

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

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

June 19, 2009

*Background notes for Monday, June 22nd
Park and Recreation Commission Agenda*

EXECUTIVE SESSION

There is a possible project involving the purchase or land or easement that will be discussed under Executive Session, Exception 6. This will occur at the end of the meeting, so that the regular meeting can be concluded. A motion will be needed to “move into Executive Session to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property and to adjourn the regular session so that the Commission will not return into Open Session.” After a second, and any discussion, the Chair must then take a roll call vote, and if the majority approves, the regular meeting will adjourn and the Commission will move into Executive Session.

COMMISSION'S IMPORTANT ISSUES

Vice Chairman Brian Nadler will discuss an updated recommendation at the meeting. The recommendation suggests liaison positions with other Town boards and committees. The second part of this project would involve the listing of goals or projects that the Commission would hope to prioritize over the next fiscal year. Here are some suggestions for consideration, not listed in any particular order: *FY'11 Financing, Trails Plan, Easement Research, Encroachment Policy, Open Space Plan, Purchase of Open Space or Easements, Dogs, Trash, Athletic Field Lights, Athletic Field Scheduling, Synthetic Turf, Athletic Field Renovations, DeFazio Parking Lot Renovations, Newman Renovation, Senior Center, CPC Legislation, Sports Council, Bicycling, Skateboarding.*

FINANCIAL UPDATE

With Nikki out on maternity leave, and the heavy pre-season work, it is difficult to provide a monthly financial update to you...but Nicole and I are working with the Accounting office on a daily basis to make sure we are on track with the department's spending. The fiscal year dates are particularly challenging for our department, as we need to spend a good portion of the budget in May and June. With increased requirements on the use of purchase orders, we need Accounting to help us with quick turnarounds on liquidations to move unspent funds that are no longer needed on a purchase order to a new purchase order for a different need, but they are overloaded with similar requests from other departments, so it isn't easy for any of us. We will likely turn back some funds that gets reverted to free cash, and we are always ready on July 1st to get caught up with needed purchases.

For a quick revenue update: the final general fund revenue balance on June 30, 2008 was \$266,022.50. Last week, we were at \$244,807, and we'll add at least \$7000 to that total

this week, bringing us to more than \$250,000. The administration collections are about the same as last year. The pool is running about \$2000 higher than last year. The summer programs \$14,000 lower than last year – but remember, these are fiscal year revenue collections. The revenue reflects registrations from July and August in 2008 and May and June in 2009. Some years, we have more pre-registration and less available registration slots during the summer – and sometimes that reverses.

The revolving fund is tracked separately. As of last week, we had about \$30,000 more revenue than last year, but that is likely due in part to the addition of the athletic field lights payments, as well as some programs having very successful registration numbers.

BY-LAWS RELATED TO DOGS

The Town has a by-law related to dogs...Section 3.7 in the Town's General By-Laws. It states that all dogs must be on a leash no longer than 6 feet when off the confines of the property of the dog owner or keeper. It goes on to state that the dog cannot disturb the peace and quiet of any neighborhood (bite, bark, howl) nor can it perform its natural body functions on any property other than that of the dog's owner or keeper without the approval of said property owner. When people ask our department questions, I respond that Park and Recreation doesn't give permission for natural body functions to occur on any of its property.

HIGH SCHOOL TENNIS COURTS

I've been hearing some complaints about the new tennis courts at the High School. I've referred questions to the PPBC staff and have requested a walk-through with one of them. This is the information they have provided to me: "I believe the cracks that are being referred to are where the posts were set for the nets. The asphalt was laid first, then cut out and patched in with concrete after the posts were set. There are cracks around the perimeter of these areas. The playing surface itself does not show signs of cracking that I have seen. The uneven surface of the courts as they were to only over lay the area of the existing parking lot does have some gaps between the playing surface and the fencing. It is toss up of having the fence be straight at the top, or follow the contour of the unlevel surface and then the top looking out of whack."

NEW ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

The new Athletic Director will be meeting with me next week, along with the DPW Parks and Forestry Superintendent. We'll do a tour of fall facilities and discuss some of the major issues before us, including scheduling.

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION PLAN

The Community Preservation Committee needs to annually review their Plan and make updates as needed. Understanding that the Commission is hoping the recreation language in the legislation is clarified; the CPC is hoping to get an update on the Commission's thoughts on what type of projects they hope to see done over the next five years.

The CPC is in support of the changes in the legislation that clarify the wording for use of the funds for recreation. The current wording benefits less developed communities who

are able to purchase land at low costs and develop new facilities. The more developed communities have fewer options for purchasing land, and if it's available, the price is at a premium. These older communities tend to have current facilities that just need to have capital investment. The change in the wording would allow for the use of CPC funds for those purposes.

MILLS TENNIS COURTS

The bid documents are now available for the renovation of the Mills Field tennis courts. The bid opening will be next week and the work should be done this summer. An alternative in the bid is the repair of the crack at the Newman courts. Those courts are in great shape, but just have one crack that we'd like to get repaired before there is too much deterioration. The Mills courts will have new fence material, and an additional screen along most of the back of the courts that back up to the baseball diamond. The DPW will be doing some work on Hampton Avenue, through a private contractor. Their own staff will be adjusting the length of the parking spaces along Ellis Street, which were shortened when the road was properly striped. I'll also try to replace the last section of fencing along Hampton, installing it a bit further into the park to accommodate the eventual plan to create parking spaces along the park side of Hampton Avenue.

SKATEPARK INTEREST

A student at Needham High School has interest in the Town creating a skatepark. He is working on an extra credit project with his teachers and has written a letter to Town officials with his thoughts. I met with the student and his teachers earlier this week and explained the three major tasks that would need to be undertaken: choosing a site, raising funds, and creating workable rules and regulations. We discussed the lengthy time frame that would be involved in creating something new, and the short term discussions on creating field trip programming to help Needham youth get to some existing skateparks. The teachers may help create a club at the High School, and our department could work with the club on setting up the format for field trips or programming.
