

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

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

June 11, 2010

*Background notes for Monday, June 14th
Park and Recreation Commission Agenda*

MINUTES

The draft set of minutes from the May 17th meeting are not finalized yet, so will be presented at the next meeting.

ROSEMARY POOL UPDATE

We keep progressing with the work at the pool, with the hope to still open on Monday, June 21st. It has been a pre-season of “two steps forward-one step back” but no one has given up, and we are all striving to put forward the best product that we can under the circumstances. The walls have a slight rust appearance. We've replaced one of the two major pumps in the filter room, and the 2nd will be replaced next week. There is a temporary pump handling the circulation tasks of the 2nd pump. The pool staff is continuing to vacuum each day. It is a slow task as the debris is heavier than what we typically get during the summer. We hired a diver to work under the water before it was chlorinated, and he got the major debris out. The water is very clear right now, and we have kept the chlorine level high during the pre-season work, but will begin lowering it to swimming standards next week. The first water sample went to the lab on Tuesday, and one of the tests takes three days to complete. A second water sample will be sent to the lab on Monday, and we hope to have our pool inspection on Friday, June 18th. The DPW is also helping with some welding work and replacement of the diving board stands. They will also do some repair on the floor of the pool, as a large area of asphalt was displaced last summer when they helped to remove the handicap railing. There are other small areas of the floor that would have been repaired if we had drained, but will not be able to be done this year. The DPW assists us with the first mowing of the season, as the tall grass is hard for our mower to handle. That will take place on Monday, and makes a huge difference to the appearance of the facility. Park and Recreation staff has cleaned the grounds to make it easier for the mowers to move through. Numerous members of the DPW staff and the Park and Recreation pool staff have put in an incredible number of hours, but remain dedicated to getting the pool open. We plan to have a party this summer at the pool to thank all of them and the private contractors who have worked closely with us! Once the pool opens, efforts will shift to providing additional information to the DEP related to the appeal.

STAFF TRAINING

The training for the staff of summer programs and the pool is underway. The five supervisors have gone through two separate trainings, and the two teams of supervisors have all started out well working together. CPR and other certification classes have

started. The program directors have had their initial training, and will now have individual program training. All summer program staff will also have their general training this weekend. Half of the pool staff had their general training last weekend. On Wednesday, June 16, all pool and program staff training will take place from 4-6 PM here at PSAB. Much of the training has taken place at PSAB, which is a great convenience for us!

The new office has worked out great for us during this busy season. Between the number of staff and all the supplies coming in, our old office was overwhelming at this time of year. We now have working space for everyone, with space to spread out and organize supplies and papers. It still can get a bit noisy, but we are so grateful for how it is working for us!

TRACK STORAGE BUILDING AT DeFAZIO

This topic has been on multiple Commission agendas, but it is now time for a decision to be made so that the bid process can begin.

CHARLES RIVER PROPERTY

The Town will have the funds to purchase the property after July 1st, but will wait until the tenant has moved out. The tenant's current lease is through the end of November, but she is hoping to move out prior to that. Assistant Water/Sewer Superintendent Chris Seariac will be the project manager for the Town, and the two of us will work closely on the projects needed to demolish the building and create an extension of the park. The Town Manager and I will set up a meeting with the direct abutters later this summer.

MILLS FIELD TENNIS COURTS

The courts are now open! The contractor lost our tennis court signs, so I asked DPW to move the Newman sign over to Mills and I've ordered new signs. The contractor is still doing some finish work on the exterior landscaping in areas that were disturbed during the project. Our major challenge will be keeping people from Newton and local businesses off the courts, so that they are available to Needham residents with passes. The employees have an opportunity to purchase individual passes, but non-residents who are not employed in a Needham business are not eligible. The Newman courts will be shutting down by the end of June for the summer.

BUBBLERS

The new bubblers are installed and in operation, with the exception of Mills which appears to have a problem further down on the water line. That will be checked on Monday.

