

**PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION  
TOWN OF NEEDHAM, MASSACHUSETTS**

**Minutes of Meeting  
February 9, 2009**

- PRESENT:** Cynthia J. Chaston, Chairman  
Brian S. Nadler, Vice Chair  
William R. Dermody, Member  
Philip V. Robey, Member  
Patricia M. Carey, Director  
Karen A. Peirce, Assistant Director
- ABSENT:** Christopher R. Dollase, Member
- GUESTS:** Bob Cohen, Resident  
Tom Jacob, Candidate  
Tad Staley, Candidate  
David DiCicco, Memorial Park Trustee

The meeting convened at 7:00PM at the Board of Selectmen's Meeting Room located in Town Hall.

1. **Minutes of Meeting January 26, 2009:** Mr. Dermody made a motion to accept the minutes of the January 26, 2009 meeting. Mr. Robey seconded the motion and the minutes from the January 26, 2009 meeting were approved.
2. **Financial Report:** None Presented.
3. **Correspondence**
  - A. **FY 2008 Annual Report:** Ms. Carey presented the FY2008 Annual Report. She announced that the report will also be available on the Town website.
4. **Assistant Director Report:** Ms. Peirce presented an overview of the Winter and Spring Program Registration numbers. She indicated that most of all the February Vacation week programs are filled to capacity. She also noted the difficulty finding staff to work during the vacation week but she will have enough to run the program. This is also the first time offering a full day program which has filled.
5. **Discussion Items:**
  - A. **Director's Report:** A written report was submitted prior to the meeting. Ms. Carey will contact the Model Yacht Club to inform them that due to construction of the new administration building the Reservoir will not be available for the Model Yacht Club events in the spring.

**B. Operating and Capital Budget Update:** Ms. Carey noted that Needham would have approximately \$200,000 cut from the state budget but due to the prudent fiscal management by the Finance Director, the Town of Needham should not see too much of a reduction in services. The Town Manager has recommended the proposed Annual Budget.

**C. Community Preservation Update:** Senator Cynthia Creem has filed legislation to amend the Community Preservation Act to ensure lasting success, broadening CPA participation and clarifying allowable uses to promote sustainable communities. Senator Scott Brown is a co-signer of the act. The legislation includes stabilization of the statewide trust fund by guaranteeing that CPA communities receive a minimum 75 percent annual match. Mr. Robey suggested the CPA committee send a letter to the legislature supporting the amendments. Mr. Nadler will clarify at the next CPC meeting to see if they are planning to write a letter.

**D. Field Construction Update:** Mr. DiCicco, Memorial Park Trustee updated the Commission of the punch list items that are being completed on the Memorial Park Field construction project. Once the snow has melted the remaining fencing will be removed. Mr. Nadler asked about the curbing/drainage along Admiral Gracey Way. Ms. Carey indicated a sidewalk drain needs to be raised to improve the drainage in that area. Curbing will be added near the gazebo to eliminate the water from coming on to the field area. Ms. Carey indicated the DeFazio Park renovation project is moving along very well despite the winter weather but the area is still very much a construction zone and will remain that way for a few more months. Ms. Carey will caution groups about safety while the construction is on going. DeFazio South will be the last field to be completed. Once the snow is melted Musco Lighting will come in and do the lighting tests. Mr. Robey asked about the signage at the parks. Ms. Carey indicated the signs need to be simple but specific, readable and informative. She will plan to talk to the sport officials and high school and youth coaches to educate them on the rules for using the new fields. Mr. Jacob suggested a small sign with a kiosk that would hold a pamphlet with further field rules and regulations at the parks.

**E. Field Scheduling Update:** Ms. Carey is still waiting for groups to submit their spring field use requests. She is unable to complete the schedule until all requests have been received. She reviewed the initial list of potential conflicts with the Commissioners. An April 1<sup>st</sup> start date will depend on how the winter weather conditions will affect the fields. There was some discussion regarding criteria for field scheduling that included only scheduling in season sports for the High School and youth sports and looking at the number of participants served. Other factors include many of the same children are playing multiple sports per season and the fall has a lot less daylight then the spring which might force fall groups to have to pay for lights. Mrs. Chaston noted making any of those changes

would require a shift in policy which would need more thought and discussion. Mr. Dermody made a motion to endorse the field scheduling guidelines as proposed by the Director. Mr. Nadler seconded the motion and the motion was approved. Ms. Carey will keep the Commissioners up to date on the field scheduling.

**F. Dogs at Parks:** Ms. Carey referenced an article in the Boston Globe highlighting the new Wellesley dog leash law. Currently the Memorial Park Trustees have a policy that prohibits dogs from the park but it is unenforceable. The Town Manager would like to see uniform policies at all Town parks. Ms. Carey suggested a joint meeting with the Park and Recreation Commission and Memorial Park Trustees to discuss dog policies. The Commissioners all agree that dogs should not be allowed on any playing fields and when visiting a public park they should be leashed and cleaned up after.

**G. Commission Important Issues:** Ms. Carey recommended that the Commission important issues list be overseen by the Vice Chair of the Commission. It would be his or her responsibility to check in with the Commissioners and make sure they are following through with their important issues. The Vice Chair would coordinate the Commissioner and the topic and would forward the information to Ms. Carey to be placed on the meeting agenda for discussion. Duties/responsibilities can change at the end of the fiscal year if needed.

**H. Other Business:** Mrs. Chaston suggested inviting Kate Fitzpatrick the Town Manager to a future Commission meeting. Mrs. Chaston also noted that she and Ms. Carey attended the Finance Committee meeting for the Memorial Park Trustees budget review. At that meeting the Board of Health requested funding of \$3600 to test the synthetic turf fields. The Finance Committee expressed concern of how the Board of Health would conduct the testing. Some of the members of the Board of Health suggested closing the fields if they are not tested. After the meeting Mrs. Chaston called Mr. Michael Connolly the Chairman of the Board of Health to ask what the Board of Health testing would involve. She also asked why Park and Recreation was not involved in the decision making. Mr. Connolly did not know who Mrs. Chaston was and questioned why she was calling him. Mr. Connolly invited Mrs. Chaston to come to the next Board of Health Meeting if she had any further questions. Mr. Nadler volunteered to go to the next Board of Health Meeting. Ms. Carey will speak to the Janice Berns, the Director of the Health Department to relay the concerns of the Commission. If testing of the synthetic turf field is going to be done, Park and Recreation would like to know what they would like to test for and that it will be done in a scientific way.

**6. Action Items:**

- A. Field Scheduling Guidelines:** The Field Scheduling Guidelines were discussed during the Field Scheduling Update.
- 7. Adjournment:** Mr. Nadler made a motion to adjourn the meeting 9:00 PM. Mr. Dermody seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 9:00PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen A. Peirce, CPRP, CTRS  
Assistant Director