

# NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

## REMOTE ONLINE MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, June 15, 2023 – 7 p.m.

Kingsbury Room, Wellesley Police Station

This meeting was recorded and available on [www.wellesleymedia.gov](http://www.wellesleymedia.gov)

Approved 7-19-2023

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

**Guests:** Jim Garvey, Chris Garris, Kelly Sullivan, Jamie Hollis, Ainsley Martin, John Bonsall

**Mr. McHale called the meeting to order at approximately 7PM.**

### **Public Speak**

1. Jim Garvey, 9 Ingersol Road – spoke in favor of Pickelball
2. Christopher Garris, 11 Oak Street – spoke in opposition of Pickeball at Sprague Field
3. Kerry Sullivan, 21 Leewood Road – spoke about the noise and the process of appointing courts at Sprague and Perrin Park
4. Jamie Hollis, Sawyer Road – wants to save the 48’ Cottonwood Tree across the street from him

### **Tree Hearing**

- Tree Hearing: Mr. Schmitt explained the process of compiling the tree hearing list, which comes from the DPW. Mr. Schmitt reviewed each tree and explained the Norway Maple at 14 Birch was cut down already and the Town will deal with this in another manner.

The following trees were reviewed -

- 14 Birch – 17” Norway Maple, 52 Denton Road - 22” Blue Spruce, 60 Audubon Rd - 22” Sugar Maple, 4 Seaver St - 20” Sugar Maple, 30 Edmunds St – 30” White Oak, 14 Sawyer Rd 48” – Cottonwood, 4 Seaver St 20” Sugar Maple

Mr. Schmitt recommended removal of trees, except for the one at 14 Sawyer Road because there was resident questioning the removal. Mr. Hollis confirmed that he would like to hold off on removal until the local residents can discuss further.

Ms. Roberts asked about the tree at 30 Edmunds St. (White Oak). Mr. Schmitt explained it was handed in late and made the paper ad but not the agenda so it will have to be deferred to a future meeting.

Mr. McHale asked Mr. Hollis about his objection to taking the tree down. Discussion continued on the subject of the Cottonwood Tree at 14 Sawyer Road.

Mr. McHale made a motion to remove the trees at 52 Denton Road, 4 Seaver Street, 14 Birch and 60 Audubon Road.

*After a motion was made (Mr. D’Ortenzio) and seconded (Ms. Bezmalinovic), the board voted 5-0 to approve the trees at Denton Road, Seaver Street, Audubon Road & Birch - McHale-Yea, Bezmalinovic-Yea, Robert-Yea, Collins-Yea, D’Ortenzio-Yea*

**Discuss Pickleball and Resident Petition with Recreation Representative-** Ainsley Martin, speaking on behalf of the Recreation Committee –explained that they were asked to review solutions for Pickleball play at Sprague, Perrin and Schofield. Mr. Martin explained the suggestions made including limited hours, using indoor pickleball balls, relocate the courts at Sprague as well as moving some courts to Hunnewell. Mr. Martin explained that Schools will not vote until they hear the NRC discussion on the subject. The committee talked about data needed prior to voting on a long-term solution.

Mr. McHale emphasized the need to find a short-term solution for pickleball players. The committee agreed that a 9 a.m. start time and 7 p.m. end time is a short-term solution for Rec. to carry through until a long-term solution is found. The Recreation Department will work with DPW to reinforce signage of the new times as well as post it on the website and through the sign-up system.

### **Permit Requests**

- **Mass at Hunnewell Track and Field: September 17, 2023** – Mrs. Robert shared that she was not comfortable allowing this event for the expected number of attendees with amplification.

Applicant John Bonsall – representative for St. John’s Collaborative –explained that the Mass takes place in front of the stands and the group does not go on the field. They arrive at 8 a.m. to set up but the group is only there for 1 hour and a half. They have a sound level they stick to minimize impact to the surrounding area.

Discussion continued about whether to permit the event. Mr. McHale and Mr. D’Ortenzio both mentioned the event had been permitted in the past. Mr. McHale explained that Town Counsel reported that religion is not an issue with this event. Ms. Bezmalinovic has concerns about the duration of amplification. The concern was about the number of people and amplification and will this open up for other large events.

Mr. Schmitt asked the NRC if there are any additional conditions to be added to the permit before the vote. Mr. McHale mentioned not to use balloons. Mr. D’Ortenzio asked about the decibel limit for the event. It was discussed that it goes by the policy manual for the decibel limit. Ms. Robert asked if the event can try the Mass without amplification. Mr. Bonsall responded that amplification was required for the event.

Ms. Collins stated that she is in support of this event for 1.25 hours of limited amplified sound that is below the limit we allow and within the field policy, as a community builder. Mr. D’Ortenzio agreed with Ms. Collins with the addition of the limitation on balloon use. Agreed that the NRC has ongoing issues with sound and consistency are important. He stated that Wellesley needs more community building and agreed with Ms. Collins and in support of the request.

Mr. McHale asked for Mr. Bonsall to work with Mr. Schmitt to control the amplification and will come back (July 6 Meeting) at the next meeting for a vote.

- **Amplification at Kelly Field**– Ms. Robert asked if the amplification was occurring in the past. The program has been running for a while and the amplified sound has always taken place.

Mr. McHale mentioned there was one letter of concern from a family on Wingate and will share the information with Joe Roberts.

Ms. Robert mentioned that amplification at Kelley Field could be camp or another event taking place. This is about amplification at that field and not the Terriers program.

