

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION
REMOTE ONLINE
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, May 19, 2022

Approved 6-2-2022

Present: Jay McHale, Chair; Laura Robert, Vice-Chair; Allison Burson; Bea Bezmalinovic, Secretary, Lisa Collins; Brandon Schmitt, Director

Guests: Lara Crawford, Jay Prosnitz, Nancy Cooper, Kayla Sheetz, Theodore Takacs, Martha Collins (spoke for Josephine Okun), Maureen Febiger, Judy Barr, Brent Willes, Jaden Crawford, Josephine Okun (spoke for Donna Indresano), Dana MacKay, Bruce Meltzer, Christie Kovacs.

Public Speak:

- **Lara Crawford (15 Rice St.)** – Ms. Crawford shared the trash she picked up on her walk in the area (around Rice St., State St., and South St.). She has observed an increased amount of trash in the area. Ms. Crawford would like to see the NRC and DPW expand the No Mow May practice to the Brook Path area next year. Ms. Crawford’s final item was about the amount of invasive species growing in the area and she suggested an invasives removal day.
- **Jay Prosnitz (11 Tappan Rd.)** – Mr. Prosnitz would like the NRC to consider the new house project at 20 Tappan Rd., which abuts Fuller Brook Park.

Director’s Report

- **Pickeball Lines at Ouellet, Phillips, Warren Parks** – Mr. Schmitt shared update on the Pickelball court preparations. The Director of Wellesley Housing Authority has some concerns with addition of pickleball linings on the basketball court at Ouellet. Mr. Schmitt has connected the Director of Housing with the Recreation Director, Matt Chin. Mr. McHale suggested the NRC approve addition of linings on courts at Phillips and Warren but wait on Ouellet until Housing and Recreation talk. Commissioners agreed with Mr. McHale.
- **Tree Planting Program** – Mr. Schmitt shared that the DPW is nearing the end of the Spring 2022 tree planting. They have planted close to 60 trees but paused last week due to the weather. Mr. Schmitt shared photos of trees planted by the company they hired for invasive species removal along Fuller Brook Park. The trees (76) he showed were along Grove St., west side of Grove St. and behind 24 State St.) to correct the pathways and restore State St. area.
- **Morses Pond Management** – One harvester has been in use and the second harvester needs to be tuned up and will be out soon. If anyone has questions about the Pond management please contact the NRC Office (nrc@wellesleyma.gov).
- Along with the Morses Pond update Mr. Schmitt added he was contacted by the Mass DEP that the Pond will be part of the Massachusetts Targeted Assessment Monitoring Program. Mr. Schmitt did mention that Ken Wagner has collected a lot of the information that Mass

DEP may need. The issue is the gas-powered boat used during the evaluation. Mr. Schmitt shared what they test for (water quality, water chemistry, collecting fish and the use of an electro fishing) and the dates (June 13 & 27; July 11 & 25; August 8 & 22).

- **Contract & Project Update** – Mr. Schmitt said they are scheduling dates for the field utilization study & to launch it around the Playing Fields Task Force June meeting. Public process will begin in the fall.
- **PlanIt-Geo** – The contract with [PlanIt-Geo](#) has been signed and the contract is being worked on. A draft will be ready within the next two weeks.
- **No Mow May Update** – Mr. Schmitt responded to the question of “No Mow May” made earlier in the meeting. The area reserved this year is the small lawn area between the library and the brook near Simons Park.
- **Meeting Location** – Mr. Schmitt presented options for in-person/hybrid meetings which will begin July 7. The NRC agreed to meet at the Warren Building instead of rotating locations.
- **Parade Update** – Mr. McHale and Ms. Robert along with Lisa Moore (NRC Education & Outreach Coordinator) will represent the NRC in the parade.
- **Restoration Plans for Morses Pond** - Mr. Schmitt explained the remaining site for the restoration are at Pine Point and site No. 13 (near the East side near Russell Road). The project will have to be bid out.

Liaison Reports:

Trails

- Ms. Robert shared that Denny Nackoney put together a project for the scouts to do at Boulder Brook for the summer. There was a guided walk at Centennial on Saturday (May 21) from 9-10 a.m. Ms. Robert also shared there is one more guided walk on June 4 (Carisbrooke Walk) – information can be found at the [website](#). Trails also added new crossing signs near the Aqueduct. Mr. McHale asked about Trails asking CPC for new projects. Ms. Robert responded that CPC is interested in projects and she suggested Centennial Park. The area needs improvement and the Trails Committee is reviewing what it will cost.

