

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

**MINUTES OF MEETING
June 8, 2009**

PRESENT: Cynthia J. Chaston, Chairman
Brian S. Nadler, Vice-Chairman
Christopher R. Dollase, Member
Thomas M. Jacob, Member
Philip V. Robey, Member
Patricia M. Carey, Director

ABSENT: Karen A. Peirce, Assistant Director

GUESTS: Barry Coffman, President, Needham Sports Council
Mike Retzky, Project Coordinator, Needham Sports Council
Bob Cohen, DeFazio Neighbor

The meeting convened at 7:02 PM in the Selectmen's Meeting Room at Town Hall.

1. **Minutes of Meetings of May 6, 2009 and May 13, 2009:** Mr. Dollase made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 6, 2009 meeting and the May 13, 2009 meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Nadler and the motion was unanimously approved.
2. **Financial Report:** None presented.
3. **Correspondence:**
 - A. **Youth Center End-Of-Year Report:** Ms. Carey noted that the report covered two years. Mr. Nadler would like to invite representatives the Commission appoints to other committees to come before the Commission once or twice a year.
 - B. **Senior Center Exploratory Committee Report:** Ms. Carey shared the handout from the recent public hearing that she and Mr. Robey attended. They both noted that no consensus was heard from people attending the hearing. The survey results have not been tabulated, yet. As three of the four properties under review are either under the Commission's jurisdiction or administration, Mr. Nadler again raised the question of whether the Commission should be represented on the committee. Mrs. Chaston noted

that the Selectmen invite the Commission to attend meetings, and Mr. Dollase stated the Commission should continue to share thoughts with the committee.

4. **Assistant Director's Report:** Ms. Carey reported on behalf of Assistant Director. Mrs. Peirce provided a staff listing for the summer programs and the pool and a revised training schedule.
5. **Discussion Items:**
 - A. **Director's Report:** The Commission reviewed the report from Ms. Carey.
 - B. **Summer Preparation:** Training sessions for pool and program staff are being organized, and some sessions have been held. The pool is filling up late this year. The entire pool surface could not be painted, as there was not enough time to go through the procurement process to purchase additional paint and get the pool filled for the summer season.
 - C. **Field Construction Update:** Mr. Coffman and Mr. Retzky joined the Commission for a discussion on the construction at DeFazio Park. The Commission discussed the recent ZBA hearing seeking an amendment for the location of one pole. Mr. Retzky said that the required data is all collected, but lighting contractor MUSCO needs to put it all in a format that is acceptable to the Building Inspector and meets the requirements of the special permit. The building permit for the wall is moving forward and will not likely need a waiver, as the location is not as close to the set-back as on the original design. Punch lists items are being finalized at both parks. Mr. Retzky also noted that it is unusual for a community to have complex zoning regulations for athletic field lights, so this process is a learning experience for all those involved, including MUSCO. It is estimated that most punch list items and permitting details will be completed in about a month. At Memorial, additional design and installation work will be needed to add netting to prevent baseballs from entering nearby properties and Highland Avenue. Ms. Carey stated that the Sports Council will not be able to fund this project, so the Town will be overseeing the appropriate changes. Mr. Robey asked if the Commission should turn the lights off at DeFazio, now that there was two months of historical information collected. Mr. Jacob asked if the permit review had objective criteria or subjective criteria. Ms. Carey said that most of the evaluation was objective, but some areas were subjective. She noted that the ZBA decision on the moved light pole did not require turning off the lights, and that there was minimal use scheduled in June, and no anticipated use in July or August. Mr. Dollase stated that Needham's process is likely to become familiar in other communities, so MUSCO, designer Gale Assoc, and contractor RAD should find a solid process to follow to make it easier when they need to react in other

communities. Mrs. Chaston thanked Mr. Retzky and Mr. Coffman. Mr. Retzky will return to the Commission's next meeting to give a revised update.

