

Newton Park Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, June 16, 2021 – 6:15 pm

Electronic Meeting held via Zoom at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86255869103?pwd=MWoxaHVSy0t3VnBjQTZrK2ZkRHNEZz09>

and Website Streaming was available 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

Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance:

Is there anyone present that may require special assistance in being able to participate in this public meeting?

- 1) Call to order at 6:15 pm by Board Chair Melanie Humphrey.
- 2) Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance statement read by Board Chair Humphrey.
- 3) Roll Call: all 4 members present.
- 4) Certification of Iowa Open Meetings Law: Community Services Director Brian Laube confirmed that the meeting is being held in compliance with all applicable laws.
- 5) Citizen Participation or Comments: none
- 6) Review and approve minutes from May 19, 2021 meeting: motioned by Tipton, seconded by Heitman to approve – no discussion – minutes approved by a 4-0 vote.
- 7) Downtown Splash Pad update: Splash Pad committee member Graham Sullivan shared the recently completed concept plan, and also provided the following information:
 - a. The committee recently submitted a grant application to Prairie Meadows seeking funding for this project.
 - b. Newton Main Street will be setting up a Go Fund Me page seeking donations.
 - c. The committee will be pursuing other possible grant opportunities.
 - d. The committee has a large donor in place that will match donations to a certain amount.
 - e. Other discussions on this included:
 - i. The building shown on the concept plan would serve as a restroom facility, open shelter, and mechanical room for the splash pad systems.
 - ii. The question on the capacity of the proposed concept plan was asked, with Brian Laube stating that they'd have to research this if the project was built.
 - iii. Following a question about people parking at the adjacent Bank Iowa site and visiting the splash pad, Brian Laube shared that the vision was to install some curbs and landscaped area to restrict

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pedestrian and vehicle traffic from moving both ways between the Bank Iowa lot and the splash pad park.

- iv. Brian Laube also shared that the number of trees shown on the concept plan is less than what was shown in an initial draft, but there still may be too many.
 - v. Councilperson Randy Ervin asked about the cost estimate that was shared of around \$600,000 and what that included. Brian Laube answered by sharing that the landscape architect who prepared the concept drawing had given a ballpark estimate of \$600,000 plus, and that included everything shown. These estimates can be on the conservative side, plus they are preliminary only since no design work has been done.
- 8) Jasper County Bike Trail Plans: Keri Van Zante (Jasper County Conservation) shared information on the county's bike trail system, current, and future projects. Discussions included:
- a. Keri shared an overall trail map of Jasper County showing proposed trails and their different priorities. This plan was prepared with the assistance of the National Park Service.
 - b. The priority one trails connecting to the City of Newton were highlighted, including trails along US Hwy. 6 towards Kellogg/Rock Creek and trails leading to Baxter and connecting to the Chichaqua Trail. Brian Laube shared that the City has future projects planned to make these connections should the County construct them.
 - c. Keri also shared information on some other trail projects in the County including the Red Rock Prairie Trail (Monroe to Prairie City/Neil Smith Refuge) which will be out for bids later this year.
- 9) Westwood Golf Course Clubhouse update: Brian Laube shared the newly created concept plan and rendering which depicts City staff's visions for the clubhouse project as shared in the business plan presentation Laube made to City Council this past winter. Brian stated that he will be presenting this to City Council on June 21st, so he was not going to go into any detail tonight with the Park Board. No discussions followed on this.
- 10) Park Board 2021 Goal Setting: Brian Laube began the goal setting exercise by recapping the Park Board's current 2020 goals, and also leading discussion on other possible projects the board could consider (see attached 2021 Park Board Goal Setting – Preliminary List dated 6-16-2021). After discussing both parts of the list (projects and goals), the following discussions occurred:
- a. Board member Osby question whether the splash pad project should remain on the list since there is a private group leading the efforts for this. Brian Laube shared that he felt it should stay on the list so it could be considered as a goal. Brian also shared that should the privately-led project be constructed downtown, there would likely not be another splash pad proposed elsewhere in the park system. Jeff Osby did suggest that this project be labeled on the goals survey list as Splash Pad (downtown project), to which the consensus was to do so. Brian Laube said he's make that change.
 - b. Discussion amongst members was had about possibly adding a project for updating Agnes Patterson Park. Suggestions included making it more of a sports complex, bringing up the condition of the fields and park in general. Consensus was that many smaller, ongoing or proposed projects address many of these projects, so no larger project at Agnes Patterson Park will be added for consideration.
 - c. Additional discussion was had about parks acreages being maintained by staff, and the need to be

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cautious in adding more Park ground to maintain. Bryce Heitman shared his opinion that maybe we should stress quality of parks over quantity, which was seconded by Jeff Osby.

- d. Rachelle Tipton brought up the idea of utilizing Maytag Park, along with the school district's Children's Forest property, to create a large X-Country course. Brian Laube stated that staff had some ideas on how to partner with the school not only on that but another possible recreation amenity, so Brian stated that he'd like to schedule a meeting with Rachelle to discuss these further.
- e. Rachelle Tipton also asked about the Maytag Park Caretaker's House project, to which Brian Laube shared that although they have no planned use for the structure, the plan was to preserve the structure's integrity and appearance even if it is not being used at the time.
- f. At the end of discussions for this item, Brian Laube shared that he'll have a survey prepared for board members by early July, so any other possible project ideas can be emailed to Brian prior to then. Once the survey is out and board members complete it, Brian said he'd prepare a proposed 2021 Park Board Goals list for consideration to approve it at the July board meeting.