Ms. Bezmalinovic shared the concern that the use of ongoing music during a baseball game is not typical and that ongoing use of music in the evenings without restriction was unusual. She also noted that priority users such as the School Athletic programs do not typically have permission for extended use of sound.

***Mr. McHale made the motion to accept the permit as presented by Joe Robert & the Terrier program, seconded (Mr. D'Ortenzio), the board voted 3-2 to approve sound for the Terriers program to play music - McHale-Yea, Bezmalinovic-No, Robert-No, Collins-Yea, D'Ortenzio-Yea***

- **Live Music at Morses Pond** – Mr. D'Ortenzio stated that the event will be a great Community Builder and is in favor of the program. Ms. Robert questioned the sound policy and now approving one-by-one which she is not in favor of.

The committee discussed a sound policy specific meeting at the end of July. Mr. McHale added the NRC still needs to complete revisions to Section 3 of the policy manual.

***Mr. D'Ortenzio made the motion to approve the permit for music at Morses Pond, seconded (Ms. Collins), the board voted 4-1 to approve sound for the Terriers program to play music - McHale-Yea, Bezmalinovic-Yea, Robert-No, Collins-Yea, D'Ortenzio-Yea***

- **Concert on Town Hall through the Recreation Department** – Every Wednesday through the summer. It's been a reoccurring event during the summer. Mr. Schmitt said he normally approves them administratively in the past, unless the committee is questioning something with the permit.

***Mr. D'Ortenzio made the motion to approve the permit for music at Town Hall for the summer, seconded (Ms. Collins), the board voted 5-0 to approve sound for the Terriers program to play music - McHale-Yea, Bezmalinovic-Yea, Robert-Yea, Collins-Yea, D'Ortenzio-Yea***

- **Sisters of Charity** – Ms. Robert reviewed a recent meeting where the Sisters property was discussed. There is a large group of people (Friends of Brookside) that signed a request to the Sisters for a conservation restriction around the border to Centennial Park. The next meeting will be June 20<sup>th</sup> with the Planning Board, for more questions to be answered.

- **Pesticide Coalition Sign-On Letter** – Mr. Schmitt reviewed the letter for the committee surrounding the three bills being presented – An Act Relative to the Pesticide Board; An Act Relative to the Pesticides and one to empower Towns & Cities to Protect Resident and the Environment from Harmful Pesticides. Wellesley is ahead of the most Towns, but individual residential use of pesticide is still unregulated. It's a start in hopes to regulate pesticides in the Town.

***Ms. Robert made the motion to approve the support of the Pesticide Coalition Sign-on Letter, seconded (Ms. Collins), the board voted 5-0 to approve sound for the Terriers program to play music - McHale-Yea, Bezmalinovic-Yea, Robert-Yea, Collins-Yea, D'Ortenzio-Yea***

### **Performance Review**

- The committee discussed a number of options to complete the Director performance review. Mr. Schmitt will share the Town form that the town uses. Ms. Robert then brought up the issue of putting Mr. Schmitt on equal setting with his peers around town.

### **Director's Report**

- **Morses Pond Erosion** - Mr. Schmitt shared photos of the sites and the reconstruction. He also said landscaping will be the next step in restoration.

- **Longfellow Project** – Mr. Schmitt reviewed a recent presentation from the Charles River Watershed Association and that the CRWA was appreciative of the input from the NRC and community members. The project will include conceptual designs to improve flooding conditions, and more information will follow.

### **Liaison Reports**

- Mr. McHale reported that he met with the CPC and shared the NRC will be in need of support to solve the Pickleball issue in town. He also mentioned that he reviewed the Active Field Study Report (Weston & Sampson Field Utilization Study) and will request money for smaller things (benches, water fountains and maintaining areas) before the reconstruction of fields. He explained it will have to be a group effort (CPC, Rec, NRC and potentially the Select Board).

### **Climate Emergency**

-Ms. Collins discussed that the obsession with air conditioning as we head into the heat of the summer.

-Ms. Robert was wondering if we could host a film series at the Library on Climate. Maybe place it on the future meeting.

- Mr. Schmitt reported that Lisa Moore is working with the Animal Control Office in Town on a speaking engagement at the Library on (June 28) about Coyotes.

### **Minutes Approval**

- The May 18 minutes were reviewed and corrected. *After a motion was made (Ms. Collins) and seconded (Ms. Bezmalinovic), the board voted 5-0 to approve the minutes for June 1 - McHale-Yea, Bezmalinovic-Yea, Robert-Yea, Collins-Yea, D’Ortenzio-Yea*

- The June 1 minutes were reviewed and corrected. *After a motion was made (Ms. Collins) and seconded (Ms. Robert), the board voted 5-0 to approve the minutes for June 1 - McHale-Yea, Bezmalinovic-Yea, Robert-Yea, Collins-Yea, D’Ortenzio-Yea*

### **Urgent Items**

N/A

### **Next Meeting**

Mr. McHale spoke about having a retreat or do we review the year along with the review process.

### **Documents referenced**

- -Agenda
- -Tree Removal Hearing Information
- -Pickleball Petition
- -Permit Information (Hunnewell Mass, Kelly Field incl. feedback)
- -Sisters of Charity CR proposal
- -See this link regarding a request for co-signers to various pesticide reduction legislation:  
[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfrXPo83jo48Q\\_0XIfqjZeFNbxYmYeIT1s4-zSj7AUGOQklhg/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfrXPo83jo48Q_0XIfqjZeFNbxYmYeIT1s4-zSj7AUGOQklhg/viewform)
- -Draft May 18, June 1 meeting minutes (in pdf and word).

## **Adjournment**

Mr. McHale adjourned the meeting at 09:47PM