



NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION REMOTE ONLINE
MEETING MINUTES
February 18, 2021, 7 PM

Approved 3-18-2021

Present: Raina McManus, Chair; Laura Robert, Vice Chair; Katie Griffith; Jay McHale; Allison Burson; Brandon Schmitt, Director

Guests: Lise Olney, Select Board; Steve Park, Trails Committee; Mary Gard, Sustainable Wellesley; Eric Sofen

Members of the Public: Martha Collins

Public Speak: A petition was read to the Board from the neighbors of Hunnewell Field supporting lighting at the field using Community-Friendly Outdoor Sports Lighting.

Action/Discussion Items:

- **Vote Trails Committee Appointment:** Eric Sofen *After a motion was made and seconded, the Board voted 4-0 to appoint Eric Sofen as the 11th member of the trails committee, effective upon swearing in through June 30th 2021. Allison Burson abstained.*
- **Vote Bench Donation Acceptance: Sawyer Park from Paul Crowley and Friends** A bench donation was proposed at Sawyer Park looking onto Babson campus at the corner of Wellesley Avenue and Forest Street. *A motion was made but not seconded.* After discussion, the Board requested that an alternative location be proposed for the bench, as the intersection did not seem to be an ideal place.
- **Climate Emergency** Mary Gard from Sustainable Wellesley discussed the Palmer Renewable Energy Biomass Plant. Burning wood on a large scale could become considered renewable energy, offering Renewable Portfolio Credits which can be sold on the open market. Ms. Gard is hoping that the NRC would show their support in opposition to allowing the biomass plants be a part of the Renewable Portfolio Standards. Lise Olney from the Select Board suggested to the board signing their support in opposition, pending the MLP's signature. If the MLP does not sign, then the NRC Board Members can sign as individuals. *After a motion was made and seconded, a vote 5-0 to approve that the Wellesley NRC will sign onto the letter to Governor Baker, Lieutenant Governor Polito, Secretary Theoharides, Senator Cream, Senator Rush, and Representative Peisch in opposition to the revisions to the Renewable Portfolio Standard Regulations.*
- **Discuss Permitting Considerations** Ms. Robert shared that the importance of keeping as much open spaces open for active and passive recreation during these times. Sharing the space without giving up all of it to permits is feasible. Ms. Burson discussed due diligence and notifying stakeholder (abutters for example) about requests should be considered. Mr. McHale reminded that as Covid is temporary, these solutions are also temporary, and it is important to help the most people as possible. Ways to notify community members of permits was discussed. Cafe Mangal is a baseline example, which was permitted in the summer of 2020 on a month-to-month basis and monitored for any discrepancies. Mr. Schmitt recommended a 2-stage approach: the applicant advertises their permit, then they get put on the agenda to be discussed at their meeting. Ms. McManus mentioned the importance of stating what permits are coming up on the agendas.

- **Open Space and Recreation Plan** Mr. Schmitt mentioned that action steps needed to be updated and consolidated and asked the board for their suggestions. These steps have also been sent out to various boards for comments.
- **Pollinator Habitat Project** Ms. Griffith updated about a meeting with Sustainable Wellesley where they requested to join in on the project. Monday there will be a meeting with Native Plant Trust regarding plant sales in June. A new webpage is being drafted. The idea for a request to making Pollinator Week an event in Wellesley using NRC funding was proposed to the rest of the board, with more specific details to come.

Liaison Reports:

Trails: Ms. Robert shared that the next meeting is March 16th at 7 PM.

Mobility Committee: Ms. Burson shared that the Committee has moved into a standing agenda that covers construction, trails, etc. There was a meeting where an on-demand carpool system that is being piloted.

Playing Fields Task Force: Ms. Burson shared that there is on-going conversations about whether or not the fields are being optimized, and if funding is consistent amongst teams. Requests for summer activities are coming up.

Director's Report:

- **Review and Possible Vote on Permit Requests:** Mr. Schmitt mentioned that it seems that both groups are still working on an operation plan for their permit.
 - **Wellesley HS Sailing at Morses Pond** No additional information has been received on this request.
 - **After School Basketball Hunnewell Courts: Wellesley Youth Basketball, Terrier Sports** Two partial requests were submitted to use the courts due to a lack of space at Hunnewell. They are in contact with one another about potential timing conflicts.
- **Aqueduct Bathroom Update** 7 bids were received for the site work. DPW will be doing their due diligence with reviewing. The building will go before the Design Review Board next Wednesday.
- The Wellesley Land Trust asked the NRC to cosponsor two upcoming events, a 2-part event about vernal pools on March 10th and April 14th at 4 PM. The board confirmed the desire to cosponsor.
- This is the final year for the Fuller Brook Park invasive species management program. 2 bids were received.

Approve Minutes:

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes for the meetings on January 21, 2021 and February 4, 2021. The motion was approved by a 5-0 vote.

Schedule Future Meetings:

N/A

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

N/A

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 8:31 PM.

Respectfully Submitted, Leah Wallner, NRC Clerk