

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

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

May 13, 2011

*Background notes for Monday, May 16th
Park and Recreation Commission Agenda*

FIELD PROJECTS

DPW Parks and Forestry has had several extra projects done in the past few weeks. The McLeod diamond sinkhole at DeFazio was repaired and the area was sodded. As of this writing, it is expected to be opened tonight for its first use of the season. A good portion of the softball/baseball outfields and multi-purpose fields have been aerated and seeded, which should help reduce compaction and work towards more growth. With funds raised by Needham High Baseball and a donation from Little League, the infield at Memorial Park's 90' diamond was replaced with a more expensive infield mix that has better draining properties. The DPW rebuilt the drain line in the outfield that was overflowing onto the outfield, directing it out drainage pipes on Highland Avenue. With funds donated by Soccer Club and St Bart's Soccer, some renovation work was done on the small multi-purpose field at the High School.

TOUCH THE TRUCKS

Don't miss this fun event on Saturday, May 21st at 10 AM at DeFazio. This is a popular family event – the DPW will clean up a number of their fun vehicles and bring them into the DeFazio parking lot, adjacent to the tot lot. Children are allowed to climb up into the trucks and pretend to drive their favorites (or in many cases sit to the side so a parent can pretend to drive!!) This special event is Park and Recreation's opportunity to express our thanks to the Department of Public Works for everything that they do for the Town and our department. They don't get enough credit for it all!

This will be the final of a series of special events this past month – Needham 300 Town-Wide Clean-Up, Trails Day, Fishing Derby and then *Touch the Trucks*. The first three have all been well-attended and well-received, and great opportunities for residents to become involved in the community. This past week has been "walking week" in Needham, with daily walks scheduled since last Saturday for all different ages and interests. Karen has been one of the primary coordinators for the walks, and each one has been a success!

DeFAZIO PARKING LOT

As most of you have seen, the driveway entering DeFazio Park was given an overlay of asphalt this week. The DPW had put the project on their list over the winter, along with some street overlay projects. The contractor was able to coordinate the schedule to get it done this week, and the DPW did the preliminary preparation so that the contractor could quickly get in and out. There was a slight inconvenience to the park users, but I think

most were willing to drive around through DPW to get it done! Chairman Tom Jacob and I met with the Town Manager, DPW Director, DPW Assistant Director and Town Engineer this week on a short-term plan for the parking lot. The DPW will continue to periodically back blade the lot, but it is hoped that a stone chip layer can be put in place next year that will provide a more stable surface and be acceptable to the Conservation Commission in the permit application for the wetland resource areas. Paving the lot is a long-term project that is in the \$8-10 million range. It will remain in the capital plan, but will not likely move forward for many years, due to other Town capital needs.

COMMISSION GOALS

Chairman Tom Jacob has asked the Commission members to review last year's important issues and goals of the board. Last year's listing was provided at the last meeting, but included, again, in this packet. I have also included the goals set for me by the Town Manager.

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION LEGISLATION

This is the most recent update from the Community Preservation Coalition on the status of the legislation: *At a hearing before the Joint Committee on Community Development and Small Business on April 13, 2011, CPA advocates gathered to testify on An Act to Sustain Community Preservation (SB 1841 / HB 765). Committee members heard from legislators and numerous statewide organizations, as well as municipal officials from Quincy, Upton, Gloucester, Needham, Taunton and others. The Coalition also presented the Committee with a large book containing written testimony from close to 200 CPA advocates across the state. We look forward to a favorable recommendation from the Committee in the coming weeks.*

MOUNTAIN BIKES AT TOWN FOREST

For decades, we've been able to have walkers and mountain bike riders co-exist on the trails of the Town Forest. In recent weeks, two walkers have commented to me that they feel the mountain bike riders are becoming more invasive and less careful on the trails. I'm not sure their information is accurate, but I contacted the New England Mountain Bike Association to see if they could assist us with educating riders. I've worked with them in the past, and for several years, they had scheduled trail clean-ups to assist us. Some of the officials from the Greater Boston branch will come out to view the trails and will get back to us with some ideas to work with us.