

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

**MINUTES OF MEETING
September 12, 2011**

PRESENT: Thomas M. Jacob, Chairman
Michael J. Retzky, Vice Chairman
Cynthia J. Chaston, Member
Andrea L. Shorthose, Member
Patricia M. Carey, Director
Karen A. Peirce, Assistant Director

ABSENT: Brian S. Nadler, Member

The meeting convened at 7:00 PM in the Charles River Room located at the Public Services Administration Building

1. **Minutes of Meeting of August 15, 2011:** Mrs. Chaston made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 15, 2011 meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Retzky and the motion was approved.
2. **Director's Report:** Submitted in writing prior to the meeting. Mr. Jacob asked about the batting cage at Claxton Field. Ms. Carey said the cage is up and the Parks and Forestry Department will put up the netting for Fast Pitch Softball and will remove it at the end of the fall season. Ms. Carey shared some photographs of the batting cage and the Needham 300 Beautification planting project at Claxton Field.
3. **Assistant Director's Report:** Ms. Peirce reported a successful summer at programs and Rosemary Pool. Rosemary Pool closed on August 26th the day before hurricane Irene hit Needham. The Cultural Council application for the summer 2012 grant for Arts in the Parks events was submitted today. The neighbors presented the sign to honor Alex and Nina Prohodski at Riverside Park to Nina Prohodski at the September 10th block party. Mrs. Prohodski was surprised and very touched by the thoughtfulness of the neighbors. Ms. Peirce met with Ms. Carey and Tad Staley from Needham Bikes to discuss developments in creating the Bay Colony Rail Trail from Needham to Medfield. Ms. Peirce has a walk scheduled at the Town Forest with Barry Fleischer from the New England Mountain Bike Association on September 15th to look at the trails to see what improvements can be made. She is in the beginning stages of two Eagle Scout projects, one at Perry Park and one to rebuild and replace the Rosemary Pool turn boards.

4. Discussion Items:

- A. Walker-Gordon Project Update:** Ms. Carey shared the plans for the Walker Gordon Field project. The diamond will remain in the same location. Irrigation will be installed and the parking lot will be graded and laid with crushed stone. New fencing, playground equipment and a crushed stone walking path are also part of the project. In order to prevent washout of the field surface and to provide better drainage there will be grass along the base paths and infield mix used in the diamond. The grass will help keep the area dry during inclement weather. Mr. Jacob suggested contacting Little League to inform them of the design change.
- B. Greene's Field Advisory Committee Update:** Ms. Carey and Ms. Shorthose attended the Greene's Field Advisory Committee meeting. A variety of ideas for renovating Greene's Field were proposed and will be reviewed. Ms. Carey and Parks and Forestry Superintendent Ed Olsen will put together a list of information pertinent to the different options and concepts to help answer some questions that will be raised at the next meeting on September 20, 2011. The Commissioners agreed that the ball field should remain in any future plans for the field. Once playground vendors are chosen each company will review the site and make proposals for the playground renovation.
- C. Field Scheduling Update:** Ms. Carey reported that the groups are still growing and fall fields are busier than ever. The High School Athletic Director is working with the community groups to try and share field space. She also reported that the St. Bart's Soccer Group and the Young Girl's Soccer combined to be a part of Needham Soccer Club. Part of the backstop at the Eliot School baseball diamond was damaged during Hurricane Irene and will be closed until it can be repaired. Mr. Jacob and Ms. Carey will schedule a time to meet with the multipurpose groups to discuss spring field use. Ms. Carey noted many special event request for field space is putting a burden on the scheduled users.
- D. Parking Issues- DeFazio:** Ms. Carey reported the Newman neighbors are trying to have a portion of High Rock Street designated as a no parking area because of dangerous spectator parking along High Rock Street for Cusick Field. At the request of the Needham Police Department Cusick Field has not been scheduled this fall during the Newman School renovation and while parking issues are resolved.

- E. Pro Forma General Fund Report:** Ms. Carey presented the Town of Needham General Fund Revenue and Expense FY 2013-2017 Pro forma presented to the Board of Selectmen on August 16, 2011.
- F. Trails Projects:** Ms. Peirce is trying to schedule a Trails Advisory Group meeting within a few weeks prior to Conservation Agent Patty Barry's maternity leave.
- G. Rail Trail Update:** Ms. Carey and Ms. Peirce attended a meeting with Tad Staley of Needham Bikes on September 7, 2011. Medfield, Dover and Needham are awaiting a feasibility study by the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to be completed. The feasibility study will view the impact on the environment, transportation and economic development in all 3 towns. Once completed the feasibility study will be reviewed by all 3 towns and the next steps include the rail company giving up their lease, and the towns obtaining a lease from the MBTA. Ms. Carey has been asked by the Town Manager to have the Park and Recreation Commission spearhead the Rail Trail initiative.
- H. Dog Park Update:** The Town Manager would like to have the Park and Recreation Commission lead the effort to research and evaluate a potential dog park in Needham. Mr. Retzky suggested creating a committee to research, visit, evaluate and make recommendations for a dog park. Ms. Carey noted site selection, fundraising and concepts/design would also need to be handled by this committee. Ms. Carey will speak to the Town Manager to discuss the process of creating a committee. .
- I. Draft Scheduling Policies:** Mr. Jacob reported that Mr. Nadler updated him on the recent Memorial Park Trustee meeting where the draft policies were discussed. The Memorial Park Trustees were concerned that the other boards involved would be able to dictate what happens at Memorial Park which is not the case. He also reported that the Memorial Park Trustees are very concerned at the amount of trash being left at the park and on the fields. The next step is for public input starting with the Athletic Director, High School Principal, Superintendent of Schools, Sports Council and user groups. It was suggested 2 Park and Recreation Commissioners, Ms. Carey, the Athletic Director Micah Hauben and a representative from the Memorial Park Trustees meet to discuss the draft scheduling policies prior to a public meeting. Ms. Carey will compile the information and coordinate the meeting. The Park and Recreation Commissioners agree with the draft policies as currently written.

5. Action Items:

A. None Presented.

6. Topics for Future Agendas: October meeting dates:

Tuesday, October 11, 2011 in the Park and Recreation office.

Monday, October 24, 2011 in the Charles River Room.

7. Adjournment of Meeting: Mrs. Chaston made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 PM. The motion was seconded by Mr. Retzky, and the meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen A. Peirce, CPRP
Assistant Director