Playing Fields Task Force

- Ms. Bezmalinovic shared that PFTF is doing work that coincides with the Field Utilization work and due to the rise in costs to maintain fields, the Task Force is reviewing the model to calculate funding. The second item Ms. Bezmalinovic addressed is standard names for the fields because they will be booking field time through RecTrac. Also addressed new signage and the abundance of trash at the fields and how it affects the budget. Ms. Collins asked if the Task Force has reached out the leagues and teams about cleaning up trash at events. Ms. Bezmalinovic said due to turnover it is hard to reach out to all but she will follow up and reach out to leagues about the responsibility when using the fields.

Mobility

- Mr. Schmitt reported on the Mobility Committee. He shared that May is Mobility Month and they released a [Sustainable Mobility Plan](#). One issue that arose is the increased use of electric scooters and the impact on public ways and the trails system.

Climate Emergency

- Ms. Bezmalinovic shared the Charles River Watershed Association reported the drought update in the state. The southern portion of Massachusetts is in a state of mild drought in April. She wanted to remind everyone in Wellesley to be water sensitive. Ms. Bezmalinovic also asked Mr. Schmitt if the NRC planned on doing the Rain Barrel Program. He said it was not in the plans but if anyone is interested the NRC can connect you with the [Great American Rain Barrel Company](#) and communities in the area running the program.

News & Continuing Business

Hunnewell Track and Field Proposal

- Mr. McHale encouraged the commission to share their views on the School Committee's last proposal. He shared the revised proposal.
- Ms. Robert began the discussion about the letters received from the neighborhood and what the NRC job is to follow the policy. Mr. McHale brought up the decision when the lights were approved for Reidy Field and how difficult this decision will be (at Hunnewell T&F). Mr. McHale said he interprets the policy different than Ms. Robert with reference in trying to compromise what's best for all parties involved.
- Ms. Bezmalinovic spoke about the policy and responsibilities of the NRC. She thinks you can look at the criteria and see both sides along with challenges.
- The discussion continued about the policy, along with sound issues and how it coincides with the School Committee's proposal.

Public Comment on Track & Field

- **Nancy Cooper – (30 Amherst Road)** Suggested the NRC oppose or postpone the proposal and to do more studies and look for other options for a lighted field.
- **Kayla Sheetz (27 Atwood St.)** – Concerned with the traffic patterns and safety issues that will change the area around Hunnewell T&F with this proposal if approved.
- **Theodore Takacs (26 Rice St.)** – Talked about the increase in the usage of the fields. He is worried about safety and traffic in the area.
- **Martha Collins (speaking for Jo Okun from 15 Cottonwood)** – Reminded the NRC they have received a petition that was signed by 109 neighbors opposed to the proposal. Ms. Collins asked for the NRC to look at other options, demand a sound study and ask for a traffic and safety study.

- **Maureen Febiger (24 Crescent St.)** – A past NRC commission reviewed some tough decisions while she served the city. She did cover the number of teams that will use the field and said it really is a small group of students it will serve.
- **Judy Barr (331 Linden St.)** – Shared information about migration of birds and stopover spots like the Hunnewell Park. Claims the lights will be on during the migration. Questions the Epsilon Report about the effects on Hunnewell’s ecosystem.
- **Brent Willess (41 Bellevue Road)** – Spoke in support of the proposal at Hunnewell because of the experience living in the area and how great vibrant it is.
- **Jaden Crawford (15 Rice St.)** – Talked about following the NRC Guidelines and the responsibility. He urged the NRC to stay true to the policy. Urged the NRC to think about Wellesley Memorial Grove when voting on this issue.
- **Josephine Okun speaking for Donna Indresano (51 Smith St.)** – Ms. Indresano spoke about the history of her family in the town and lights would be detrimental to the area and the lack of respect for the neighbors in the area.
- **Dana MacKay (63 Smith St.)** – Mr. MacKay is used to the noise the field creates already but feels the lights will create more nuisance since he feels the 15 games will increase to over 100. Mr. MacKay is also concerned about the noise levels and the effect it will have on his family’s sleep patterns.
- **Bruce Meltzer (30 Amherst Rd.)** – Asked the NRC to consider the veterans with an approval decision. Wellesley Memorial Grove (memorial for WW1 Wellesley residents) is right near the entrance to the football field. Installation of light towers, noise pollution and traffic changes will disturb the area and the meaning of the area.
- **Christie Kovacs (25 Twitchell St.)** – She is worried about the nature in the neighborhood, the quality of life for everyone, and the consequences of lights.

Approved Minutes

- The NRC approved the minutes, 4-0, for 5/5/2022 after some minor edits. Allison Burson was absent.

Adjourn:

- The meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.