



**City of Newport
Park Board Meeting
April 27, 2017**

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ROLL CALL

Board Members present – Emily White; Anita Perkins; Heidi Tweeten; Jared Flewellen; John Graber

Board Members absent –

Also present –Matt Yokiell, Executive Director; Dan Lund, Council Liaison

3. APPROVAL OF PARK BOARD MINUTES

A. Park Board Minutes of March 23, 2017

Motion by Perkins, seconded by Graber, to approve the Park Board Minutes of March 23, 2017 as presented. With 5 Ayes, 0 Nays, the motion carried.

4. GARLIC MUSTARD PULL

The Park Board discussed the garlic mustard pull and having students perform this as their student service day. The deadline for getting an application in is May 15th. The senior service day is June 1st.

5. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT-

Chairperson White - I would like to set our dates for Winter Family Fun Night in 2018, it would be January 27th. Is that ok with everyone? I would also like to set the date for the buckthorn pull. Would October 28th work?

John Graber - It would be better if we did it before it went to seed.

Executive Director Yokiell - The reason we do it that late is because it's one of the few trees that still has leaves on so it's easy to identify.

John Graber - Could you mow it so it doesn't go to seed?

Executive Director Yokiell - It's in the middle of the forest.

Chairperson White - Did you hear how the goat project went in Cottage Grove?

Mayor Lund - I believe it worked but it was just a small area.

Chairperson White - Anything else on the goals?

Anita Perkins - The adopt-a-park thank you notes have been mailed.

Chairperson White - Great. Do we have the openings on the website?

Executive Director Yokiell - Not sure.

6. BOARD REPORTS

A. Anita Perkins - I just wanted to thank all the volunteers. If there is anyone else that would like to sign up, please call Renee.

B. Heidi Tweeten - You should have received an estimate for the cost for the signs at Bailey School Forest. The price is reasonable. We would need about 20 signs. It's relatively simple. It has the scientific name, common name, and whether it's native or non-native. We presented the idea to the Bailey School Forest Governance Committee meeting and it was well received. I have a masters student helping me identify trees. She's more than willing to help on a few other projects inside the Forest too. We'd like to have it done by the time the leaves fall.

Chairperson White - I like the looks of the top one but I'm thinking it would be hard to read if they're nine feet high. The blue stands out more. Also, is this a picture of how they'll be mounted?

Heidi Tweeten - Yes, they are mounted so the tree can grow around it. We also talked about putting little coin tags on the trees to identify them if the sign falls off so Public Works could replace it with the right one.

Chairperson White - What's our next step? Is it a motion here to pass it on to Council?

Executive Director Yokiel - I think we need to identify the number of species first so we can pass on specifics to the City Council.

Chairperson White - Can we figure out the species by May?

Heidi Tweeten - I'll try, it depends on my volunteer contacts.

Chairperson White - It would also be nice if we found a company that already has a template so it would be cheaper for signs.

Jared Flewellen - How did you come up with 20?

Heidi Tweeten - Marge Meconis said that there were about 15-18 species that were native and then there are some more that are left over from when Bailey's owned it. Also, I have a list of about 10 trees from Ashley.

Jared Flewellen - I think 20 is a good number and like the color contrast.

Chairperson White - I would still like a motion to move forward with this.

Motion by Tweeten, seconded by Flewellen, to present the tree walk project to the City Council for 20 signs with more information coming in May. With 5 Ayes, 0 Nays, the motion carried.

Heidi Tweeten - I have two more things. We were talking about basketball courts. I asked Rich Romano, the principal at the school, if they had any interest in having full-sized basketball courts being put in. He said that basketball courts are really difficult because the hoops get broken so much. He said instead that they would really like soccer nets. They come in at about \$3,000. He said that if the Board were to make a motion for a project, soccer nets would be the most useful and durable. Something to think about. The other thing, we talked about a prairie restoration project in Bailey School Forest. While I was doing the tree walk, I brought a nature center individual up there and she said it was a prairie remnant at the top of the hill and we should check it out. John and I met with some individuals from the Watershed and Conservation District. We discussed the quality of the remnant and it's poor on the bottom of the hill. They talked about a lot of funding sources and programs. They said Bailey School Forest was a good candidate for the restoration. They also talked about a greenway project to connect several different trails. They want a trail to run from the River to La Lake in Woodbury. The first estimate was about 15 acres.

Vice-Chair Perkins - Is that mainly underneath the power lines?

Heidi Tweeten - Yes.

Executive Director Yokiel - And I'm not sure if there are regulations with the easements for the power lines. We'll need to get a blessing from them.

