

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

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

April 6, 2012

*Background notes for Monday, April 9th
Park and Recreation Commission Agenda*

THANK YOU, COMMISSIONER NADLER

I thought I made it clear last April that I didn't particularly love writing notes to thank a retiring Commissioner, but Mr. Nadler has enjoyed reading them, so felt it was time for his tribute! Brian Nadler was elected to the Park and Recreation Commission in April 2006, and appointed to be Chairman in April 2009. My first official meeting with Brian was in the hallway of Town Hall outside the Park and Recreation office. He was not pleased that the natural turf multi-purpose fields were closed in the summer for repair and maintenance. Some people complain for the sake of complaining, but Brian was willing to learn more about the issue to see that it wasn't a simple choice. I encouraged him to get involved, and he attended a Field Scheduling summit to hear more about field use, and he got updates on the progress of the Field Study Committee. He joined the Commission as *Fields of Dreams* was moving forward, probably not realizing how many meetings he would be attending related to that project, and how many cold nights he'd be outside evaluating aspects of that project. As he leaves the Commission, he can now see the success of all the hard work on that project and many others – and he can go out on a synthetic field in the summer and play soccer! Thank you, Brian, for all your energy, all your questions, all of your pushing for answers, and all of your support on the tough days. I will miss working with you!!

ELECTION

April 10th will bring a new day to the Commission. There are two Commission seats on the ballot and the top two vote-getters will be on the Commission. Chairman Tom Jacob is running for re-election after three busy years. Dave DiCicco and Matt Toolan are also running. Dave will finish serving as a Trustee of Memorial Park, after several terms, on Election Day, so this would be his second elected office. Matt is active with his family's activities, and this would be his first elected position in Needham. The next meeting will be on Monday, April 23rd. Before the start of the regular business meeting there will be a re-organizational meeting to vote for the new Chairman and Vice Chairman.

MEETING CONFLICTS

On Monday night, the PPBC and School Committee are holding a joint meeting regarding study options for the Mitchell and Hillside schools. Park and Recreation will start 30 minutes late to give time for the Chairman to attend the beginning of the meeting. PPBC has also suggested a 30 minute joint meeting with Park and Recreation on April 30th, which is the same night as the League of Women Voters' Warrant night. The next conflict comes up on May 12th which is a Town Meeting night, and then May 28th which is Memorial Day. Please bring calendars so we can try to resolve some of the conflicts.

LIGHTS

There is a bulb out on one of the track light poles. The contract for the special electrician has been spent for this fiscal year, so the repair will take place under a new contract this summer. The timing of the lights on the track and DeFazio parking lot has been adjusted for daylight savings time.

WEBSTER STREET

I attended a state training on complete streets this week. It's the concept of making sure you have appropriate space for vehicle traffic, along with pedestrians and bicycles.

Parking is also a consideration on some streets. One concept that I hadn't seen before is reverse angle parking. It's diagonal, but cars back into the spot rather than go head-in. It basically is the first step of parallel parking, without the extra turn. It is a concept that will be studied for the improved parking on Webster Street at Avery Park. I've put a flyer in the meeting packets with some description for the Commission's education, but it's not an agenda topic at this time.

BIKE RACKS

Through a state grant, I was able to purchase 17 bike racks a few years ago. The DPW completed the installation last week. They are in several locations around Town, including Memorial Park, DeFazio Park, Rosemary Pool and many of the schools. Try them out!!

SUMMER

The pace in the office has picked up quite a bit as we all prepare for Summer 2012. Tennis badges and pool passes are on sale, and volunteer packets are available. Planning is underway for programs and for summer construction projects. It's exciting and tiring all at once!

COMMUNITY CENTER CONCEPT

I attended a working lunch meeting with the Community Center of Needham group last week. Representatives of several organizations attended and listed what services/programs were offered and indicated where there might be gaps in the inventory. Space seemed to be the primary gap, no matter which age group was discussed. It's always interesting to hear perceptions of gaps that are sometimes resolved at the meeting with information, so I think that education and marketing are always a gap that any of us must strive to close on a regular basis!
