

Special Newton Park Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 27, 2022 – 6:15 pm

Electronic Meeting was held via Zoom at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87034864667?pwd=UDIKRFJkVjdLT2JXSUwvKzVZUXZLZz09>

and Website Streaming at <https://www.newtongov.org/CivicMedia>

(Pursuant to Iowa Code section 21.8) This electronic meeting was held because a meeting in person is impossible or impractical due to concerns for the health and safety of board members, staff, and the public due to COVID-19. The public was able to participate in this meeting and comment on an agenda item by submitting via email to brianl@newtongov.org before 5:00 PM the day of the meeting or, during the meeting, by calling 641-521-7137. Providing comment in person was not an option.

MINUTES

- 1) Meeting called to order at 6:15 pm by Board Chair Humphrey
- 2) Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance statement read by Board Chair Humphrey
- 3) Roll Call: present - Humphrey, Caldwell, Osby, and Tipton; absent - none
- 4) Certification of Iowa Open Meetings Law confirmed by Community Services Director Brian Laube
- 5) Proposed Park Bond Referendum - presentation & vote on recommendation of projects to include in the proposed park bond referendum:

- a. Before any discussion occurred, Community Services Director Brian Laube briefed the board on the three most-recent City Council meetings, and what he presented to council concerning the proposed park bond referendum issue. This included sharing the current Park Board goals, City Council goals, and briefly discussing all park-related projects in said goals lists in all three presentations or discussions with City Council. He also shared that City Council has not taken any formal action approving a resolution for the proposed park bond referendum, with that consideration by Council likely to be on the agenda for their February 7th agenda.

Laube then continued that the purpose of this agenda item was to have the Park Board take a vote on a recommendation to City Council which projects they'd like to see included in the proposed park bond referendum. Laube stated that whatever recommendation the board might approve tonight, even if it is different from the feedback staff received from Council on what they'd like to have in the referendum, he would include this recommendation in the council report that will be submitted for this Council agenda item on February 7th. Laube also shared that the guidance and feedback staff received from City Council on January 17th was to include the following projects in resolution approving the park bond referendum:

- i. Westwood Clubhouse improvements

Park Board Chair – Melanie Humphrey

Park Board Members – Miranda Caldwell, (vacant), Jeff Osby, & Rachelle Tipton.

- ii. Maytag Pool Play Features
 - iii. Dog Park at Sunset Park
 - iv. Pickleball Courts at Aurora Park
- b. Motion by Caldwell & seconded by Osby to recommend to City Council a list of park projects to include in the proposed park bond referendum.
- c. Board discussion followed:
- i. Board Chair Humphrey stated that after the last Park Board meeting and the news article that followed concerning that meeting, she has received questions on why the Park Board was not supporting the splash pad project. She continued by stating that the Board does support the splash pad project as it's one of their goals, but it's not their top goal. She continued by stating that City Council can choose items they want to construct. She also added that she does have reservations about the proposed downtown splash pad's location and priority.
 - ii. Board member Caldwell agreed and said that the Clubhouse is the top priority, the pool improvements should be second, and then it comes down to choosing the other projects. Humphrey agreed with this assessment.
 - iii. Humphrey added that the Westwood Clubhouse project has been a goal of the Park Board for maybe 8 years, and that it's about time to get something done. She continued by stating that a splash pad project, not necessarily the downtown location project, has also been a goal of the Board for a couple years. After Brian Laube confirmed this with a brief summary of the original splash pad idea at Maytag Pool, and then a stand-alone location away from the pool in another park, he stated that the current goal is for the downtown location. Humphrey added that she had concerns on costs of upkeep and maintenance.
 - iv. Board member Osby added that he felt that the Park Board focused on other projects since the private side had taken the lead to get a splash pad constructed. He continued by sharing that we need to improve the existing parks before adding any new ones, to which Humphrey agreed.
 - v. Caldwell asked if any of the board members has issues with council's apparent direction of the four projects. Osby stated that he was fine including the dog park at Sunset and pickleball courts, as those are high in demand. He added that the clubhouse should be no. 1, and the pool improvements are no. 2.
 - vi. Humphrey shared that she has no ties to either Westwood or the pool, but felt that the board is supporting these projects since that's what the community is asking for.
 - vii. Osby reminded the board that they had past discussions about continuing to upgrade Agnes Patterson Park, and that should not be forgotten.
 - viii. Caldwell then thanked Brian Laube for sharing slides from his recent presentations, since she was not on the board when the recent goals were approved. She then continued by stating that the improvements at Sunset should be part of this recommendation, but asked

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should they consider including hike and bike trail construction. After Humphrey stated that the goal was to connect to Jasper County's trails, Brian Laube added that the actual goal of the Park Board related to trails was to complete the loop around town. Laube continued by sharing that staff has been working on some possible coordination with Jasper County on some of the missing pieces, and that staff does not feel that they are ready to fill in some of these pieces yet due to needed ROW or easements not secured, or other platting or development issues still unknown.

- ix. Caldwell stated that maybe money for bike trails could come from somewhere else, the pickleball courts would be easy to construct, and the dog park idea is good; so she has no issues with what council appears to want.
 - x. Humphrey added that the board can recommend other projects, but feels that the splash pad project is something the private committee should be the lead on while the board pushes other projects.
 - xi. Osby then commented his preferences of projects: Westwood Clubhouse, then the pool improvements, then the dog park, and pickleball also.
 - xii. Caldwell then asked if money is budgeted for the proposed splash pad already. Brian Laube shared that the project is currently included in the proposed Capital Improvement Plan being considered by council, with the private side raising \$400K and the City contributing \$225 towards the construction. Caldwell then stated that the splash pad project does not fit into this bond issue, and that the bond could get muddy if the splash pad was included in the referendum. Tipton agreed.
 - xiii. Board discussion ended, and no citizen comments were made. Discussion was then closed.
 - xiv. Humphrey then stated that there was a motion and second to approve a recommendation to City Council by the Park Board to include the Westwood Clubhouse Improvements, Maytag Pool Play Feature Upgrades, Dog Park at Sunset Park, and Pickleball Courts at Aurora Park in the proposed park bond referendum. Roll call vote taken – motion carried by 4-0 vote.
- 6) Adjourn: motion by Osby and seconded by Tipton to adjourn. Motion carried by 4-0 vote. Meeting adjourned at 6:48 PM.

BJL

1-27-22