DOGS

The Board of Selectmen held a public hearing earlier this week on possible changes to the Town's by-laws related to dogs at parks. The majority of attendees were dog owners, but very few with concerns about dogs attended or spoke. The tone of the meeting was cordial.

OFFICE STAFFING

We have re-posted the Administrative Specialist position. Many of the prior applicants did not have the specific skills needed for the position, and from some of the resumes and cover letters, it appeared they had interest in the type of work that the Assistant Director handles. We're hoping this round will attract better qualified candidates. On June 21st, I will be attending the Personnel Board meeting to discuss the proposal to change our Department Assistant position into a Recreation Supervisor position. This will allow me to set up a more appropriate balance of workload between the four positions.

OPEN MEETING LAW UPDATES

The state is still working on regulations related to the revisions to the Open Meeting Law. There is a bill before the state senate to delay implementation until November, but at this time, we have to be prepared for a July 1st start-up. Postings for the Commission's Monday meetings will have to be done by Thursday afternoon, and the agenda needs to be provided with the posting. At this time, it appears paper copies of the agenda will be at the Town Clerk's office and the Police Department. Agendas will continue to be posted on the website. We can revise the agenda prior to the meeting and then provide updated copies. It will not be appropriate to add items to the agenda during the meeting, particularly those that require a decision or are controversial. It will be okay to bring up new topics to request that they be placed on a future agenda. Any documents used for the meeting will be filed with the minutes. As in the past, members of the public are welcome to attend meetings and listen to the deliberations. They may also record meetings, but must notify the Chairman prior to the meeting who will then make an announcement. As in the past, members of the public may not address the board without approval of the Chairman. Once the state has made final decisions on the regulations, there will be some training.

SIGNS

The Town Manager's program for creating emotionally intelligent signs is being recognized with a national award this fall. This was a project created by the Town Manager, and she worked with students at Pollard to create the existing signs. The project has been featured in regional press and in a national governing magazine. The Newman School has also received a grant to work on some new signs at their site, and the Town Manager will work with them on the project.

PROJECTS WITH DPW

The March rains and the unexpected work at the pool has caused some of our projects with DPW to back-up! We're working on the renovation project at Asa Small diamond, which is a collaboration project with Little League; we need to remove the Greene's Field playground structure; work on the renovation of the Charles River Street property; procure the new bleachers for Memorial Park; complete the Memorial Park netting project which is ready to be awarded to a contractor; procurement of diamond fencing at backstop at Mills; and resolve the issue at McLeod Diamond related to the sink holes. The DPW assisted with replacing playground surfacing, until the material was depleted,

so we'll need to procure new orders after July 1st. They will also assist with adding sand to the sandboxes, and this week they have been replacing some of the basketball nets at outdoor courts. The interview process is underway for hiring the Parks and Forestry Superintendent, and I will participate in the 2nd round of interviews with the final candidates.

ZBA RULING ON ATHLETIC FIELD LIGHTS

The official ruling on DeFazio is still being written. Once it is available, the joint policy will be updated, and will reflect the rules that are different between Memorial and DeFazio Parks.

NEWMAN RENOVATION

The contractor has been hired and is putting together the schedule for work to be done this summer, including the preparation work for the portable classrooms in the parking lot. The tennis courts, playground and athletic fields will not be available for use until September. Discussions are underway for what will be needed at Pollard to accommodate the pre-school, Kindergarten and KASE program, both within the building and outside.

CLAXTON BATTING CAGE

The High School Athletic Director and Varsity Softball coach will be requesting permission for the installation of a permanent batting cage at Claxton. They have tentative approval for funding from the Needham Booster's Club, pending all appropriate Town approvals. I have met with them on the site and discussed a possible location that would not interfere with other uses of the parks, and I will discuss the possibilities with the DPW. The AD and coach are investigating style options, though the current thought is to install a model similar to the one at Memorial Park. The netting would be removed at the end of their spring season to keep it in good condition, so any other group would need to provide netting for use in other seasons.
