

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

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

April 23, 2010

*Background notes for Monday, April 26th
Park and Recreation Commission Agenda*

CHANGE OF MEETING LOCATION

Just a reminder that the Park and Recreation Commission meeting will be at 6:30 PM at the Pollard School. The “inner space” meeting room is located off of the Media Center, and the Media Center is right across from the main entrance. The meeting location and time have been changed to allow the Commission to attend the League of Women Voters’ annual Warrant Meeting.

At the Commission’s last meeting, it was decided that the first meeting in May, scheduled for May 10th, would be moved to Monday, May 17th to avoid conflicts with Town Meeting. I’ll tentatively schedule the meeting in the Park and Recreation Office as the Charles River Room is already booked, and if Town Meeting is still in session, it’s likely that the time will be changed or the meeting cancelled. I will not be able to attend the May 17th meeting.

WELCOME, MR. RETZKY

It is exciting to welcome Mike Retzky to his first official meeting as a Park and Recreation Commissioner! Obviously, Mike has been to numerous Park and Recreation meetings as the Needham Sports Council representative for construction of Fields of Dreams, but he will now be able to participate in decisions that reflect recreation and park services for the entire community. I look forward to continuing to work with Mike, and getting him involved with lots of non-athletic field projects!

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Commission is being asked to go into Executive Session at the end of the regular meeting under Exception Six of the Open Meeting Law, “to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property, if such discussions may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the governmental body and a person, firm or corporation.” A roll call vote is required to go into and adjourn the Executive Session.

ANNUAL DRAIN-DOWN OF ROSEMARY POOL AND LAKE

Unfortunately, a resident has filed an appeal with the DEP asking them to supersede the Order of Conditions approved by the Conservation Commission for the draining of Rosemary Lake. Town Counsel is working with us on the next steps, so that the pool can be ready to be open for the full season. This project has taken up many of my hours, and that will continue!

SENIOR CENTER EXPLORATORY COMMITTEE

The Vice Chairman of the Board of Selectmen Denise Garlick will be attending the Commission meeting to discuss the progress on the feasibility study for a site for the Senior Center. A matrix presented to the PPBC at their meeting this week is included in the meeting packet and will be posted on the Town's website.

OPEN MEETING LAW

Because of issues on the state level, new regulations for the Open Meeting Law are being put in place for municipalities, but not for the Legislature, as is the case with the revised Ethics laws! There will be training for board members and staff related to the Open Meeting Law. Examples of the changes include: posting meetings with the agenda, and making sure the posting are visible to the public 24 hours a day; and keeping the hand-written notes from minutes along with minutes with more depth to the information. Monday meetings will now have to be posted on Thursdays, as long as Friday is not a holiday, and will need to be posted with the agenda. The agenda has to list all reasonable topics anticipated to be discussed, which eliminates "other business" and the opportunity for residents to come to boards with issues to be discussed that aren't on the agenda. It's unclear at this time if the Director's Report will be permitted, but if allowed, we would continue to keep it posted on-line and attached to the relevant Commission meeting minutes.

NATIONAL CITIZENS' SURVEY

Needham participated in this survey two years ago, for the first time. More than 50% of the 1200 households contacted participated in the survey, and overall the results were positive. The Police and Fire Departments were recognized for their high ratings, based on national averages! Postcards are being sent this month to 1200 households chosen by the firm. The results of the survey should be available this summer.

TOWN MEETING UPDATE

The Annual Town Meeting warrant has 42 articles listed. At this time, it's known that 5 will be withdrawn, so this will be the shortest warrant in recent years, and unless there are unexpected lengthy discussions on some of the warrant articles, it is possible that Town Meeting would conclude by May 12th. The Special Town Meeting warrant has 15 articles, so that might take longer than the traditional one night. It is also complicated by the fact that Special Town Meeting is scheduled for May 10th, following the Melick Foundation awards, and it is the night before the special election for state senator, so all efforts will be made to finish earlier than usual that night.