

**NATURAL RESOURCES  
COMMISSION REMOTE  
ONLINE MEETING  
MINUTES  
May 5, 2022 - 7:00 PM**

**Approved 5-19-2022**

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

**Guests:** Linda Chow, Catherine Mirick, Jack Pilecki, Mike Berry, Steven Riberdy, Al Ferrer.

**7:05 p.m. Public Speak:**

- No residents spoke.

**7:15 p.m. News & Continuing Business**

**Hunnewell Track & Field Proposal Update**

- School Committee Chair Linda Chow presented the updates on the Hunnewell Track and Field proposal. She presented slides on the Updated Lighting Proposal.
- Ms. Chow said the revised proposal is based on feedback the board has received from the NRC from the March 22, 2022 meeting.
- Ms. Chow said the school committee focused on the proposed usage, traffic and parking issues and a number of others items including trash control, sound, environmental and who is accountable for the lighting.
- The School Committee revised the number of nights of use – 15 night events, (11 in the fall and four in the spring) and six night practices, (four in the fall, and two in the spring). Ms. Chow also added that the MIAA ([Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association](#)) invites top teams to play post-season play offs. Schools might request up to five extra games - one for each eligible team - during post-season. Ms. Chow also presented an illustrative field use schedule that reflects these changes.
- Ms. Chow said that if lights are approved, all football games would be treated like a big event with police detail in the first year. She addressed the issue of the school avoiding double-booking on the same night to avoid traffic, parking and noise issues.
- At the School Committee request, Steven Riberdy at Epsilon reviewed the previous Epsilon consultant's report to review and update based on the School Committee's revised assumptions. Mr. Riberdy's scope of work included a desk review of relevant previous reports and a site visit on April 29, 2022. Mr. Riberdy confirmed the original findings. He noted that many of the proposed events with lights will occur in early spring and late fall, a period of dormancy or hibernation.
- Ms. Chow presented the IDA performance requires as a minimum for compliance and clarified the IDA standards versus the proposed lighting plan. She then had Mr. Berry from Musco speak about the performance report standards on the lighting design.
- Mr. McHale asks for any questions with the new revised plans.

- Ms. Bezmalinovic asked Chief Pilecki to comment on plans for major events. Mr. Pilecki spoke about the Police Departments commitment to make the events go as smooth as possible.
- Ms. Robert asked Ms. Chow if the School Committee has reviewed or will review the revisions with the neighborhood and Ms. Chow responded no. Ms. Robert asked Ms. Chow if they will be fixing the sound system even if lights are not approved and Ms. Chow said no because a new sound system needs new poles. Ms. Robert asked Chief Pilecki if he would open Seaver Street access and Mr. Pilecki responded no.
- Ms. Bezmalinovic asked difference in acceptable sound levels in the neighborhood near stadium versus Hardy.
- Ms. Collins asked about the scheduling and if there would be no back-to-back events. The discussion continued with questions from the NRC on sound and scheduling.
- Mr. McHale reviewed the guidelines for residents commenting during the meeting and invited public comment.

### **Public Comment on Track and Field Proposal**

- **Gregory McGregor – (McGregor Law)** – Mr. McGregor urged the NRC to adhere to its policy regarding change in use. He concluded by saying this project does not adhere to the legal requirements for using the park in this way.
- **Martha Collins – 17 Rice Street** – Ms. Collins urged the NRC to preserve and protect the towns’ natural resources and open space parkland. She observed that the area is already heavily trafficked with both pedestrians and cars. She urged support for the neighbors’ quality of life.
- **Jo Okun – 15 Cottonwood Road** – Ms. Okum spoke about the inconsistency between Schools on the role of the plan as well as the ZBA’s involvement at Sprague Field and her concern about this plan with the addition of lights.
- **Marc Shechtman – an abutter on Rice Street** – Mr. Schechtman does not want Hunnewell to end up like a schoolyard and protect it as parkland.
- **Nancy Cooper – 30 Amherst Road** – Ms. Cooper asked the NRC to protect the green space and natural areas.
- **Bruce Meltzer – 30 Amherst Road** –Dr. Meltzer expressed concern about school activities that cut into family time by overlapping athletic games with family dinner times. He advocated for the protection of the family schedule, family time, and homework
- **Marlene Allen – 29 Rice Street** – Ms. Allen expressed concern that the School Committee proposal was developed the subcommittee without public agenda or public speak, that there was no legal means of preventing a slippery slope in the use of loans, and that abutters of public land would lack zoning protections when living by parkland.
- **Cliff Canady – 55 Smith Street** – Mr. Canady emphasized that community building can happen during the afternoon and that parity with other towns is not a requirement. Without an enforcement mechanism, the policy is not meaningful and the lack of a binding policy may lead to increased use along with the other associated effects (noise, trash, disruption). He called on the NRC to reject the proposal.
- **Jerry Nigro – 15 Washburn Street** – He commented that he was walking down Washington Street after a lacrosse event at Needham and had recently attended events in Natick, Weston and Canton that were family events under lights. He encouraged the neighbors to participate in these events

Mr. McHale addressed the next steps on dealing with the new proposal that was presented to the NRC this week. Mr. McHale asked member to prepare questions for the Schools prior to the next meeting. Ms. Robert and Ms. Burson would like to have Schools reach out to the neighborhood in good faith. The NRC planned to have an internal discussion on May 17, 2022, followed by a vote if enough information has been gathered on the proposal to address board member's questions.

### **8:30 p.m. - Liaison Reports:**

- Mr. McHale thanked all the community groups involved with the clean ups around town including Weston Road, Brookside, Beebe Meadows, Hunnewell Field and the Wellesley Conservation Land.

### **8:35 p.m. – Climate Emergency**

The Board briefly discussed [the Nevada law banning unnecessary natural lawns](#), which have led to the removal of 4,500 acres of turf given drought conditions and low water levels at Lake Mead.

### **Directors Report**

- Mr. Schmitt asked about approval for Wellesley Rocks concerts at Clocktower Park. The NRC unanimously approved the permit for five concerts at Clocktower Park.
- Request from the Recreation Commission discussed the addition of pickleball lines on half of the basketball courts. This is meeting a demand with an existing resource at Ouellet, Warren and Phillips playgrounds. The board would wait to allow future comment and discuss at the next meeting.

### **Schedule Future Meetings**

- The NRC will not meet on July 21, 2022 because of vacation schedules. Mr. Schmitt also advised the NRC that after July 1, 2022 meetings will take place in person or with hybrid participation.

### **Approved Minutes**

- The Board unanimously approved the 4.28.2022 after a revision suggested by Ms. Robert.

### **Adjourn:**

There were no urgent items not anticipated prior to 48 hours of posting. The meeting adjourned at 9:34 p.m.

### **Attachments:**

[School Committee Presentation](#)