

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

**Minutes of Meeting
March 9, 2009**

PRESENT: Cynthia J. Chaston, Chairman
Brian S. Nadler, Vice Chair
William R. Dermody, Member
Christopher R. Dollase, Member
Philip V. Robey, Member
Patricia M. Carey, Director
Karen A. Peirce, Assistant Director

GUESTS: See Appendix A

The meeting convened at 7:05PM at the Broadmeadow School Performance Center

Special Agenda Item: Needham Sports Council Recommendations for Field Names at DeFazio Park-Joint Discussion with Board of Selectmen and School Committee.

Park and Recreation Commission Chairman Cindy Chaston introduced the members of the Park and Recreation Commission and staff. She thanked the Needham Sports Council for all of their hard work and fundraising to make the Fields of Dreams a reality. She invited the Sports Council President Bruce Herman to come forward to begin the discussion. Mr. Herman indicated the project was a labor of love and he thanked the Park and Recreation Commission and Director Patty Carey for the tremendous support for the project. Mr. Herman indicated that he is seeking approval to accept a donation of \$6600 from the Middlesex Bank for a scoreboard to be installed at DeFazio Park. If approved the scoreboard will be located facing field # 2 and it will be similar to the scoreboard at Memorial Park with a yellow and blue design. Mr. Herman noted that there is a plan to have a sign recognizing the donation from the Roche Family on the back of the football scoreboard at memorial Park. The back of the baseball scoreboard will recognize the donation from the Needham Bank. He also shared a preliminary design for a recognition area at DeFazio Park. A sign would be placed on the Carleton Pavilion with an identifying map of the fields surrounded by a semi circle of granite benches. Mr. Herman spoke about the many people who made the Fields of Dreams possible through significant donations. Many made the donations but wanted the naming of the fields to go to others who have made significant contributions to the community. Mark Miskin, the Executive Director of the Needham Soccer Club presented the Commission with information to recognize a field to be named after Don Brock, Needham High School Soccer coach for over 41 years. See Appendix B for information on Don Brock. Mr. Miskin presented information endorsing the naming of a field after Dick Fischer, Hart Swaffield and Chuck Winans. In 1967 they were the founding fathers of the Needham Junior Soccer Association. See Appendix C for information regarding Founding Fathers Field/Three Scotsmen Field. Mr. Robey supported the name Founders Field.

Next Mr. Herman introduced Gregory Strakosch to endorse a field to be named after Needham resident and youth coach Bart Warner. See Appendix D for information supporting a field to be named after Bart Warner. Mr. Robey stated that there have been many extraordinary youth coaches in Needham and suggested naming a field Coaches Field. Mr. Herman noted that over \$50,000 was raised to honor the memory of Bart Warner in the Fields of Dreams project.

Mr. Herman introduced Barry Coffman to endorse a field to be named after Needham resident Bob Conroy. Mr. Coffman stated that Bob Conroy wrote the first check to the Fields of Dreams Project and over \$50,000 was raised by his family and friends to honor his memory. See Appendix E for information supporting a field to be named after Bob Conroy.

Mr. Herman introduced Paul Stenberg to endorse a field to be named after Needham resident Jim Healy. Mr. Healy was a driving force in creating a vision to unify the user groups to commit to joint fund raising for the Fields of Dreams project. See Appendix F for information supporting a field to be named after Jim Healy.

Mr. Dermody asked if new signage with the names of the fields would be placed on Dedham Ave. Once the naming decisions are made and the fields are completed there will be new signage and a dedication ceremony planned. Mr. Herman thanked the Commissioners for their support and requested acceptance of the names that have been presented at the meeting. Mrs. Chaston indicated that the Commission will review everything that has been presented and a decision will be made at a future meeting. She thanked Mr. Herman and the presenters for their time and for the field naming submissions.

