

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

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

July 10, 2009

*Background notes for Monday, July 13th
Park and Recreation Commission Agenda*

PROCUREMENT ASSISTANCE

The Department of Public Works has been working on some administrative reorganization based on a recent study of their operations. A new position is being created (after the elimination of others) that will serve as a Procurement Officer. This person will work with all departments who will be located in the new Public Services Administration Building, which includes Park and Recreation. If all goes well, this should reduce some of the burden on the procurement work and allow all of us to get more work done in a timely fashion. The current set-up creates major delays for all departments, which is frustrating to staff as well as residents. This re-organization will also put in place a full-time staff person to handle the permitting for Public Facilities as well as assist with work in the DPW offices. The permitting staff person has been part-time, which hasn't always been helpful in getting permits issued.

POOL COMPLEX UPDATES

The procurement process delayed some of these projects getting done prior to the opening of the pool, but some fence replacement and repair work finally began on Thursday at the pool. When it's complete, the fence surround the DE pit will be replaced, and the lower gate for services will be replaced. Some broken areas around the perimeter are being repaired. The lights in the lower portion of the building will be replaced with more energy efficient models in late July. We saw a reduction in our electrical costs after replacing the units upstairs last summer. Some replacement work will also be done in the filter room, again making things easier to manage but also more energy efficient.

SUMMER FIELD MAINTENANCE

The DPW Parks and Forestry Division is working on multi-purpose fields over the summer. The higher level of attention goes to those used by High School sports, so next week, there will be aeration work at High Rock and Cricket. Cricket # 2 will have areas loamed and seeded. Cricket # 1 and High Rock will be prepped for sodding next week followed by the sod the week of July 20. Cricket has been part of an organic program for 3 years now. If you stand on Cricket # 1 now, you'll notice a large square of grass around the goal mouth areas that is a slightly different color green. That was the area traditionally sodded prior to this organic program, adopted from Wellesley College. The amount of area that will be sodded has been greatly reduced because of this program. You'll see the bare areas are now just a small portion of what was originally sodded. The

goal is to get to a point where sodding is not needed, as the sod is not a long-term improvement, especially when the field is used about four weeks after installation.

CAPITAL BUDGET

The Assistant Town Manager has changed the schedule for submitting capital budget requests. I need to now have all the initial input completed by August 4th, which will be a challenge during the busy summer months. I need to coordinate some of it with other departments, and get input from those managers in between their vacations.

COMMISSION IMPORTANT ISSUES

Brian Nadler and I have drafted a list of important issues for FY'10. The Town Manager has requested this type of information from each board to help coordinate the work of all staff. This is being incorporated into the framework that Brian has been discussing with the board, with liaisons to other Town boards. I'll need a vote on the topics you'd like on the list sent to the Town Manager on Tuesday.

MILLS TENNIS COURT BIDS

There were no bids on the initial bid offering to re-build the tennis courts. Apparently, some other similar projects were out to bid at the same time and those were estimated to be much larger projects. The DPW is helping put together a second bid, and we've talked to a few possible companies who hope to bid on it the second time. As part of the project, we included the repair of the crack in the Newman courts. I'm not sure what the final decision will be about the use of the Newman courts during the Newman project, but if those are lost for the duration, it will be important for the Mills courts to be in great shape.

SYNTHETIC TURF TEMPERATURE READINGS

The Health Department has been conducting temperature readings on the synthetic turf fields at Memorial and DeFazio this spring and gave me a copy earlier this week. I've only been present for someone filling in for testing, so haven't seen the process followed on a regular basis, but the method used on the day that I was present didn't seem to be one that provided accurate readings. The Parks and Forestry Division purchased the same model to do readings, and was able to do about 4 days before the temperature probe broke. There is a slight variation on how Parks and Forestry staff are taking the tests, so discussions need to be held on the methods used and the information that is gathered. I've included the list of results in the meeting packet.

MOVE TO NEW BUILDING

Preparations are underway for moving everyone out of Town Hall to the new Public Services Administration Building. You'll see extra bins in the hallways that will be taken out to a shredder. The state has come in to view documents to note what can be shredded and what needs to be saved. The actual moving date is still not know, but may now be in February over the holiday weekend. The earlier date noted was the January long weekend, but everything might not be ready for the move. Town Hall is the home base for the Town's IT system, so everything related to that has to be done appropriately.

CHANNEL FIVE'S CHRONICLE

Chronicle is doing a story on the dangers of thunder and lightning at outdoor facilities. The producer had called me to ask about using DeFazio for "b" roll shots as part of the story, but after talking with me about the concerns on athletic fields, particularly with the possibility of irrigation systems getting hit by lightning, she added that into the story and interviewed me at DeFazio. I don't know if I'll make it into the story, or when it will be on, but I'm glad they are doing the story.

CONTRACTS

I'm working with Conservation Agent Kristen Phelps and Water/Sewer Superintendent Bob Lewis on the design of some stormwater management improvements for Rosemary Lake. We've contracted with BETA Group, Inc. and have discussed improvements that would be recommended for the parking lot and hillside, as well as for the trail that begins off of the pool parking lot. I'm working with Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick, DPW Director Rick Merson, Town Engineer Tony DelGaizo, Parks and Forestry Superintendent Lance Remsen, and Conservation Agent Kristen Phelps to develop an estimate for the renovation of the Newman athletic fields. This estimate will be done by Weston & Sampson. The primary contact is Needham resident Gene Bolinger who is a landscape architect with Weston & Sampson. This estimate will be reviewed in a discussion with the Board of Selectmen, School Committee and Finance Committee for possible inclusion in the override vote that will likely be held for the Newman School renovations.

OFFICE OPERATIONS

It seems hard to believe that the 3 months maternity leave is just about over, but Nikki is scheduled to return on Monday, July 20th. We are sad for her to lose the special time she's had with the baby and her daughter, but ecstatic to have her back with our office family. Nicole has been phenomenal handling much of Nikki's financial day-to-day work, and Karen has kept up with lots of the personnel work. I've had to be more involved with day-to-day tasks, too, but we've all learned a lot, and found we could achieve what was needed working as a team. We all have projects sitting waiting for us that we are looking forward to getting our hands into, too. Thanks for your patience – we'll catch