

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

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**January 4, 2008**

*Background notes for Monday, January 14<sup>th</sup>  
Park and Recreation Commission Agenda*

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**AGENDA**

As I will be in Mississippi with *Needham Cares* from January 6-12, these notes have been written before my departure. The Assistant Director will finalize the agenda.

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**FIELD STUDY UPDATE**

The consultants from Gale Associates met with the Conservation Commission on December 27<sup>th</sup> to provide information on the DeFazio plan, drainage, and areas within the buffer zones to the wetlands. The Conservation Commission asked for some additional information and clarifications. The hearing was continued until Thursday, January 24 at 7:45 PM at the Needham Public Library.

The Department of Public Works is preparing to do the work to replace the drain pipe that crosses under the DeFazio fields. In its current location, it would be under the new synthetic turf fields. The pipe brings water from the neighborhoods on the other side of the railroad tracks and is nearing the end of its life, so it will be replaced and its location slightly adjusted so that it will be located under natural turf, between the synthetic turf fields and the track.

The Board of Selectmen are discussing a March Special Town Meeting to bring forward the request for funding the track and inner natural turf field at DeFazio. Town funding is being sought for this project, and if approved, would be publicly bid and operated separately from the work that will be funded by the Needham Sports Council at Memorial and at other areas of DeFazio. Getting a decision in March will help move the work forward at Memorial Park in the spring, as it will necessitate the removal of the track at Memorial.

The Finance Committee has had an initial meeting to discuss the track and field funding request, and will have a formal discussion at their meeting on January 16<sup>th</sup>. During the initial informal discussion, questions related to the costs of on-going maintenance and expected replacement information.

Field requests will be submitted throughout the month, with all those from the School Department due in soon, along with special events. At this time, it appears that groups are trying to work out conflicts together, but if there are any problems, a meeting will be set up with the Commission.

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### **TOWN HALL UPDATE**

The Board of Selectmen will be continuing their discussion on the three options for renovation of Town Hall. It is hoped that a final decision will be made by the end of January. The Selectmen are waiting for an opinion from Bond Counsel on what it views as eligible for Community Preservation funds.

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### **BUDGET REVIEW**

The Park and Recreation operating budget will be reviewed by the Finance Committee on Wednesday, January 16<sup>th</sup>.

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### **COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE**

The CPC will meet with the proponents of three projects on January 16: the trail improvements based on the Trails Master Plan; an appropriation to the Town's Conservation Fund; and the creation of trails at High Rock Homes that will connect to the Town Forest. On January 30<sup>th</sup>, the final two projects will be reviewed with the proponents: the renovation of Town Hall and the purchase of a section of Hearthstone Farm on Nehoiden Street.

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### **SCHOOL PROJECTS**

The High Rock renovation is out to bid and it is expected that a contractor will be hired by early February. The original parking plan had ten spaces that were not approved by the Conservation Commission during their permitting process. As the spaces were added through erroneous information that they were needed for use of the athletic fields, a request has been made to the Planning Board to revise the parking space requirements and allow for the elimination of the ten spaces. Without consulting Park and Recreation, a statement had been made that there was not enough parking on site for the athletic fields, but once it came to my attention, I explained to the School Committee and PPBC that parents parked on the street at High Rock for convenience and not due to the lack of parking spaces. I've made a request to the Traffic and Parking Committee to assist Park and Recreation with handling these types of on-street parking issues. It's a problem at other locations, with emergency access being blocked as well as the driveways of neighbors, all when empty parking spaces remain in lots.

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### **TRAILS COMMITTEE**

Work is progressing on the Master Plan, maps, and maintenance maps. I am working on a subcommittee looking at stewardship and volunteer service. Commissioner Cindy Chaston is working on the kiosk and trail marking subcommittee. A third subcommittee is reviewing options for trail oversight in the future. As the trails fall under four jurisdictions, there is an effort to find a way to keep the trails work continuing without side-stepping the jurisdiction of each board.

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