

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

**MINUTES OF MEETING
April 23, 2012**

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

GUESTS: Bob Cohen, DeFazio Neighbor
Richard Reilly, Finance Committee Chairman

The meeting convened at 7:00PM in the Charles River Room located in the Public Services Administration Building.

1. **Minutes of Meeting of April 9, 2012:** Mr. Jacob recommended amending the following sentence listed under Discussion Items: E. Rocket Lacrosse/128 Lacrosse to include the words listed in italic. “Mr. Jacob noted that without the non-profit status the lacrosse programs will not be able to use the Needham Fields *in 2013*.” Mrs. Chaston made a motion to approve the minutes, as amended. Ms. Shorthose seconded the motion as amended and the amended motion was approved.
2. **Director’s Report:** Submitted in writing prior to the meeting. Ms. Carey reported there has been no news regarding the CPA legislation decision.
3. **Assistant Director’s Report:** Ms. Peirce reported the following:
 - As an Earth Day beautification project the Needham Cub Scouts are planting flower seeds to be transplanted at Rosemary Pool this spring.
 - The Town Wide Clean Up Day is scheduled for April 28th.
 - The Community Gardeners have joined in and will do a clean up of the Tillotson Road gardens.
 - There are only 2 more Eco Explorer meetings before the EPA grant ends. Park and Recreation has teamed up with the School Department to offer a Garden Mentor program. This opportunity is being offered to people on the Community Garden wait list to have them tend to the school gardens over the summer.
 - Eagle Scout Ted Morin is working on making new turn boards for the lanes at Rosemary Pool
 - Matthew Bejian is working on an Eagle Scout project to build new benches at the High School tennis courts and he will plant some trees along the court fence.
 - The Tennis monitor will begin monitoring the tennis courts April 29th.
 - Meeting with Hank Haff from PPBC and John Gautschi Tennis Instructor to discuss the resurfacing and painting of the Pollard Quick Start courts.
 - Volunteer registration began on April 11th and has been filling up quickly.

- Attended the MRPA Aquatic Branch meeting to learn about the changes at the Red Cross. Fees for services have increased for all programs including lifeguard, CPR and First Aid certifications and the Learn-to-Swim Programs.
- Interviews are winding down for summer employees.
- The Reservoir will be stocked on Thursday, April 26, 2012 at 11:00AM. The Fishing Derby will be held on Saturday, May 5th.
- The Summer Brochure is almost ready to be sent to the printers.

4. Discussion Items:

A. Hillside/Mitchell Feasibility Study: Mr. Jacob reported that he and Mr. Retzky met with Marianne Cooley and Heidi Black from the School Committee to discuss an option the School Committee and PPBC have been exploring to build the Hillside School on Cricket Field. The Commissioners told Mrs. Cooley and Ms. Black that the Park and Recreation Commission is willing to discuss the idea but would be reluctant to release Cricket Field to become a school building site. The School Committee is trying to put the Hillside and Mitchell School projects on the MSBA list for funding for the reconstruction projects. The Cricket proposal would save money on providing a swing space if Hillside was to be rebuilt at the current location. The School Committee has to show a feasibility study indicating options and obstacles to the state. Mr. Jacob also spoke to George Kent the Chairman of the PPBC about the Park and Recreation Commission concerns about the proposals and the importance of the Commission to be involved in the process. Mr. Kent assured Mr. Jacob that Park and Recreation will be involved in all discussions on this project. The Town Manager has called a meeting with representatives of the PPBC, Board of Selectmen, Park and Recreation Commission, School Committee and Finance Committee to discuss the Hillside/Mitchell Feasibility Study. Mr. Retzky noted the Nike Site was considered but removed from the list because of minimal access and infrastructure issues. Mr. DiCicco asked why the PPBC staff member who has been working on the Cricket Building Project with Park and Recreation never mentioned that Cricket Field was being considered as a school site before spending \$10,000 on the Cricket Building Renovation plans. Mrs. Chaston feels strongly that Cricket Field not be used as a school site. Without taking a formal vote, the current consensus of all five Commissioners is that they are willing to listen to information, but would not currently approve giving up the jurisdiction.