1. **Minutes of Meeting February 23, 2009:** Discussed later in the meeting
2. **Financial Report - January 2009:** Discussed later in the meeting.
3. **Correspondence**
 - A. None Presented
4. **Assistant Director Report:** Discussed later in the meeting
5. **Discussion Items:**
 - A. **Annual Discussion with Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick:** Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick asked to speak to the Commission regarding a number of Park and Recreation related issues. The first item discussed was the proposed renovation of Claxton Field. Little League has proposed renovating the fields to include a new concession stand, new lights and fields that 2 Majors teams could play on at the same time. One issue would be a permanent mound verses a movable mound. In order for Junior Football to practice at Claxton in the fall the mounds could not be permanent. Ms. Fitzpatrick proposed a long term

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proposition to create a future Little League Baseball complex at the Newman Fields. Currently the fields need to be renovated to alleviate the drainage issues and the uncertainty of the final school renovation plan needs to be considered. The Mitchell School fields would not be suitable for Little League because of the size of the diamonds. Another consideration would be to offer the fields at Broadmeadow for Little League use. Girls Softball could move to Claxton. Another option could be converting the Pollard Field to a grass baseball field. Needham Little League and the Needham Soccer Club are interested in fields at the Nike Site and at Ridge Hill. Ms. Carey indicated that the Soccer Club, Girls Softball and Little League have worked out a system for sharing the fields for the spring of 2009. Ms. Fitzpatrick indicated she would like to reallocate some funds for the Town Meeting warrant to help renovate player benches, irrigation and fencing for the Asa Small diamond located at DeFazio Park.

Mr. Dermody stated he would love to see the Girls High School Softball team be given a chance to play a game under the lights at Memorial Park. Ms. Carey noted that the option is there for the team to play under the lights but that has to be a choice made by the coaches and the Athletic Director at the High School. Ms. Fitzpatrick stated she is looking at every possible idea for field improvements. Mr. Robey stated that he, Ms. Carey and Mr. Nadler recently made a presentation to the School Committee regarding the current and future needs of the fields. Mr. Nadler reminded the School Committee members that even with the Fields of Dreams project the Town has not increased the number of fields but did create non conflicting fields. He is interested in the Nike Site for future field use but he wanted to note that Park and Recreation Commission is not only concerned about fields but there are concerns about building renovations such as what is needed at Cricket. Ms. Fitzpatrick brought up the Rosemary Pool facility and what the next steps will be for the facility. She suggested developing a business plan for the long term use of the pool looking at repairs and renovation needs and what the residents are willing to pay for the facility. Mr. Dermody mentioned signage and that helpful signage with protocols for using fields and tennis courts should be installed. Ms. Carey is working on signage.

Mrs. Chaston mentioned the issue of dogs at parks and fields. A dog policy is necessary especially at the synthetic turf fields. Ms. Fitzpatrick would like to consider a reasonable proposal to restrict animals from all fields and playgrounds. She would also like to see the leash law enforced. It would have to begin with educating community groups and adding appropriate signage at parks.

Mrs. Chaston stated the Park and Recreation Commission members are serious about providing safe fields and would like to be kept informed of the Board of Health testing. Ms. Carey will request to work closely with the Director of the Health Department and keep the Commission informed.

Ms. Carey stated that the play structure on Greene's Field is a concern, but the long-term decision on the park still has not been made. She would like to remove

the majority of the current structure, trying to preserve part of it as a symbol, and then add a few small pieces in that could be moved to another location if needed. She would like to work with community groups such as Parent Talk, the Exchange Club and the Women's Club to see if a joint project could be done in the long-term.

