

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

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

May 13, 2010

*Background notes for Monday, May 17th
Park and Recreation Commission Agenda*

CHANGE OF MEETING LOCATION

Just a reminder that the Park and Recreation Commission meeting will be held at the Park and Recreation Office in the Public Services Administration Building. I will not be at the meeting.

The Commission's 2nd May meeting is cancelled, so NO meeting will be held on Monday, May 24th.

ROSEMARY POOL UPDATE

The middle of May is the time that all work inside the pool needs to be done so it can start filling, so the opportunity to drain, clean, paint and refill has passed. The appeal is still at the DEP, though indications continue to be that it will not be approved, but waiting for that process to conclude would cause us to lose a good portion of the summer season, so we have moved onto a plan that would allow us to clean the pool and get it operational in time for the June 21st opening, but without having the surfaces painted. The pool will look "tired" but will be safe and clean. The DPW began the cleaning out process, this week, using two large pumps. As the pool staff returns from college, some of them will join the DPW staff on the cleaning process. The Town Manager and I presented an update to the Board of Selectmen this week. I will also be working on written text to send to all those who have purchased season passes, press information, and information at the pool.

CHARLES RIVER PROPERTY

Town Meeting approved the purchase of the two properties that make-up 174 Charles River Street, adjacent to Walker-Gordon Field. The Community Preservation Funding is available after July 1st, and the Town will wait to purchase the property until the tenant has moved out, which could be as early as this summer or as late as November. While we are waiting for the actual purchase, a plan for the work needs to be developed. I have spoken to the most direct abutter since the approval, and explained that we would bring together the three direct abutters to the purchased property to hear their questions and concerns and try to work on a plan that is win-win for both sides of the property. It's likely we are looking at some fencing, and possibly some trees or bushes to provide more privacy to the home with the largest shared property line. I'll also need to get some ideas from other Town staff on the process for developing the procurement for the removal of the house and other projects.

MILLS FIELD TENNIS COURTS

The company is basically waiting for appropriate weather to install the final surface on the tennis courts. It needs to stay above 50 degrees at night throughout the installation and though the days have been warmer than normal in recent weeks, the nights have dropped below 50 degrees. The courts at Mills are also partially shaded, making it more difficult to get to the appropriate temperature. The Assistant Town Engineer remains in contact with the contractor.

DOGS

The Selectmen will hold a public hearing related to dogs in public parks on Tuesday, June 8th at the Broadmeadow School. They anticipate hearing from residents who want more freedoms for pets, but also from people who have concerns about dogs in areas frequented by children. Brian Nadler, Phil Robey, and I met this week with the Town Manager, and representatives of the School Committee and Board of Selectmen to discuss the possible issues to be raised at the public hearing.

SENIOR CENTER EXPLORATORY COMMITTEE

The Board of Selectmen will have a public hearing on May 25th to give additional opportunity for people to express their ideas, as a follow-up to the April 29th public hearing. The Senior Center Exploratory Committee will likely present their recommendation for 2 sites for further study to the Selectmen on June 15th, though that is a tentative date.

OFFICE STAFFING

We have gone through the interview process for our Administrative Specialist, but none of the candidates were the right match, so we'll need to re-start the process. Retired Administrative Specialist Jan Dorsey is helping out with some of the accounting tasks as it gets busy in our office. I'm also working on changing the Department Assistant 2 position into a recreation programmer. The Assistant Director and programmer would split the programs between them, and take on new duties, which will help me balance the work load between the four of us.

PERRY PARK TREE

The young child of former Needham residents died last week, and the family friends would like to raise funds to plant a tree at Perry Park in his memory. They chose Perry as it is in their neighborhood and was a favorite of the 4 year old boy. We have been working at increasing the number of trees at Perry, to help provide more shade, so this will help with that plan, and I have approval from the Trust Fund Commission to spend some of the Perry Park Trust Fund on trees, so I could coordinate the two projects together.

HIGH ROCK SCHOOL GARDENS

The High Rock School is working on a plan to install raised garden beds at the school, outside of the soccer field area. I'm trying to coordinate with the school and DPW on the location.

BREWSTER AND CAROL ROAD PROPERTIES

The committee created to develop a plan for the land recently purchased at Carol Road and Brewster Road is starting to deliberate on a variety of ideas. Town Meeting has approved CPA funds to restore the cleared land, to prevent the growth of invasive species. A consultant will be hired to develop a plan in coordination with the Conservation Director and the committee. I'm assisting as needed.

NEWMAN RENOVATION

I am on the Superintendent's working group meeting for issues related to the Newman renovation. I've met with the subcommittee for the Pollard work. The pre-school and kindergarten classes, as well as the KASE program will be located at Pollard in the modulars and a few additional classrooms. They will have a play area in the "courtyard" area. There won't be funding for a playground, but I can install a temporary sandbox for some activities. The committee feels that fencing is needed for the area, so they will be looking for a funding source. A new parking and drop-off plan at Pollard will need to be devised. At this time, no one can let me know if there will be any interference with the use of the fields. I've also been in discussions on the locations of school buses. There was a request to park the buses at DeFazio overnight, but I explained that the busy times for the parks is when the buses would need space, so I believe an area at the High School is under review. The fields and tennis courts will be shut down this summer, but will re-open in the fall. After the contractor is hired, the plan for summer 2011 and construction will be more evident, so that decisions can be made on the use of the fields. The tennis courts will be used for parking, so they will not be available after the 2010-2011 school year.

Next week, the state is having a session on a state grant that could possibly be applied for in order to fund renovation of the Newman fields and restoration of the boardwalks, trails and observation areas in the adjacent wetlands area behind Newman. Conservation Director Patty Barry will attend the training and will let me know if it is a possibility.

YOUTH COMMISSION

Connie Barr is the Park and Recreation Commission representative on the Youth Commission. She has decided not to request to be reappointed this summer, due to her work on the School Committee. I have suggested that Connie and the Youth Commission offer some suggestions to add to any that the Park and Recreation Commission have for the interview process. It is a loss to the Youth Commission – and the Park and Recreation Commission – to lose Connie's presence on that board, but as she is currently the Chairman of the School Committee, she will be working closely with us on many projects.