

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

**Minutes of Meeting
October 22, 2012**

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

ABSENT: Andrea L. Shorthose, Member
Patricia M. Carey, Director

GUESTS: Bob Cohen, Resident
Dan Shapiro, Cricket Neighbor
Bill Monahan, Needham Little League

The meeting convened at 7:02 PM in the Charles River Room at the Public Services Administration Building.

1. **Minutes of Meeting of October 9, 2012:** Mr. Jacob made a motion to approve the Minutes of the October 9, 2012 meeting. Mrs. Chaston seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.
Minutes of Executive Session of October 9, 2012: Mr. Jacob made a motion to approve the Minutes of the Executive Session held on October 9, 2012. Mrs. Chaston seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.
2. **Director's Report:** None Presented.
3. **Assistant Director's Report:** Ms. Peirce reported on the Spooky Walk held on October 20, in Needham Center. The first session was full with 150 children. The second session had 70 children attend. Ms. Peirce noted she and the Recreation Supervisor Nicole DiCicco will be meeting to discuss making some changes to the Spooky Walk. Mr. Jacob suggested contacting members of the Needham Business Association and the Merchants Association to get their input on the future of the Spooky Walk. Ice Skating lessons and youth tennis lessons began last week with lower numbers than usual. With help from Mrs. Chaston and members of the Exchange Club, the Town wide Clean-Up Day was a big success. Over 820 lbs of trash was collected at the Needham Town Forest, parks and fields. Ms. Peirce attended the Department of Transportation Moving Together Workshop in Boston on October 17th to learn more about access for biking, pedestrians and people with disabilities. On Friday, October 26th Ms. Peirce will be offering the first Owl Prowl at the Rosemary Trail from 8:00-9:00PM.
4. **Discussion Items:**
 - A. **Community Preservation:** Mr. Retzky announced that the Community Preservation Committee voted to fund article 10 for \$500,000 for a Charles River ARC home but due to additional funding from another source the amount requested has been reduced to \$220,000. The CPC also voted to approve Article 11 Appropriate \$35,000 for Rail Trail Feasibility Study and Article 12 Appropriate for Greene's Field Improvement.

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Mr. Retzky reported that a motion was made by a CPC member to withdraw Article 11 for the Rail Trail Feasibility Study if Article 8: Citizen's Petition – Rail Trail Committee passes.

B. Trails Projects: Ms. Peirce announced that on October 13th, 12 people installed all the Town Forest trail signs. Members of the Trails Advisory Group, trail stewards and other volunteers installed the color coded trail markers. On Saturday, December 1 the next trail sign installation will take place at Ridge Hill. Ms. Peirce will update the kiosks at both locations to reflect the new trail information. Hunting season alert signs have been posted at the Town Forest, the Greendale Trail and Ridge Hill. The Trails Advisory Group is working on a policy for all trails regarding motorized vehicles used for handicapped access. Ms. Peirce is working on a draft which eventually will need approval from both the Conservation Commission and the Park and Recreation Commission. Mrs. Chaston reviewed a letter from the Conservation Commission sent to the Community Preservation Committee identifying three trail projects that are the Conservation Commission priorities for implementation: Needham Reservoir Accessible Trail, Ridge Hill Reservation Loop Trail and the Eastman Conservation Trail Improvements and Extension. The Park and Recreation Commission agreed that the three Park and Recreation Commission trail project priorities include the Reservoir Accessible Trail, Newman Fields and Trails and the Rosemary Trail.

C. Field Maintenance Planning- Ed Olsen, Superintendent of Parks and Forestry: Discussed later in the meeting.

5. Action Items

A. Hillside/Mitchell Pre-Feasibility Study: The PPBC and School Committee are reviewing initial drafts of the report on the environmental issues at Hillside. The remediation costs are not as high as originally anticipated. Dan Shapiro, Cricket neighbor asked if anyone had a sense of where the School Committee is heading. He would prefer the School Committee not put any more money into the feasibility of the Cricket property becoming a school. Over 1500 signatures to Save Cricket Field have been collected. There was discussion whether the MSBA would approve a project if the project being recommended is on property not under the jurisdiction of the School Committee. Mr. Shapiro thanked the Commission for working to Save Cricket Field.

B. Special Town Meeting Articles: Discussed later in the meeting.

4. Discussion Items:

C. Field Maintenance Planning- Ed Olsen, Superintendent of Parks and Forestry: Ed Olsen, Superintendent of Parks and Forestry shared a few articles about field maintenance. He reminded the Commissioners that the Town does not spray chemicals for aesthetics but only on rare occasions for safety. Fields are being fertilized and over seeded more which has helped to have more healthy plants. His main concern now is the Japanese beetle grub. Grubs attach to the root system and weaken it, which can be dangerous to players. Grubs tend to gravitate to the edges of fields where there may be less fertilization. He shared photos of grub damage at

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High Rock, Mills and Memorial Park fields. Mills is currently on the Bay State Organics program which is free but it could cost approximately \$15,000 to repair the grub damage on Mills Field. Mr. Olsen suggested using Acelepryn which coats the plant to make it stronger to protect the turf. This product is nontoxic and can be applied safely by certified DPW staff. Mr. Olsen noted the Town has a solid Integrated Pest Management program (IPM) that has been in place for many years. Funding to maintain current fields is very important but he also has to seek funding to maintain and sustain the newly renovate fields so that they do not deteriorate. He and Ms. Carey will be meeting with the Board of Selectmen to talk about funding. Mr. DiCicco asked Mr. Olsen about resting fields. Mr. Olsen noted he would like to become more involved in the permitting of fields so he can know what activity is taking place on fields so he can rotate resting periods. Mr. Olsen also asked if there is policy for field use when there is frost on the ground. He suggested implementing training for the coaches and league officials during the preseason so that they know what to do and what not to do to on the fields. Training the coaches could alleviate some of the field damage that is caused by untrained coaches. The Commissioners thanked Mr. Olsen for attending the meeting and sharing this wealth of information.

5. Action Items

B. Special Town Meeting Articles: Mr. Jacob made a motion not to support Article 8 on the special Town Meeting warrant. The motion was seconded by Mr. DiCicco and the motion was approved unanimously. Mrs. Chaston made a motion not to support Article 9 on the Special Town Meeting warrant. Mr. Jacob seconded the motion and the motion was approved unanimously.

6. Topics for Future Agendas: Hillside/Mitchell Pre-Feasibility Study

7. Adjournment: Mr. Jacob made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:16 PM. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Chaston and approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen A. Peirce, CPRP
Assistant Director