

Park and Recreation Commission Meeting

September 15, 2025, at 7:00pm

Present: Christopher Gerstel (Chair), Michelle Geddes (Vice-Chair) via Zoom, Cynthia Chaston (Member), James Rosenbaum (Member), Dina Hannigan (Member), Stacey Mulroy (Director) via Zoom, Hannah Corrigan (Assistant Director), Grace Steeves (Administrative Assistant) via Zoom

Guests: Michael O'Brien (Chair of Needham School Committee)

Call to Order

Mr. Gerstel called the meeting to order at 7:03pm, September 15th, 2025

Meeting Guests

Mr. Michael O'Brien, the chair of the Needham School Committee, attended the meeting to speak with the Commission regarding the Pollard School project. Mr. O'Brien explained that the town had decided to move forward with the design team and present seven plan options to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA). Mr. O'Brien also invited the Commission to attend a board summit meeting on Thursday, September 25, 2025, at the Broadmeadow School. This board summit meeting will include a discussion between seven different committees across town regarding the Pollard School project and will give all the committees the chance to share dialogue and speak in smaller break-out room sessions. All Commission members besides Ms. Chaston are unable to attend due to prior commitments. Mr. Gerstel thanked Mr. O'Brien for bringing this information to the Commission, and asked Mr. O'Brien to clarify the timeline of the Pollard School Project, specifically, what important dates the Commission should be aware of as the project approaches their decision-making phase. Mr. O'Brien explained that they are hoping to have the seven options narrowed down, and a decision made on which option is the most feasible by the end of Fall 2025, this will include a public hearing on November 17th, 2025, and the second board summit meeting the following week. A final decision will be made on December 8th, 2025, and the plan that is picked will be presented to the MSBA on December 15th, 2025. This decision will be presented to the town at the town meeting in Spring 2026, where it will then be voted on by residents. Mr. Gerstel also inquired about what materials or statements would be helpful for those attending the summit meeting on September 25th to have, as the Park and Recreation Commission would not be able to provide a quorum of members at the meeting. Mr. O'Brien shared that it would be beneficial for the Commission to provide an understanding of what user groups and fields would be impacted by these designs, and other factors the Commission has faced at these sites. The commission discussed a number of these impacts such as sports teams, traffic, fields, and emergency procedures. Ms. Chaston asked Mr. O'Brien if the Pollard project would need anything specific from the Commission stating that their official stance overall is that they do not want DeFazio to be considered as a site for this project. Mr. O'Brien stated that the team would need to discuss to figure out what formal

documentation is needed but asked the Commission to continue to take part in discussions with the other boards in town.

At the conclusion of their discussion with Mr. O'Brien, **Ms. Chaston made the motion to request that the DeFazio site option for the Pollard School project be removed from consideration for construction of a new school. Ms. Hannigan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote of 5-0 as follows: Michelle Geddes – yes, James Rosenbaum – yes, Dina Hannigan – yes, Cindy Chaston – yes, and Chris Gerstel - yes.**

Director's Report

Ms. Mulroy told the Commission that the department continues to sell court badges with ten passes sold in August for an additional \$506.00 in revenue, and three passes sold between September 1st and September 15th for a total of \$137.00.

Pool pass numbers have stayed the same as the pool season has come to a close. Ms. Mulroy did inform the Commission that she had totaled the amount of money that the pool made in memberships versus in daily-pass sales. The pool totaled \$210,633.25 in revenue for seasonal pool passes and totaled \$71,100.00 in revenue for daily passes. The numbers for swim lessons, swim team, and camps also stayed the same as the summer season came to an end.

Fall program registration began on Wednesday September 10th for Needham residents. In the two days of registration being open prior to the Commission meeting, there had been 271 registrations resulting in \$21,721.00 in revenue. She explained that senior and adult programs made up the largest portion of registrations. Mr. Gerstel also shared excitement for fall programming numbers growing, with events such as the Spooky Walk garnering a large amount of participation.

