

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

**Minutes of Meeting
September 24, 2012**

PRESENT: Michael J. Retzky, Chairman
Thomas M. Jacob, Vice Chairman
Cynthia J. Chaston, Member
David C. DiCicco, Member
Andrea L. Shorthose, Member
Patricia M. Carey, Director

ABSENT: Karen A. Peirce, Assistant Director

GUESTS: Sam Bass Warner, Friends of Needham Woods and Water
Nancy Lankford, Friends of Needham Woods and Water
Sue Owen, Cricket Neighbor
Bill Monahan, Needham Little League

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

Mr. Retzky moved the discussion of the Rosemary trail up to the beginning of the meeting, to give the proponent time to present before attending another meeting.

Friends of Needham Woods and Water Concept for Rosemary Trail: Sam Bass Warner spoke to the Commission on behalf of Needham Woods and Water. He provided information, prior to the meeting, including concepts that were developed by students from the Arnold Arboretum's Landscape Institute. Mr. Warner proposes creating a handicap accessible trail around Rosemary Lake as the first step towards creating a park. Mr. Warner's text is attached to the Minutes as Appendix A. Mrs. Chaston noted she was a member of the Trails Master Plan Committee and currently is on the Trails working group, and that the focus has been on creating an ADA trail at the Reservoir, as it has fewer issues to resolve. Mr. Warner asked if both could be designed and then a choice made for one. He's concerned with too many activities being built around DeFazio rather than in the center of Town.

- 1. Minutes of Meeting of September 10, 2012:** Mrs. Chaston made a motion to approve the Minutes of the September 10, 2012 meeting. Mr. Jacob seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.
- 2. Director's Report:** Mr. Retzky asked if a date had been chosen for re-opening Warner diamond and Healy multi-purpose after the sod project. Ms. Carey said it was anticipated the fields would re-open in another week. Mr. Jacob asked if the neighbors on High Rock Street who will have No Parking signs posted in front of

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their homes were aware of the new signs. Ms. Carey said that the neighbors had worked with the Traffic Management Committee and had signed a petition requesting the signs.

3. Assistant Director's Report: None presented

4. Discussion Items:

- A. Friends of Needham Woods and Water Concept for Rosemary Trail:** Mr. Warner presented earlier in the meeting, and his notes are found in Appendix A. Mr. Jacob asked if, during design, both options could be reviewed. Mrs. Chaston noted the many difficulties with the land in creating an ADA trail at Rosemary. She also stated that Rosemary currently was a challenging trail, which is a good option to have in Town. Mr. Retzky felt that the decision on the pool would be needed prior to making a decision on the ADA trail around the lake. Mr. DiCicco asked if Mr. Warner's plan was on the capital plan. Ms. Carey said the renovation of Rosemary Trail was on the capital plan, but did not include funding for Mr. Warner's more extensive concept. With the CPC funds now available, Mr. DiCicco is concerned that projects may try to move ahead of others that have been waiting for funding.
- B. FY'14 Capital and Operating Budgets:** The Commission reviewed the Town Manager's budget pro forma, with predictions for budgets for the next few years. It is anticipated that there will not be many changes in FY'14, but unknown changes in federal and state budgets might start to impact Needham in FY'15. The Commission reviewed the draft capital request from DPW for athletic field improvements. Ms. Carey noted that Newman fields were next on the list, with funding split between two years, but that they could possibly be combined into one year for a CPA application. Ms. Carey stated that the estimated requests did not include the addition of athletic field lights at Newman, but that may be a consideration for at least one diamond. Mr. Jacob suggested considering lights for the multi-purpose field, too, and the creation of a second football field. Mr. Retzky, Mrs. Chaston and Ms. Carey will meet next week with the School Committee Chair, Vice Chair and Superintendent to discuss Newman and a CPA application. The School Committee would like to understand all athletic field needs, particularly as Hillside and Mitchell projects move forward. The Commission reviewed last year's list of 5-year capital projects. Mrs. Chaston asked if there should be consideration for removing the buildings on the camp property, due to lack of use, and vandalism. Ms. Carey said it should be an option. Mr. Retzky suggested having the building inspector look at the buildings, and Mr. Jacob noted that he would not want to remove the main building if it was found that nothing could be rebuilt in its place. Ms. Carey also discussed the field maintenance and administrative fees. The Selectmen would like to discuss the fees with the

Commission, to see if its time to raise them, or not. Discussions would also need to be held with the user groups. Mr. DiCicco noted that some of the groups were still making payments towards the costs of Fields of Dreams, and would likely still have those payments for 3-5 more years. Ms. Carey will request a meeting with Chairs and Vice Chairs to begin the conversation.

- C. Special Town Meeting:** The Commission reviewed the draft warrant, and discussed the CPC proposal for Greene's Field. The CPC has asked for information on the impact of the project if only the playground was funded in October, and the remainder of the project was proposed for a future Town Meeting. The consensus of the Commission was to recommend that the full project be requested at one time. The Commission reviewed two citizen petitions that will be on the Special Town Meeting warrant. Ms. Carey said that information is being compiled to show how the goal of these two recommendations to create new Town committees are already being handled through other Town committees or working groups.
- D. Route 128 Add-A-Lane:** The Commission reviewed a document outlining the projects for the next section of the Route 128 project. Based on the available diagrams, it doesn't appear there are any traffic lights on the Kendrick Street bridge or on the Highland Avenue bridge to assist pedestrians or bicycles from crossing the on/off ramps. Ms. Carey will request additional information.
- E. Projects with DPW:** Ms. Carey said that the bids for the DeFazio storage building were received, and there was only a \$700 difference between the bids. There will be funds remaining in the capital article that will be used for Walker-Gordon's project.
- F. Fall Field Scheduling:** Ms. Carey stated that overall, there are no major issues, but a few groups are discussing concerns between themselves. Use of the fields will get more difficult as the sun sets earlier each day.
- G. Rosemary Pool:** Ms. Carey has started draft text for scope and hopes that a draft will be available in October for review.

5. Action Items

- A. Hillside/Mitchell Pre-Feasibility Study:** The PPBC is holding a meeting this evening and discussing an environmental report on Hillside. Ms. Carey had sent the Chairman and Vice Chairman copies of the draft report last week, but will send the report to the full board to review. Mr. Jacob has been approached by a Finance Committee member who does not believe a school should be rebuilt at Hillside based on his concerns for environmental issues,

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but the Commission agreed that more information needs to be provided for that type of decision to be made by the Town.

- B. October and November Meeting Schedule:** The Commission typically meets the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month, but have conflicts coming up. October 8th is Columbus Day and November 12th is the day that Veterans' Day will be observed. Those meetings will be held on Tuesday, October 9th and Tuesday, November 13th. Ms. Carey also noted that December 24th would be a conflict, so the Commission decided to meet once in December, on December 17th.
- 6. Topics for Future Agendas:** Mr. DiCicco asked for a review of the joint policy for field permits at an upcoming meeting. Mr. Jacob noted that Representative Denise Garlick would like to attend an upcoming meeting to discuss several topics of interest with the Commission. She will be invited to the October 9th meeting. Mrs. Chaston will work with members of the Commission to purchase a brick for the Phil Robey Playground at Newman in recognition of his 18 years of service as a member of the Commission.
- 7. Adjournment:** Mrs. Chaston made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:05 PM. The motion was seconded by Mr. Jacob and approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia M. Carey, CPRP
Director