No promise was made in a public meeting – no public vote. Lights improve quality of life for students and the community. Manage parkland for public benefit.
 - Third speaker long time HS, college and adult soccer referee. Has never been in any stadium where houses are so close to the stadium. Reference sound/PA system and can’t imagine living on Smith St. Look at Boston College. No PA system and houses are even further away than with HT&F. Pay attention to security system and “Perceived Noise Level”. Town horticulturist confirmed no more trees will fit on the site as sound barrier. Lights off 8:30 Varsity.
 - Fourth speaker expressed the decision is not a public vote issue. Commented the proposed non-binding resolution equals speaking up in mass to influence decision. Mistrust comes from many historical meetings that never make it on the public record. Neighbor reps not chosen by neighbors. Meetings are shielded from public view. School Committee slide deck points to the absence of evidence as the evidence of absence. Fifth speaker volunteered as neighbor rep for concern for environment, quality of life, social justice issues. NRC needs to consider the impacts. Environmental assessment is limited and biased. Did not consider quality of life, physical, social, psychological wellbeing of inhabitants. Survey flawed: poorly framed, limited response categories, overall design. Neighbor panel not elected by neighbors, we are individuals speaking for ourselves. Protests of neighbors not included, no recordings, minutes. Neighborhood rep model is flawed and frustrating. My name was used without my permission to support the proposal even when I don’t agree.
 - Sixth speaker supports doing a minority report, consultants are not unbiased, town officials are not disinterested parties. HT&F does not represent my views, implies my agreement, I don’t agree. SC states each impact won’t be as bad as one thinks. How bad is bad enough? Are we only looking at the bad effect? Conciliation is needed, reasonable noise, temporary lights, see how things work.
 - Speaker seven representing Sustainable Wellesley. All town boards consider impact on carbon emissions and adopt measures to offset additional impact on climate. If lights meter it separately, fuel with 100% renewable energy with certificates or MLP 100%. Possible solar nearby, convert other field lights. This is first project since Article 12, will set direction, NRC should take seriously, set precedent and work to reach carbon reduction goals Town State and Federal.
 - Speaker eight urged to follow NRC policy and criteria which was put on the screen.
 - Speaker nine spoke of adverse consequences of the proposal and problem with incremental improvement strategy and the trust issue. Find a way to clear of acrimony. Hesitant to speak out but close proximity to Fuller Brook land density make it detrimental.
 -
 - Raina McManus stated the divisive nature is not good for the community and is looking for common ground. Laura Robert is suggesting temporary lighting to highlight our athletes. She would not approve the current proposal because it fails a number of impacts. Jay McHale said we have a tough decision and even

if a compromise is made not everyone is going to be happy. We are responsible for parkland for a town and we have to go through the change of use and send it back.

- Allison Burson agreed that people are putting a lot of time in but looking for a compromise should not be rushed.
- Bea Bezmalinovic said she was hearing that at least of few nights of light are acceptable with temporary lights. If there is a willingness to accept some number of nights with temporary lights, then there should be some acceptable solution with regular lights. What are the conditions (light use, number of nights and noise level) that would be acceptable And there needs to a timeline and clear process.

Raina McManus reviewed that the next meeting (Thursday, Jan. 20) would be dedicated to just the commission going through our change of use policy and impact criteria compared to the proposal received from the schools

Liaison Reports:

Trails: Ms. Robert reported that the Trails Committee are working on guided walks for the spring. They will be posted by the end of March and will be on the Trails Website.

Community Preservation Committee: The CPC will be going to advisory the same time as the Natural Resources commission and will discuss NRC project relevant to CPA funding on on January 12, 2022.

Mobility: Ms. Burson reported that there will be an abutters meeting for residents of Walnut Street about the complete street changes to the road. They will then get feedback from trails, though there is not a specific design yet. The goal is to the connections from all the trails. There is another round of Shared Streets grant funding which will go live on Jan. 10 and be due by March (which is small projects like crossing and safety).

Climate Emergency – Raina McManus referenced the people caught in a snow storm overnight in cars on a highway and how scary that would be. Bea Bezmalinovic referenced an article in the Boston Globe on Dec. 30, 2021 in reference to the lack of snow. It referenced the fact that [New England is warming faster than the global average and within New England, Massachusetts is warming fastest.](#)

Director's Report:

- **Open Space Plan** - project is a work in progress.
- **Field Utilization Project** - Responses were due Friday, Jan. 6 but it was extended to Thursday, Jan. 13. At the next meeting we will dedicate time to discuss the submittals.
- **Lawn Conversion Project** – The proposal is set and there are a number of firms that are interested in the project (to design custom seed mix, educational material on how we can convert conventionally managed lawns into landscapes that support biodiversity and our local pollinators). The deadline for that is Jan. 27 and will report back on Feb. 3. Also we will work with CPC on the funding for the project.
- **Staff Update** - Human Resources will vote on reclassification on the Wetlands position and the review of job description of the Environmental Education position.

Approve Minutes:

The approval of minutes for 12/14/2021 was deferred to a future meeting.

Schedule Future Meetings: The Board will meet again on Jan. 20, 2022 (strictly about the Lighting Proposal).

Urgent Items Not Anticipated Prior to 48-hours of Posting: N/A

Adjourn:

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 PM.

Materials Referenced

Article 49. Police Regulations, Proposed Changes

Linda Chow pp

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie Tunnera, NRC Clerk