John Graber - You'd have to get a blessing for the controlled burn.

Heidi Tweeten - The City last did it in 1998. I asked them to come and speak at one of their meetings in the future.

Chairperson White - If they've done this kind of thing before, they might have answers about the power lines.

Heidi Tweeten - There was a lot of interest at the Bailey School Forest Governance Committee meeting today. Someone said that a lot of birds are leaving because of encroachment.

Chairperson White - Was she a teacher?

Heidi Tweeten - I'm not sure. The cost would be approximately \$500 - \$800 per acre to maintain it. That cost is for the first acre, the cost would go down the more acres you have. That covers mowing, burning, etc. Money is primarily available for the initial stages of the project. One other funding project was that if we put up 10%, they'll put up 90% of the funding.

Chairperson White - I'm sure that'll vary. It's something to look into and start talking about.

Heidi Tweeten - I'm going to contact someone about getting a forest management plan for Bailey School Forest because we don't have one and would for those grants.

Chairperson White - My initial concern is about the upkeep after it's done. I'm not sure what the upkeep would entail. In the summer, you're so busy that you can't keep the grass mowed. We would have to look into that.

John Graber - It would need to be mowed a couple times a year the first couple years to keep the weeds out. They also mentioned pulling every so often for weeds or buckthorn.

Chairperson White - The other person to talk to would be in Cottage Grove because they have that prairie restoration. I'm not sure who does that.

Executive Director Yokiel - In regards to maintenance, public works is not qualified to do burning. Even the fire department wouldn't do that. It would be a third party.

C. Jared Flewelling - Nothing to report.

D. John Graber - Nothing to report.

7. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Executive Director Yokiel - We've poured the concrete for two shelters at Busy Beaver Park. We need to let that cure before we can finish the shelters. We're working on the new community garden location with the fence going up next week. The last thing is that we did attend the Bailey School Forest Governance Committee.

Chairperson White - Do we have a regular contact person at the School District?

Executive Director Yokiel - Yes, we're getting there. It's a step in the right direction.

Chairperson White - The community garden will be on the corner of 4th Avenue and 15th Street and people should contact City Hall to rent a plot. The fencing was provided through a grant with the Refinery. Thank you for that. I noticed public works cleaned out the old spot. It looks good. We should be ready to plant in a few weeks.

Executive Director Yokiel - Newport on the Move received the grant.

Chairperson White - Dan, did you have something?

Mayor Lund - The City is in ongoing discussions to acquire the parcels on the north side of Lions Park. There are four separate parcels with two owners. I'm also working with staff to put together a proposal to find enough staff time to explore coordinating recreational opportunities with surrounding areas.

Chairperson White - I thought about that after our last meeting. I think it might be too late for this year but I think it's a perfect time to start talking about it. If we can come up with suggestions now and through the fall to be more organized, this is the perfect time to start.

Mayor Lund - As Mr. Bern said, he doesn't think the Newport Athletic Association should be the primary organizer of recreational activities because it doesn't have any volunteers. His vision is to partner with existing organizations. I know personally, we looked for some during the summer and other than the Newport program, the closest one is five miles away and that's too far for kids to get themselves there. When we spoke with Woodbury, they're short park space so they would have interest in partnering to have more room for formal programming. I think there are opportunities there. Like everything, if there's not staff time behind it, things kind of languish because we're volunteers and don't have enough time. My hope is to get enough staff time to explore the opportunities and find out what those are. If a bunch of people want to rebuild the Newport Athletic Association, no one is against that but it's been non-existent for a few years now. It shouldn't really be the City's entire responsibility but it's important for the residents to have those opportunities.

Chairperson White - Even if we partnered with someone, my biggest concern is that t-ball wouldn't be in the City. So if someone else organized it and hosted it in Newport, that would be great.

Mayor Lund - For t-ball, my understanding is that Newport kids end up in St. Paul Park a lot so that's what staff would have to explore.

Jared Flewellen - If you're looking for a Park Board member to help facilitate those conversations, I would be more than willing to.

Mayor Lund - I don't know if the Park Board needs to make some formal resolution for that. I'm just trying to get some staff time and budget behind the ideas. We don't really know exactly what is out there. We'll hopefully know more by the end of the summer.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Flewellen, seconded by Tweeten, to adjourn at 6:45 p.m. With 5 Ayes, 0 Nays, the motion carried.

Signed: _____
Emily White, Chairperson

Respectfully submitted,

Renee Eisenbeisz
Assistant to the City Administrator