Ms. Mulroy provided the Commission with updates on the tennis courts at Needham High School (NHS). She shared that signs had to be put up at the NHS courts to ask residents to "Please keep off wet paint", after a recent incident in which a group of people had jumped the fences around the court, stepping in wet paint, which in turn left footprints on the court. This week at the NHS courts, the contractor was finishing and trimming the sidewalks; placing the final surface on courts seven and eight while placing the polyurethane sand slurry on courts one and two, which will be the final two courts completed; and installing the court markings. Going forward, the contractor will continue to install court markings, the nets should be installed in the next two weeks, surfaces receiving grass will be ready for the placement of grass, and the finish course of pavement will occur on September 23rd, 2025. Mr. Gerstel inquired if there was a timeline or set date in which the courts will be fully completed. Ms. Mulroy stated that she was going to go to the courts tomorrow to talk to the contractor and inquire about an end date to the project, however, she stated that they are very close to being done.

Updates on the tennis courts at Claxton were also shared. Ms. Mulroy stated that the department will be meeting with the Department of Public Works (DPW) on Tuesday, September 16th, 2025, regarding the opening of Claxton. The issue that they are currently facing is that earlier in the summer, the sod at Claxton had been fried, which they are currently trying to bring back to life. The departments working on Claxton had hoped that the opening would be within the next two weeks, however, they are now working around the drought and level one water restrictions. The department will continue to work with the DPW on this.

Discussion Items

- A) Needham Park & Recreation's Field User Manual - Needham Baseball and Softball (NBS) brought up a few concerns regarding the appeal process, including priority of organizations and timelines. The department would like to make sure these are listed more clearly in the manual. As well, the ability for NHS athletics to rent fields after 6:00pm has become more prevalent of a need. In the manual, it was written that if the high school athletics have to go past 6:00pm, there cannot be more than three nights per season per varsity sport that they are scheduled to do so. Recently, it has become harder to schedule umpires and referees, resulting in games starting later. Concerns were also discussed about NHS sports starting later and taking field spots from youth sports. Another issue the department wanted to highlight was making sure field users are being kind to each other and town staff. They would like to make sure a code of conduct is included in the manual. The department will update language within the manual, and the Commission will continue discuss the appeals process at upcoming meetings.
- B) The Multipurpose Room – The Multipurpose Room at the Rosemary Recreation Complex is currently used by Park and Recreation programs, town departments, sports teams, Parent Teacher Councils (PTC), and the Needham Community Council (NCC). It was never decided if the room would be able to be rented out by outside groups. The Commission discussed their opinions on renting out the space and the department gave insight into how the room is already used on a day-to-day basis. The department also explained that with a lack of full-time custodial coverage at the Rosemary Recreation complex, and the room already being booked out by the existing groups who use it, it does not seem feasible to rent it to outside groups. The department will work on drafting formal language around which groups may have access to renting the Multipurpose Room and will bring it to the Commission at a later meeting to approve.
- C) Capital Plan – Ms. Mulroy explained that the next Park and Recreation Commission Meeting is planned for a date after the capital plan is due. She also explained that the Select Board was approached with an inquiry as to why Park & Recreation was not in favor of a disc golf course. Ms. Mulroy has since spoken with Town Manager, Katie King and provided discussions that both the department and the Commission have had

regarding the disc golf course, expressing the Commission's support of it, but uncertainty as to when it will be built. As part of a capital plan discussion the Commission must make a priority list for the projects, which the disc golf course will be included in. Ms. Mulroy asked the Commission if they would like to plan one more meeting to go over the priority list before the capital plan deadline. The Commission decided they will meet on September 29th, 2025, for a capital discussion.

Action Items

- A) Special Event Approvals – None
- B) Policy Approvals – None
- C) Fee Approvals – None
- D) Meeting Minutes Approvals – None

Chairs Updates and Issues Not Reasonably Anticipated by Chair within 48 Hours

None

Topics for Future Meetings

- The Pollard School Project
- Policies
- Goals

Next Meetings

September 29, 2025

October 22, 2025

Adjournment

Ms. Chaston made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:50pm. Ms. Hannigan seconded the motion, and it was unanimously passed by a roll call vote of 5-0 as follows: Michelle Geddes – yes, James Rosenbaum – yes, Cindy Chaston – yes, Dina Hannigan – yes, and Chris Gerstel - yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Grace Steeves

Administrative Assistant