

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

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

October 4, 2013

*Background notes for Monday, October 7th
Park and Recreation Commission Agenda*

PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING

The Park and Recreation Commission typically meets the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month. Because of two upcoming Monday holidays: Columbus Day and Veterans' Day, the Commission has adjusted its meeting schedule: Monday, October 7; Monday, October 28; and Monday, November 18. At this time, a second meeting is not scheduled in November, but may be added if urgent business comes forward.

IMPORTANT DATES

Community Preservation Public Hearing on Proposals for Special Town Meeting
Wednesday, October 9 @ 7:30 PM – Town Hall Selectmen's Chambers
Fall Special Town Meeting
Monday, November 4 @ 7:30 PM – Town Hall Powers Hall
Tentative, if needed – Wednesday, November 6

VACATION

I will be on vacation from October 10th through October 19th, returning to the office on Monday, October 21st.

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

The CPC has two proposals under review for the Fall Special Town Meeting. The Board of Selectmen have requested \$45,000 for insurance required under the lease agreement with the MBTA. Permission to sign the lease is also on the STM warrant. The CPC would be reimbursed for 50% of the actual cost of insurance, if approved.

The second proposal is actually a project under review since 2005. The Conservation Commission is trying to replace the boardwalk bridge on their Swamp Trail, and also replace a small bridge on their Charles River Trail that leads to the Charles River. It has taken several years to finally get the project designed, and during that process, soil borings indicated a deep layer of peat. Due to the locations in the swamp and wetlands, helical pile foundations would be used, as they can be installed by hand and have the least impact on the wetlands. The Conservation Commission will use \$100,000 from the Conservation Trust for this project, and is seeking just over \$180,000 from the CPC to cover the full project costs.

In July 2012, the state legislature revised some of the wording to the CPA legislation that revised the uses for recreation to allow Needham and similar communities to use the CPA fund to renovate recreation projects. Prior to that change, the property had to be purchased with CPA funds in order to be renovated. A second part of the approval was to provide additional funds to CPA communities from surplus funds at the conclusion of the

FY'13 fiscal year. The state still hasn't finished finalizing the FY'13 revenue, but most likely by the end of December, Needham will be notified of additional funds that will be deposited into the Needham Community Preservation Fund. I have no information on how much it might be, nor does the non-profit Community Preservation Organization have any additional information.

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING

One of the possible articles on the Special Town Meeting warrant is related to the funding process from MA School Building Assistance (MSBA) for the Hillside School. As this is written, I have not received information on whether the MSBA will respond to the request to place the Hillside School on the list of approved projects or not. The Selectmen and School Committee will need to determine whether to move forward with this article without notification from MSBA or not. It is also possible that they will receive information prior to the November 4 Special Town Meeting. The wording of the article on the draft warrant is required by MSBA and cannot be altered.

FACILITY MASTER PLAN

This topic will be a regular agenda item over the next year. Commissioner Matt Toolan will represent Park and Recreation, and I will be an active staff member with the working group. The Working Group is still being appointed, so they have not held a meeting, yet. The RFP is being finalized and ready to send out.

BAY COLONY RAIL TRAIL PROJECT

It is hoped that this project will take a major step forward with Town Meeting's authorization for the Town Manager and Board of Selectmen to sign a lease for the rail right-of-way, initially from High Rock Street to the Charles River/Dover border. The Bay Colony Rail Trail Association will partner with the Town for the creation of the rail trail, and intends to privately raise the funds for the majority of the project. They have utilized estimates from the FST report from Spring 2013, and developed a phased approach for the initial path with rough surface, installation of stone dust, creation of "trail heads" with parking at High Rock Street and Fisher Street, and creation of a link from Chestnut Street to High Rock Street. The high estimate to create the path with a stone dust surface is in the \$250,000 range. Without having started a formal fundraising campaign, they have already raised more than \$65,000.

SYNTHETIC FIELD TESTING

The Health Department has scheduled their annual testing of the synthetic turf fields for October 7th. No health or environmental issues have been found in the testing since the 2008-09 installation.