B. DeFazio Projects: Reported in Director's Report.

C. Town Meeting Preview: Ms. Carey shared information from the Finance Committee on the Town Meeting articles that they have voted to support. Mr. Jacob asked about the Athletic Field Improvement Fund and where \$282,728 comes from. Chairman of the Finance Committee Mr. Reilly reported the funds have come from free cash as a preliminary funding for long term capital for the replacement of turf fields or other significant long term field improvements. Ms. Carey reviewed the articles that pertain to Park and Recreation.

D. Operating and Capital Budget Update: Ms. Carey reported that the budget submitted to the Town Manager is being recommended to Town Meeting without any changes. Mr. Jacob asked for a brief outline on budget and other Town Meeting issues to help answer questions at Town Meeting, if needed.

E. Field Scheduling Update: Ms. Carey reported that the Temple Aliyah softball players removed the fencing at Claxton Field. Parks and Forestry staff had to re-install the fence. Ms. Carey also reported someone put duct tape on the synthetic turf fields at DeFazio Park. Parks and Forestry staff had to remove the tape which caused a small amount of damage to the turf. On April 20, 2012, Ms. Carey received a request for a bike event to be held on May 13th. The request is to use Walker Gordon Field as a rest stop for the bikers. The Commissioners approved for Ms. Carey to get more information from the group and once it is received make a decision on behalf of the Commission. Today was the first day the fields were closed due to rain this spring.

F. Rosemary Pool: Ms. Carey reported that the pool continues to drain and once it is empty, cleaning and painting will begin.

G. Trails Projects: Ms. Peirce reported the second Trail Steward Training took place on April 21st. Currently all the trails in Needham are assigned to one of the 15 trained Trail Stewards. Ryan Colarusso is scheduled to clear the Charles River Trail at Ridge Hill on Saturday, April 28th as his Eagle Scout project. Ms. Peirce is working on procuring the trail signs to be installed on all Needham trails. Ms. Peirce will lead a Nature Trail Walk for members of Parent Talk and their children at Ridge Hill on Saturday, June 2, 2012. She noted a complaint from a resident reporting hundreds of bicycles riding through Ridge Hill and on the resident's private property on Sunday, April 22. The trees were tagged with pink markers and the riders had maps. Ms. Peirce will investigate to try and find out what group organized the ride to inform them that there is no bike riding at Ridge Hill and any future event must be approved by the Town Department that has jurisdiction over the requested property.

5. Action Items:

A. Little League: 1-Day Baseball Clinic: Ms. Carey shared a special event request from Little League to host a one day baseball clinic on July 19, 2012 from 8:00AM – 1:30PM at DeFazio Park. Mrs. Chaston made a motion to approve the request with the standard fees. Mr. Retzky seconded the motion and the motion was approved. Ms. Carey noted this is a clinic within their summer season.

B. Citizens' Petition: Organic Land Management Policy: Ms. Carey reported that the Citizens Petition was changed and a new substitute motion regarding Organic Land Management is being presented at Town Meeting. Ms. Carey noted the Parks and Forestry Superintendent is not planning to do any pesticide application this year, but is monitoring some areas with evidence in the past of grubs. Out of 88 acres he manages, 63 acres are on organic programs, and the remaining 25 are primarily organic, with some synthetic fertilizer use. In the fall, trees at Memorial Park and on the Town

Common were sprayed for winter moth following the IPM process. The Board of Health has indicated their support for an IPM policy. The differences in cost of the current maintenance plan vs. changes under the Citizen Petition haven't been determined. The Commission will be prepared to speak to this issue at Town Meeting. Mrs. Chaston made a motion not support the substitute main motion Citizen's Petition: Organic Land Management Policy. Mr. DiCicco seconded the motion and the motion was approved.

6. **Topics for future Agendas:** DeFazio Storage Building

7. **Adjournment:** Mr. Jacob made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:48PM. Mrs. Chaston seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 8:48PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen A. Peirce, CPRP
Assistant Director