11) Old Business:

- a. Board member Osby asked if Cardinal Pond was open to the public yet. Brian Laube shared that it is not, as staff has to complete some minor erosion control items and wait for the grass to be fully established. The pond is fully stocked, but fish are not of keep-able size yet. The signs stating this have been delayed in arriving. Also, staff intends to pursue approval to allow ice fishing on the pond, so this will be on an upcoming Park Board agenda for discussion.

12) New Business:

- a. Board Chair Humphrey inquired about the volleyball courts at Agnes Patterson Park. Nick Cummins shared that staff was reconstructing these, and they were about a week out from being ready.
- b. Brian Laube shared that the department's Parks & Rec Seasonal Specialist Victoria Jordan had put together a week-long day camp that was running this week. The Explorer Camp had sessions on STEM with the High School, birds with Jasper County Conservation, and art with the Center for Arts and Artists. Should this be successful, another week of events will likely be scheduled for late summer prior to school beginning. Brian also shared that a Yoga in the Park program is being put together, with more details coming very soon.
- c. Brian Laube also reminded all that even though the Park Board does not deal in the maintenance side of our parks, if anyone discovers or is informed about a maintenance issue that they please contact our department directly. This cuts down on the time it takes for City staff to investigate and make repairs.

13) Motion to Adjourn by Tipton, seconded by Osby – by a 4-0 vote the meeting was adjourned at 8:12 pm.

BJL

6-21-2021

2021 Park Board Goal Setting – Preliminary List (6-16-2021)

2020 Park Board Project Goals:

- Maytag Pool Upgrades: install new play features in the pool (includes removal of existing mushroom fountains and concrete structure in the shallow end), lazy river, or other large scale attraction. CIP (FY-23 & FY-24)
- Hike & Bike Trail Loop: complete the city-wide hike & bike trail loop. CIP (FY-23 & FY-24)
- Ball Field Playing Surface Upgrades: upgrades to the turf and lime surfaces at the six ballfields at Agnes Patterson Park. (Completing work on at least two of these in 2021.)
- Westwood Clubhouse: build a new club house for Westwood Golf Course to better serve golf customers and to generate more usage of the facility (downsized vision to seat 150 people for events). CIP (FY-23)
- Splash Pad (Downtown Project): Install an interactive splash pad somewhere in the park system (location to be determined). CIP (FY-23)
- Playground Equipment: complete a substantial upgrade to all older or outdated playground equipment. CIP (FY-24)
- Skate Park: construct new skate park in Aurora Park.
- Sunset Park: complete park improvements per recent planning and design efforts. CIP (FY-25 & FY-27)
- Ball Field Lighting and Electrical Upgrades: NGSa and Newton Little League have requested lighting and electrical upgrades at the six ballfields at Agnes Patterson Park.

Other Projects for Consideration in 2021 (in current CIP):

- Westwood Cart Path Improvements: In addition to making some repairs, this project would add cart paths to locations still without. (FY22 and FY-24)
- ADA Improvements in Parks: construct ADA-complaint walks, routes, and other related improvements at various park locations. (FY-24)
- Maytag Park Caretaker's House: interior and exterior restoration work for a use TBD. (FY-25 and FY-26)
- Downtown Dog Park: construct a dog park in Sunset Park. (FY-22, but not funded)
- Inclusive Playground Features: construct inclusive playground equipment and features in a park location TBD. (FY-23 and FY-24)
- Pickleball Court Improvements: construct stand-alone pickleball courts in a location TBD. (FY-24)
- Cardinal Pond Improvements: install improvements such as trails, ADA-accessible fishing pier, and other possible amenities. (FY-23 and FY-24)
- Disk Golf Expansion: request was received to upgrade and expand the current disk golf courses at Maytag Park and Woodland Park.

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2020 Park Board Visions/Other Goals:

- Hike & Bike Trails: Connect Newton to the Central Iowa bike trail system.
- Marketing: Expand marketing efforts to recruit new park users, increase rentals of park facilities, and attract new events.
- Parks Evaluations: Evaluate the long-term needs or uses of all City parks.
- Non-Profit Support: Establish and support a non-profit to raise money for park improvement projects, coordinate volunteer's activities, and raise awareness of parks activities.

Other Possible Visions/Goals for Consideration in 2021:

- Service Projects: facilitate and/or coordinate Eagle Scout or other service projects in City parks.
- Volunteer Opportunities: Create volunteer opportunities to encourage more ownership of the parks among citizens to discourage vandalisms and other unwanted activities.
- Reduced price pool admission passes: offer free or reduced-price pool passes/admissions based on ability to pay or need.
- Expand Recreation Programs and Opportunities: offer new or different rec. programs utilizing existing facilities.

BJL
6-16-2021