

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

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**June 22, 2012**

*Background notes for Monday, June 25<sup>th</sup>*

*Park and Recreation Commission Agenda*

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**HATFIELD PARK**

Doug George is building a house on Melrose Avenue and was looking for approval for one night to park modular home sections on the roads surrounding Hatfield Park on Melrose Avenue. Since the parking is on-road and not actually on the park, I explained it was not a Park and Recreation Commission decision. He needs to apply for a permit through the DPW. As it is one night, I have told DPW there is not an objection, but that there would likely be if it was more than one night and residents did not have access to the park.

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**SUMMER PREPARATION**

The pool opened on schedule on Monday, June 18<sup>th</sup>. I worked with a project team from DPW and Public Facilities, and we had a long list of pre-season projects to accomplish, from the drawdown and Order of Conditions, to cleaning and painting, to replacement of hot water heaters, to replacement of deck boards...and lots of small projects in between. Karen and Nicole interviewed new staff candidates, and Karen met frequently with Pool Supervisor Sam Parnell on staff, training, and safety issues, and they coordinated all the pre-season maintenance tasks and schedule. Cassandra and I handled all the procurement, including contracts and purchase orders. Karen and Sam scheduled lots of training sessions, including the big one with the Fire Department and Police Department. Training doesn't end once we are open, though – it will be on-going throughout the summer. Next up at the pool...the start of swim lessons on Monday, June 25<sup>th</sup>.

Just as important, the summer programs are all set to start on Monday, June 25<sup>th</sup>. Nicole and Karen worked on coordinating building permits through Public Facilities and interviewed lots of interested candidates. We actually stopped scheduling interviews after reviewing how many applications we had in January, already. Nicole and Summer Recreation Supervisor Jackie Lusardi have been putting all the training plans into action over the last few weeks, and adding lots of fun and creative options into the training mix. I've been working with them on their orders, including the lime green staff shirts – which look great when you see the whole staff together in one location. All their supplies were delivered on Friday, and each staff will be all set up for children to start coming on Monday.

The supervisors have all decided that they would like us to continue with the PARK and REcord, the weekly staff newsletter. Karen and Nicole have made sure to collect numerous photos during pre-season, and will continue with that throughout the summer, so that we'll have a good collection to use over the winter to help market the programs and the pool. They always try to do it each summer, but it's a task that can get lost when

its busy, so I've made it a goal for this year, and they have placed it as a goal for their supervisors and program directors.

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### **SUMMER FIELD MAINTENANCE UNDERWAY**

Though not the ideal time of year, multiple maintenance projects are underway on the athletic fields. The Mills irrigation project will take place on Tuesday and Wednesday. The field will be playable by 5 PM each day. The DeFazio sodding project is under review by the Conservation Commission as small sections of Healy Field and Warner Field are within the wetland buffer zone. The request is for an amendment to the existing Order of Conditions. Once approval is granted, the project will go out to bid so that all work is done prior to the fall season. Memorial Park is getting an improved drainage system at the base of the hill. It will capture high levels of ground water and place into the drainage system. The work is just about done, and the disturbed area will be sodded next week. Specifications are being drawn up for the replacement backstops at Claxton. High Rock's multi-purpose field has had excess water since construction, due to the large area of asphalt adjacent to the field. The initial thought was to add some drainage, but Parks and Forestry Superintendent Ed Olsen is meeting with a consultant on a less invasive project that would help change the soil chemistry to handle the additional water. The athletic fields on the top two tiers for maintenance will have the first round of intense maintenance and cultural practices, with a second round later in the summer. Cricket 2 will have some areas replaced with sod in the next week.

It has helped, for scheduling purposes, officially ending the spring season on the third Sunday of June. We only had to arrange for one make-up game on Monday on High Rock multi-purpose. The natural grass multi-purpose fields are now closed so that work can be done to strengthen them for heavy use in the fall, and to rest from the heavy use in the spring. Until recent years, diamonds all had this maintenance time in the fall, but programs have increased to three seasons, making it challenging to have a similar proactive maintenance program.

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### **GRAFFITI AND VANDALISM**

There have been two more incidents of vandalism. Graffiti was sprayed on the back of the Cricket building, facing the homes on Avery Street. The Cricketeer Adventure staff has repainted the area. At Ridge Hill, windows were broken in the garage and an electrical line to the outside area was torn down. The windows are being repaired before our program starts next week. The Outdoor Living Adventure staff has repainted the bathrooms walls, floors and ceilings, so that they look much cleaner and welcoming. The electrical line that led to an outdoor light beside the garage cannot be repaired, as it doesn't meet current code. It is now only needed on two nights of the summer by our program, so we will bring in some temporary lights.

The person arrested for spraying graffiti on the camp property building paid restitution to the Town. The funds need to be moved into an account I have access to, so I can use it to hire a painter to repaint the building.

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### **VESTA PARK**

This pocket park is located at the intersection of School Street, Dedham Avenue and Warren Street, and is under the Commission's jurisdiction. The DPW is in the process of planning some roadwork, and a small sliver of the park would be needed for proper road width. This is a discussion that will be brought to the Commission in September for discussion. The gas company is doing work nearby, so DPW has given the OK for temporary lay-down space for the pipes.

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### **END OF FISCAL YEAR**

As I write this, we have one full week of the fiscal year to go. It is always a busy time of year for us, as it's our most active time for spending and collecting revenue. We are also preparing for the new fiscal year, getting together all of our purchase order requests. We try to purchase enough supplies to get us through July, to give Accounting time to switch over the systems from one fiscal year to another. The Town is preparing to turn-over the accounting system onto new software in July 2013, so some preparation work is underway now. The state contract system is undergoing some major changes to be implemented in December 2013, so we've been given some additional training on using state contracts over the next 15 months, and will have updated training when it is ready to go live. Though still a lot of paperwork, some time can be saved when using available state contracts.

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### **RAIL TRAIL**

The Town Manager will attend an MBTA hearing on leases on July 11<sup>th</sup>. Though the Town still needs to hold formal discussions on the possibility of a rail trail from Needham Junction to the Charles River, the process of requesting the lease can move forward, so that if it is decided to proceed, a request to approve the lease would be ready for Special Town Meeting. The non-profit is gathering information on an engineering study/feasibility study.

A second citizens' group is being formed to advocate for the section of rail on the Newton end of town. The Selectmen are working with the Planning Director on transportation and economic development studies in that area of Town, so the Selectmen are not prepared, at this time, to study its conversion to a rail trail. The discussion also involves the 128 Add-A-Lane project, which is just another level of complexity.