

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

7PM Thursday, April 6, 2023

Warren Building 90 Washington ST, Wellesley MA

Approved 4-6-2023

Present: Jay McHale, Chair; Bea Bezmalinovic, Vice-Chair; Lisa Collins, Secretary; Laura Robert and Michael D’Ortenzio and Brandon Schmitt, NRC Director

Guests: Joe Roberts, Terrier Sports

Public Speak

No one spoke on a non-agenda item

The meeting was called to order at 7PM.

Director’s Report

Permits

- Mr. Schmitt talked about permits requests coming in and reminded people that Town Hall Officially closed (4.6.2023) and if you are requesting the Town Hall area there is limited parking in the area.

- Senior Class event asked for a permit from the School Department for a slip n’ slide and dunk tank. It’s not related to the school department and Mr. Schmitt spoke to the Principal and Assistant Principal. There is no connection to faculty or schools at this event. He shared a graphic of where the event will take place. The applicant provided a certificate of insurance. Discussion continued about parking, deposit for permit and CORI Forms for adults supervising. Mr. McHale asked Mr. Schmitt to check with the Chief of Police, ask about a rain date and ask about the CORI Forms. And he suggested checking with the DPW for the slip n’ slide. *After a motion was made (D’Ortenzio) and seconded (Collins), the board voted unanimously to approve the permit for the Senior Class Day from Wellesley High School.*

Tree Canopy Study – Mr. Schmitt reviewed some of the initial findings as well as the information that PlanitGeo is using to produce a study for the Town. Mr. Schmitt is hoping to have a report from PlanitGeo by May.

Simons Park Update – Mr. Schmitt reported that there is a black tarp going over the area which is plastic. Mr. Schmitt also shared that the sandbags have been ordered and we have a volunteer group that will help fill the bags starting on May 3. The filled bags will be left and on May 17 & 18 the contractor will come out and mark the outline along with DPW and hopefully on the 18 the tarp will be installed.

Liaison Reports

- Ms. Bezmalinovic – Playing Field Task Force – The next meeting is Friday, April 14.

- Ms. Robert – Trails & Wetlands – Trails will meet on April 13. The first trail walk will be on Sunday, April 30. The wetlands meeting is simultaneous with this meeting. Ms. Robert shared that in the last meeting the Wetlands Protection Committee discussed materials being brought in by approved applicants used for mitigation and how to avoid introduction of contaminants, including soil and invasive species.

- Mr. D’Ortenzio – He attended the Eco Fair at Bates School a few weeks ago. He was impressed by the students’ answers and interest in the environment around the Town.

New Conservation Restriction Layer –Mr. D’Ortenzio and Mr. Schmitt shared the new CR layer in the Town’s GIS system. They are continuing to work on mapping land restrictions.

- Mr. McHale reported that he and Ms. Bezmalinovic spoke with members of the Select Board to make them aware we want to be involved in the Sisters of the Charity Property discussion, when the next proposal is presented.

Climate Emergency

- Ms. Robert – Mentioned that the “No Mow May” initiative and ecological benefits of the initiative in early spring are featured in the [April Newsletter](#). Ms. Robert also brought up the negative impact of using leaf blowers in early spring.

- Mr. Schmitt added that on Tuesday, April 11 there is a [meeting](#) hosted by the Charles River Watershed Association, and residents are encouraged to attend.

Minutes

After a motion was made (Robert), and seconded (Bezmalinovic), the board voted unanimously to approve the March 23rd, 2023 minutes.

Clocktower Bell Schedule

Mr. Schmitt reviewed a request by an abutter to the park to adjust the clocktower bell schedule. The board discussed various options to adjust the schedule of the clock, as well as the current schedule, whether the nearby church had a bell, future restoration efforts, and input from the Historical Commission and CPC. The board agreed that they are disinclined to change the schedule at this time.

Policy Review

The board began discussion of Policy handbook Section #2, but the Board put the discussion on hold until after Joe Roberts presented the Terriers Sports sound request.

Amplification Request for Kelly Fields: Terriers Sports: April 18-April 20, 1:15pm-3:45pm

Mr. Roberts introduced a request to amplify music for the Terriers sports program at Kelly Field. Mitigation efforts include: speaker size, pointing the speaker away from houses, notification to abutting neighbors via flyers w/ contact info. In addition, music “type” is managed by a filter app and adult supervision.

The board discussed the need to refine the overall sound policy. Ms. Bezmalinovic asked about monitoring the decibel levels and noted it’s important to be consistent across fields/neighbors.

Ms. Robert suggested that no amplification requests should be approved until the policy is developed and is concerned with a slippery slope effect. If approved, then we open ourselves up to every sport/organization requesting sound at events. Ms. Robert is concerned about approving one-off requests without a policy and feels that we are creating a potential problem that does not currently exist.

Ms. Bezmalinovic noted we currently consider one-off requests and School Committee has the right to evaluate sound requests on their own fields. She also stated that approval of the request is a one-off approval and should not be considered a precedent.

Ms. Collins noted other towns do have policies that allow one-off requests. Newton was used as an example. Ms. Collins also noted that one-off requests allow us to consider the type of organization (non-profit vs. for profit) and ensure that requests are “boundaried” with set times and dates. Ms. Collins stated she supports the permit request.

Mr. D’Ortenzio commented that the concerns of neighbors are important but not the sole determining factor. It is appropriate that we think about policies around speaker amplified noise and he advocates for balanced use of fields. This request is for limited use and strikes as reasonable.

There was further discussion about the need for a greater sound policy and operational approach to managing the requests. Mr. Roberts suggested using the Playing Fields Task Force to address the need to look at the requests in totality.

After a motion was made (Collins) and seconded (Bezmalinovic), the board voted 4-1: Robert – Nay, D’Ortenzio – Yea, Collins- Yea, McHale – Yea; Bezmalinovic - Yea to approve the request.

Policy Review continued

Mr. D’Ortenzio reported on a discussion he had with the Assistant Secretary for Environmental Policy at the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs on the Quantum of Vote and Land Exchange ratio from the EOEEA policy. The EOEEA plans to issue a new policy in the next weeks to months, and will retain the Article 97 sections, but will revise Quantum of Vote from the current unanimous requirement to a two-thirds (2/3) requirement. Concerns of the unanimous vote cited by the state related to bullying, single hold-out and harmonizing the 2/3 requirement with the rest of the vote requirements with other voting State bodies (e.g. State Legislature). Mr. D’Ortenzio offered a recommendation for the language in Handbook Section 2 based on this discussion for the Board to consider.

Mr. Schmitt will send around Handbook Section 2 with Mr. D’Ortenzio’s recommendations for review and continue deliberation at a future meeting.

Urgent items

Ms. Collins asked the Board for recommended references and resources for sound policy, such as Quiet Communities. Ms. Bezmalinovic suggested CDC and healthy levels of sound, possibly the Health Department. Ms. Robert suggested review of a Light and Noise study from Planning several years ago.

Scheduling Meetings

The board agreed to meet remotely at the April 20 Meeting.

Adjournment

After a motion was made (D’Ortenzio) and seconded, the board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:46 PM.

Materials Referenced

Permit Request for HS Slip N Slide
Draft NRC Minutes (3/2/2023, 4/6/2023)
Clocktower Schedule Request and Background Information
Draft Policy Handbook Edits Section 2
Request for Amplification at Kelly Field

Respectfully Submitted,

Brandon Schmitt