

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

**MINUTES OF MEETING
July 23, 2012**

- PRESENT:** Michael J. Retzky, Chairman
Cynthia J. Chaston, Vice Chairman
David C. DiCicco, Member
Patricia M. Carey, Director
Karen A. Peirce, Assistant Director
- ABSENT:** Thomas M. Jacob, Member
Andrea L. Shorthose, Member
- GUESTS:** Bob Cohen, DeFazio Neighbor
Cricket Neighbors: Donna Poretsky, Bruno
DiFazio, Linda DiFazio, Heather Yountz,
Darlene Diodato, John Diodato
Sue Owen, Carole Stefanoni,
Dan Shapiro, Rhonda Spector
Michael Miller, Rachel Miller
Joan Feeney, Joseph Feeney

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

1. **Minutes of Meetings July 9, 2012:** None Presented.
2. **Director's Report:** Submitted in writing prior to the meeting. Ms. Carey reported that Tad Staley attended the last CPC meeting to talk about applying for CPA funding for the Rail Trail Feasibility Study. The Rail Trail was highlighted in the Boston Globe West on July 22, 2012.
3. **Assistant Director's Report:** Ms. Peirce stated the pool and programs are going well. The summer season is at the halfway mark. On July 20th Rosemary Pool celebrated 40 years of fun at Friday Family Fun Night with games, cake and music. Ms. Peirce is collaborating with the Needham Community Farm to offer a program in the fall for children ages 3-5 called "Down on the Farm". More information will be available at the next meeting. Project Van assisted with a trail clean up at the Rosemary Trails on July 12th. Arts in the Parks and Children's Theatre are going very well. Swim meets and other activities been well received at the pool.

4. Discussion Items: Items A-H Discussed later in the meeting.

A. NSTAR Vegetation Management:

B. Community Preservation: Possible Projects under Recreation Category:

C. Commission Goals:

D. Projects with DPW:

E. Fall Field Scheduling:

F. Rosemary Pool:

G. Rail Trail Concept: Needham Junction to Dover:

H. Trails Projects:

I. Long Term Protection: Cricket: Mr. Retzky indicated that the Commissioners are hoping to begin a conversation with the Board of Selectmen to determine whether Cricket Field can have the deed changed to provide more protection. The final Pre-feasibility Study from the School Committee and PPBC is currently on the school website. Mrs. Chaston noted that at the recent Board of Selectmen's meeting it did not seem that the Selectmen were interested in taking the Cricket property for a school site. Many of the Cricket neighbors were in attendance and shared their thoughts with the Commissioners. Carol Stefanoni is concerned that if the Hillside School site is determined to be unbuildable due to the toxicity then Cricket will automatically become the site. Cricket Field is important to all members of the community not just the neighbors. She asked if Cricket Field was ever a landfill in the 1930's. Ms. Carey indicated it was not a landfill but soil from the area was used to fill in the Back Bay area in Boston. Sue Owen noted that there was a state general by-law that indicated the Park and Recreation Commission would need to vote to give up the property in order for it to be considered for a building site. Ms. Carey assured the group that the Commissioners are well aware of this. Mr. Retzky noted the value of Cricket Field is to be at the forefront so people understand it is a well used property. Dan Shapiro asked if the Commissioners would take a vote to not give up jurisdiction to the Town to convert the park into a school. Mr. Retzky responded that the Commission is keeping its options open but can vote on this issue at anytime and he would prefer all Commission members to be present for a vote. This topic is on the agenda each meeting and will remain on the agenda as an action item so it can be addressed at any meeting. Rhonda Spector indicated that the neighborhood is feeling pressure from the Hillside Community who wants to keep Cricket on the list as a school site option. Mr. Retzky noted that dividing the community is counter productive and in the long run could create adversity that would prevent the passage of an override necessary for the project to begin. Mr. DiCicco stated that the community needs to work together to get the school built. Mrs. Chaston noted that the Save Cricket group has been very polite and she appreciates their vigilance in protecting this green space. Heather Yountz stated that divisiveness

is not the way to approach this project. She wants people to come from a place of kindness and respect to preserve the green space for all in the community. Joan Feeney asked why there was spray paint on Cricket Field. Ms. Carey stated it was to mark the irrigation system for summer maintenance and has nothing to do with the pre-feasibility study. Michael Miller stated that he would like to inform the community that this is not just a neighborhood issue but a community issue. Mrs. Chaston suggested a way to have a voice is to become a Town Meeting member. Bruno DiFazio noted that whether the Hillside site is used as a school or a field the potential toxicity issue will need to be addressed. Sue Owen reported that the neighborhood is working on creating and distributing Save Cricket Field signs throughout the Town. Ben Spector is very interested in long term park protection. Mrs. Chaston responded that the Commissioners are researching ways to protect the Cricket property with the Board of Selectmen who will talk to the Town Counsel. Mr. Retzky, Mrs. Chaston and Ms. Carey will meet with the Board of Selectmen Chairman, Vice Chairman and the Town Manager on July 26th to discuss long term protection of Cricket Field. Mr. Retzky thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

A. NSTAR Vegetation Management: A meeting with NSTAR sponsored by Denise Garlick will be held on July 26th. Ms. Carey, Mr. Retzky and Mr. Jacob will attend the meeting.

B. Community Preservation: Possible Projects under Recreation

Category: Ms. Carey shared a list of possible projects to propose for CPA funds. The list is in random order. Ms. Carey noted the Rail Trail project could request funds from the administrative funds for a feasibility study. Mr. DiCicco suggested moving forward to request CPA funds to renovate Newman School Fields and Greene's Field. Ideally he would like to have it on the October Town Meeting warrant. Ms. Carey indicated preliminary studies will need to be done by the Conservation Commission and DPW before any funding can be requested. The CPC will host a summit for all potential groups requesting CPA funding at the end of August. The Commissioners will prioritize the list at the next meeting.

C. Commission Goals: The Commission will discuss at a future meeting.

D. Projects with DPW: Ms. Carey reported that the Parks and Forestry Superintendent is scheduling maintenance on the multipurpose fields at High Rock, Pollard and Cricket using money from the field maintenance account. In the fall they will begin working on maintenance on the baseball diamonds. Sod for DeFazio Field is currently out to bid.

E. Fall Field Scheduling: Ms. Carey is meeting with Needham High Athletic Director Micah Hauben tomorrow to discuss fall field scheduling.

F. Rosemary Pool: Ms. Carey is working with Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick and PPBC Director Steve Popper to create a draft to determine the scope of the Rosemary Pool Feasibility Study. About \$70,000 is available for the study. Ideally the study would go out to bid in the fall, worked on through the winter and completed spring 2013, after the consultant is able to observe the pool when it is empty.

G. Rail Trail Concept: Needham Junction to Dover: The MBTA is willing to sign a lease with the Town of Needham. The Town and Rail Trail committee will continue their research, which will continue a public hearing with abutters.

H. Trails Projects: None Presented

5. Action Items:

A. Refund Request: Hegarty: Mrs. Chaston made a motion to approve a refund for the Tennis Academy to Mr. Hegarty. Mr. DiCicco seconded the motion and the motion was approved.

B. Hillside/Mitchell Pre-Feasibility Study: (Cricket): No action taken at this time.

6. Topics for future Agendas: Hillside/Cricket Feasibility Study
On August 13th the Commission meeting will begin at 6:00PM so the Commissioners can attend the Summer Staff Appreciation Party at 8:00PM at Rosemary Pool.

7. Adjournment: Mrs. Chaston made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:50PM. Mr. DiCicco seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 8:50PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen A. Peirce, CPRP
Assistant Director