1. **Minutes of Meeting February 23, 2009:** Mr. Nadler made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 23, 2009 meeting. Mr. Dollase seconded the motion and the minutes from the February 23, 2009 meeting were approved.
2. **Financial Report - January 2009:** Ms. Carey presented the January 2009 financial report.
3. **Correspondence**
 - A. None Presented
4. **Assistant Directors Report:** Ms. Peirce stated she and Ms. Carey have completed many interviews and have more scheduled for summer employment.
5. **Discussion Items:**
 - A. **Annual Discussion with Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick:** Discussed earlier in the meeting.
 - B. **Directors Report:** A written report was submitted prior to the meeting. Mrs. Chaston thanked Ms. Carey for compiling the Trust Fund list. Ms. Carey stated some of the Trust Funds could be used to help remove the playground structure at Greene's Field. Some of the Perry Park Trust fund will be used for fencing at Perry Park. She also stated when the Skate Park Trust fund was created the cost for a skate park was approximately \$150,000 and a location was never identified.
 - C. **Field Scheduling Update:** Ms. Carey reported the spring/summer field scheduling will be finalized in the next week. Little League is considering moving opening day to Memorial Park. They will need approval from the Memorial Park Trustees. Ms. Carey had a request from the Charles River ARC requesting Memorial Park for the Ellie Bloom Olympics event. Due to the construction at DeFazio and the lack of a track at Memorial Park she suggested the CRARC hold the event in the fall at the DeFazio track.
 - D. **Review of Public Meeting on Athletic Field Lights:** Ms. Carey reported there were no public complaints regarding the athletic field lights at Memorial Park. She a MUSCO subcontractor tested the athletic lights at DeFazio Park, after a repair, without prior approval for doing the tests early in the morning. Ms. Carey will keep interested people updated on the formal testing of lights at both parks.
 - E. **Canada Geese:** Recently an article was printed in the Hometown Weekly Newspaper regarding Canada Geese at fields. As unsightly as they can be, Ms.

Carey stated there has been no documentation of a health risk to humans from Canada Geese droppings. In the article a suggestion was offered to spray a goose repellent on the field. Ms. Carey indicated the spray would need to be reapplied after every rain shower and mowing at the cost of \$400 per application per field. In addition to the cost there is no guarantee the treatment works. Another suggestion was using a Border Collie to chase away the geese. Ms. Carey noted from her research the Border Collies are costly and need to be combined with other treatments. Other methods need federal permits since the Canada Geese are on the endangered species list. Further information can be found on the department's website.

F. Other Business: Mr. Dermody announced that a public hearing will be held on March 23, 2009 to discuss the Senior Center. Mr. Dermody suggested a letter be sent to the Senior Center Advisory Committee prior to the March 23rd meeting indicating that the Commission would like to see Greene's Field remain as green space in the downtown area. Mr. Nadler suggested a Commissioner serve on the Senior Center Committee. A Commission member may leave the Commission meeting to attend the hearing on March 23rd. Ms. Carey noted that the Conservation Commission Chairman would like to have an advisory committee to oversee the trails. The Trails Advisory Committee would be comprised of 2 representatives from the Conservation Commission, 2 Park and Recreation Commission members, Assistant Parks and Forestry Superintendent, Park and Recreation Director and the Conservation Commission Environmental Agent. Mrs. Chaston agreed to serve on the Trails Advisory Committee and she will contact the Chairman of the Conservation Commission to follow up.

6. Action Items:

A. Executive Session: Exception Six: Mr. Dermody made a motion to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property at 9:15PM and not return to the regular meeting. Mr. Dollase seconded the motion. There was a roll call vote and the motion was approved. Mrs. Chaston –yes, Mr. Nadler- yes, Mr. Dollase-yes, Mr. Dermody-yes, Mr. Robey-yes.

7. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 9:15PM to go into Executive Session.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen A. Peirce, CPRP, CTRS
Assistant Director

Appendix A

PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION TOWN OF NEEDHAM, MASSACHUSETTS

March 9, 2009 Meeting Attendance

| | |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| Bob Cohen | Resident |
| Tom Jacob | Candidate |
| Bruce Herman | Needham Sports Council |
| Michael Retsky | Needham Sports Council |
| Barry Coffman | Needham Sports Council |
| Mark Miskin | Needham Soccer Club |
| Kate Fitzpatrick | Town Manager |
| Dan Matthews | Board of Selectmen |
| Gregory Strakosch | Resident |
| Paul Stenberg | Needham Youth Lacrosse |
| Willie Yadus | Resident |
| Gary Gillmartin | Resident |
| David DiCicco | Memorial Park Trustees |