

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

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

September 9, 2010

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

OFFICE STAFF

The most exciting change since the Commission's last agenda is the addition of Cassandra Halloran to our office staff. As the Administrative Specialist, she will handle all of our "bookkeeping" tasks and be our primary customer service staff member. She will be a great asset to the department!

SENIOR CENTER EXPLORATORY COMMITTEE

Commissioner Mike Retzky and I attended the recent public hearing on two additional site options for the senior center...Emery Grover School Administration building and the Heights MBTA lot. There were mixed comments on Emery Grover, with most of the concerns related to safety with traffic and parking. The MBTA lot received mostly positive comments, with some concerns raised about the intersection of Hillside and West. Some speakers still spoke in favor of Greene's Field. The committee still expects to make a site recommendation to the Selectmen in a few weeks, choosing between or ranking Ridge Hill, Rosemary Lake's hillside, Greene's Field, Emery Grover and the Heights MBTA lot. It is possible that the Exploratory Committee may have additional information for the Commission prior to or at the Commission meeting.

PROJECTS WITH DPW

Demolition of the Greene's Field playground structure is complete. After cleaning the debris, a second test was done on the soil and DPW is waiting for results prior to loaming and seeding. If we have a fall season with warm days, cool nights and periodic rain, the new seed should do well. At Asa Small diamond, the foundation for the dugouts is complete, and the block wall construction is scheduled for the week of September 13-17th. Most of the fence work and the roofing work will begin the following week, with the hope of substantial completion on time by the end of September. The DPW will have some site work to do prior to re-opening the diamond. At Memorial, the bid documents for new bleachers have been put out, and the bid opening is expected to occur at the beginning of October. The hope is to have the new units prior to the Thanksgiving Day football game, and if possible, for Needham 300's opening event. The Booster Club is donating two portable bleacher units to Memorial Park, so that will help with temporary seating for the early part of the season.

ROSEMARY PROJECTS

The DEP is still reviewing all of the information we provided for the appeal. We were requested to get an advisory opinion on whether a permit was needed from Massachusetts

Environmental Policy Act, but the initial opinion is that the annual draining is a maintenance project that does not require a MEPA permit. After a period of public comment, and official ruling on the MEPA permit is expected in mid-September. We were also asked to get a clarification on whether Rosemary Lake is considered a "great pond." DEP's Chapter 91 program has confirmed that Rosemary Lake is not considered a great pond so an additional license is not required. We are waiting for guidance on whether a MA Water Management Act permit is required, and then it is hoped the DEP will make a final decision on a superseding Order of Conditions before the end of September, which is 40 days after our submission of materials.

A secondary DEP project at Rosemary is the Stormwater improvements project we began with DPW and Conservation more than a year ago. The DEP had additional questions, and DPW Engineering is finalizing the information on that project. The hope is to improve the drainage as water comes down the steep hill into the parking lot, and change the flow of water at the mouth of the walking path leading from the parking lot to the camp property on the opposite side of the lake.

FIELDS OF DREAMS

The official turn-over and donation of the projects at Memorial Park and DeFazio Park will occur at the next Board of Selectmen's meeting. One of my dream projects from the initial drawings started, today! The new walking path at Memorial has been well-used, but unlike the track, most people aren't aware of the mileage. A Girl Scout Gold Award candidate has created a template and is painting "Needham rockets" along the outer path to help people gauge walking mileage. The painting started, today, and will be followed up with information and an "opening" celebration. A visit to either park during the day shows the value of these two parks to the community, beyond the more obvious benefits to athletic programs.