- D. ZBA Hearing Review:** Discussed during Field Construction Update.
- E. Field Scheduling Summit:** Ms. Carey stated that scheduling the fields in the fall is usually not too challenging, but she's starting to get numerous requests for use of the fields and recommends bringing the Needham groups together to work out any issues. The Commission may need to consider additional regulations in relation to scheduling. The summit has been tentatively set for the Commission's July 13th meeting.
- F. Park Issues: Dogs and Trash:** Mr. Jacob has stated the # 1 request to him has been for more trash barrels at the parks. Ms. Carey met with RTS Superintendent Mario Araya and Parks and Forestry Superintendent Lance Remsen at DeFazio so the challenges of some parks could be discussed. Mr. Araya is waiting for the arrival of the new packer truck, which was ordered months ago. Since the truck can't drive across the fields, the trash will need to move out to the truck. Though the original plan was intended to take trash duty away from Parks and Forestry, they might need to move the trash to a dumpster at some parks. The Commission discussed personal responsibility and staff responsibility for trash. Mr. Nadler suggested large signs at the parks stating the importance of trash pick-up. Mr. Nadler would also like to see large signs stating "No Dogs" at parks. Ms. Carey said that those signs cannot be enforced as the by-law does not prohibit dogs at parks. The Town Manager is hoping to bring board members and staff together this summer to try and find solutions to the issues with dogs.
- G. Needham Bicycle Organization:** Mr. Dollase has joined this new organization founded by Needham resident Tad Staley. There are about 100 members, and the recent petition had over 300 signatures. About 8 members attended the recent planning meeting. In the short term, they hope to assist with the installation of signs that are designated on the Town's Bike Plan. They will work with Ms. Carey on the addition of new bike racks, with funding for the purchase available in a state grant. They would also like to encourage more ridership in Town and safety, possibly helping with the bike rodeos held at some schools. In the long term, they would like to work on the conversion of the rail line near the Town Forest into a rail trail. Mr. Jacob asked how the Town would work with this group. Mr. Dollase and Selectman John Bulian will be liaisons. Mr. Jacob asked about the federal funds that were noted in recent newspaper articles. Mr. Dollase said that was still under review and didn't appear easy to access.

- H. Encroachment Issue at Camp Property:** Ms. Carey noted that the abutter has met with the Conservation Commission and a plan to rectify the issue is being worked on through the Conservation Commission.
 - I. Commission Important Issues:** Mr. Nadler has been working on the draft, and wanted to suggest a different format for setting the list of important issues. He suggested having the Commission members serve as liaisons to other Town boards and committees. Mr. Robey cautioned that liaisons would have to be careful not to speak on behalf of the Commission without prior discussions and knowledge of the majority opinion. Mr. Nadler will continue to work on this concept, and he and Ms. Carey will have a revised draft at an upcoming meeting.
 - J. Other Business:** Mrs. Chaston noted that the Commission now had the completed versions of the Trails Master Plan. Mr. Robey asked if the wetlands filling at DeFazio had been resolved. Ms. Carey stated that Town Engineer Tony DelGaizo was working with Ms. Phelps and Gale Associates on the plan that would be acceptable to the Conservation Commission, and that the contractor RAD would do the needed work. Mr. Robey also read the report on synthetic turf in the meeting packet. He asked what type of crumb rubber infill mix as at Needham's fields. Ms. Carey stated that it was cryogenic. Mr. Nadler asked if the Commission's past minutes were posted on the website. Ms. Carey said that the Assistant Director will work with another staff member to get the meetings since January posted.
- 6. Action Items:**
- A. Appointment to Youth Center Board of Directors – Toni Carbone:** Based on the recommendation of the Youth Center Board and the background information available to them, Mr. Dollase made a motion to appoint Ms. Toni Carbone to be the Park and Recreation representative on the Needham Youth Center Board for a 3 year term. The motion was seconded by Mr. Nadler and approved unanimously.
 - B. Athletic Field Lights Advisory Committee:** Mr. Nadler recommended the creation of an advisory committee to help resolve concerns related to athletic field lights. Mr. Dollase stated this committee could help neighbors and organizations work together rather than just "talk at each other" at a public hearing. Mr. Robey compared it to the Golf Club Advisory committee that has "neutral" members appointed to handle issues related to the Golf Club. Mr. Jacob felt the work of this advisory group would help resolve issues before returning to the ZBA in December to provide updated information. Mr. Nadler and Mr. Dollase will work together to refine the concept for this advisory group and report back to the Commission.

- C. Parent Talk Request: *Flicks on Field At Claxton*:** Mr. Dollase made a motion to approve the request of Parent Talk to hold an outdoor movie night at Claxton Field on Saturday, August 29, 2009 with a raindate of Sunday, August 30, 2009. The motion was seconded by Mr. Nadler and was approved unanimously.
- 7. Adjournment:** Mr. Dollase made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:57 PM. The motion was seconded by Mr. Jacob, and the meeting adjourned at 9:57 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia M. Carey, CPRP
Director