

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

**MINUTES OF MEETING
July 9, 2012**

PRESENT: Michael J. Retzky, Chairman
Cynthia J. Chaston, Vice Chairman
Thomas M. Jacob, Member
David C. DiCicco, Member
Patricia M. Carey, Director
Karen A. Peirce, Assistant Director

ABSENT: Andrea L. Shorthose, Member

GUESTS: Youth Commission Applicant Karen Folb
Cricket/Hillside School: Sarah Tarantino, Liz Lee,
Evan Allen, Dan Shapiro,
Dog Park Supporters: Bill Paulson, Mike Verdun,
Donna Verdun, Justin Oriel, Donald Jacobson,
Ellie Spyropoulos, Artie Crocker

The meeting convened at 7:04PM in the Charles River Room located in the Public Services Administration Building.

1. **Minutes of Meetings June 25, 2012:** Mr. Jacob made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 25, 2012 meeting. Mr. DiCicco seconded the motion and the motion was approved.
2. **Director's Report:** Submitted in writing prior to the meeting. Ms. Carey noted that Governor Deval Patrick signed the CPC legislation. She also mentioned the Adirondack chair painted by Nicole DiCicco as part of the town wide Chair to Remember initiative represents Town Hall and the Town Common and can be seen at Town Hall.
3. **Assistant Director's Report:** Ms. Peirce reported that Session 2 of swimming lessons began today at Rosemary Pool. Scott Groux completed a great project at Perry Park to obtain his Eagle Scout badge. His project included painting lines and 4 square games on the basketball courts, rebuilding 5 benches, removing a path of asphalt and replacing it with soil and grass seed and clearing brush away that was growing onto the basketball court. Ms. Peirce shared the Arts in the Parks and Children's Theatre schedules. She has a meeting scheduled with Debbie Schmill from the Community Farm to collaborate on fall programming at the farm.

4. Action Items:

A. Youth Commission Applicant: Karen Folb: Mrs. Folb attended the meeting and introduced herself to the Commissioners. She indicated she is currently a lawyer working part time from home and she is a mother of 3 children. Her motivation for wanting to serve on the Youth Commission is to be able to give back to the community. Mrs. Chaston noted that it is helpful for the designee to report to the Commissioners periodically updating the happenings of the Youth Commission. Mr. Retzky thanked Mrs. Folb for attending the meeting.

B. Hillside/Mitchell Feasibility Study: Discussed later in the meeting.

C. Special Event Request: Cricket Field Neighborhood Event: Mr. Jacob made a motion to approve the special event request from the Cricket neighbors to host a neighborhood party at Cricket Field on September 16, 2012. The motion was seconded by Mr. DiCicco and the motion was approved.

5. Discussion Items:

A. Dog Park Update: Mike. Verdun and Bill. Paulson spoke on behalf of the Dog Park supporters. Mr. Verdun reported that a working group was formed in February 2012 with the mission to establish the first off leash dog park in Needham. They met with Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick and Town Clerk Theodora Eaton and discussed the quarry area at Claxton Field and the Nike Site as possible dog park sites. The working group has determined that they need a minimum of 1 acre with at least 10 parking spaces, easy access and visibility. Mr. Paulson suggested the tree covered area at Mills Field. Newton, Brookline and Dedham have established off leash dog parks. Wellesley has a pilot program with specific limitations. Newton has a very successful program charging \$50 for a resident tag. Mr. Verdun suggested that the Park and Recreation Commission oversee this project with a subcommittee reporting to the Commission. Mr. Jacob asked what the non resident fee is in Newton. Mr. Verdun reported the non resident fee is \$100. Tags are issued and rules are clear. Dog walkers are limited to 2 or 3 dogs. The group would prefer a designated space, not a shared space on a playing field or park. Mr. Paulson stated they are working on a draft proposal indicating the pros and cons of different locations, including rules and regulations. The report should be completed in 3-4 weeks. Mr. Retzky thanked the group for attending and the Commission is looking forward to seeing the proposal when it is completed.

4. Action Items:

A. Youth Commission Applicant: Karen Folb: Mr. Jacob made a motion to approve Karen Folb as the Youth Commission Representative to the Park and Recreation Commission. Mrs. Chaston seconded the motion and the motion was approved.

B. Hillside/Mitchell Feasibility Study: Ms. Carey reported that over the past few days, the Commission has received over 30 e-mails from Hillside School parents asking that Cricket Field remain an option in the prefeasibility study. An e-mail from Superintendent of Schools Dan Gutekanst responding to the letter sent from the Commissioners to the School Committee to ask the School Committee to remove Cricket Field as an option was reviewed. The Board of Selectmen are meeting on July 10th at 6PM and Mr. Jacob will attend. Mrs. Chaston asked if they could contact the Town Counsel to find a way to protect Cricket Field from any building. Ms. Carey will speak to the Town Manager and she will contact the Town Counsel for information regarding protecting properties. Mr. Jacob stated that he hopes that the Hillside property is vetted out completely during this process. If Hillside School is rebuilt in the current location, redistricting would not be required but it might be required if moved to the Cricket Field location. Mr. Retzky noted that frustration could grow to anger and divide the support which could then result in the defeat of an override. He would like to see all the facts regarding the Hillside School site addressed in the prefeasibility report. Hillside parent Liz Lee stated she would like to see the Hillside Community kept together. Dan Shapiro, Cricket Field neighbor indicated that Cricket is a well used area and is an important part of the neighborhood as well as being used by many members of the Town, that can't be replaced once it is gone. Mr. DiCicco suggested that the letter the Commissioners sent to the School Committee be sent to the Hillside community. Ms. Carey will send the letter to Mrs. Lee to forward to her Hillside contacts.

5. Discussion Items:

A. Dog Park Update: Discussed earlier in the meeting

B. Community Preservation: Possible Projects under Recreation

Category: The Commissioners reviewed the list of possible projects to propose for CPA funds. Ms. Carey indicated the Town Manager and Superintendent of Schools have both seen the list of possible projects. Mr. Retzky will send a letter and the list of possible projects for CPA funds to the School Committee Chairperson, Heidi Black so she can share the information with the School Committee members. It was suggested that a request to transfer jurisdiction of Greene's Field from the Board of Selectman to the Park and Recreation Commission be placed on the agenda to be discussed at a future meeting.

C. Commission Goals: The Commissioners reviewed the Commission Goals and discussed reassigning some of the tasks. To be discussed further at the next meeting.

D. Fall Field Scheduling: Ms. Carey is working on the fall field requests.

E. Rosemary Pool: Ms. Carey will be meeting with Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick and PPBC Director Steve Popper to discuss the scope of the feasibility study for Rosemary Pool. She also reported the Rosemary Pool legal suit deposition will take place on July 17, 2012 in Needham. Ms. Carey and the Conservation Commission Director will be deposed.

F. Trails Projects: Ms. Peirce reported that Project Van will send 12 volunteers to clear trails at Rosemary Lake Trail on July 12th.

G. Summer Meeting Dates: The summer meetings will be held on July 23, August 13, and August 27, 2012. Following the August 13th meeting the Summer Staff Appreciation gathering will be held at Rosemary Pool.

6. Topics for future Agendas: Greene's Field Jurisdiction

7. Adjournment: Mrs. Chaston made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:48PM. Mr. DiCicco seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 9:48PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen A. Peirce, CPRP
Assistant Director