

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

**Minutes of Meeting
December 17, 2012**

- PRESENT:** Michael J. Retzky, Chairman
Cynthia J. Chaston, Vice Chairman
Thomas M. Jacob, Member
David C. DiCicco, Member
Patricia M. Carey, Director
Karen A. Peirce, Assistant Director
- ABSENT:** Andrea L. Shorthose, Member
- GUESTS:** Greg Atkinson, Needham Baseball and Softball
Dan Shapiro, Save Cricket Field
Sue Owen, Save Cricket field
Jo-Anne Ochalla, Community Center Needham, Inc.
Mary Ann Joyce, Community Center Needham, Inc.
Janet Jankowiak, MD, Public Health Com. MMS, resident swimmer

The meeting convened at 7:00 PM in the Community Room at the Needham Public Library.

1. **Minutes of Meeting of November 26, 2012:** Mr. Jacob made a motion to approve the Minutes of the November 26, 2012 meeting. Mrs. Chaston seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.
2. **Director's Report:** Submitted in writing prior to the meeting. Ms. Carey announced that the DeFazio storage building has been installed and DPW will begin storing the track equipment in there this week.
3. **Assistant Director's Report:** Ms. Peirce reported the following:
 - Attended the summer building use committee meeting with Recreation Supervisor Nicole Diccico. The Park and Recreation summer programs will be held at Eliot, Pollard and the High School this summer.
 - Attended the Needham Farm Advisory Committee meeting. The Farm is looking to raise funds and awareness about the farm. The current farmer will be leaving in the spring of 2013 and will be replaced by two part time people. One will run the Farm operations and the other will focus on education and outreach. The Farm will not participate in the Needham Farmers Market in 2013. It was reported that a great deal of fresh produce was donated weekly to the Needham Community Council Food Pantry in 2012.
 - Attended the Needham Youth Substance Abuse Coalition monthly meeting. A new initiative is high school students visiting the Pollard Middle School classrooms and talking directly to the students about what high school is like. It

has been very well received by the students and the teachers. A group of high school students attended the NYSAC meeting to share their experience speaking in the middle school classes.

- The Senior Walking Club uses a room on the third floor of the high school to meet before and after their indoor walking group. Recently the room was reduced in size to accommodate new office space. The senior walkers are unhappy with the small space. Ms. Peirce will go to the program to see the room and will work with the high school administration to see if another room may be available.
- Received permission from the Principal to be the High School Fishing Club Advisor. Currently trying to identify fishing club members.
- Winter Spring registration began on December 11th. Signs were posted at Memorial Park, PSAB and Claxton Field advertising the registration date. Currently the registration numbers are very low. Information was sent out on “Notify Me”, newspapers and school newsletters. More informational emails will be sent after the holidays.
- The Nashoba Valley Ski/Snowboard program is full with 35 participants. All chaperones are returning.
- Attended the second round table for the Youth Resource Network. It was very well attended by a variety of school, town and non-profit organizations in Needham and concrete resources were shared to help the family that was being presented.

4. Discussion Items:

A. FY14 Operating and Capital Budgets: Ms. Carey shared the Town Manager’s Capital Funding preliminary Recommendations for FY14.

B. Rosemary Pool: Ms. Carey shared the draft engineering and design for RFQ for the Rosemary Pool Feasibility Study. She noted the time line includes the ability for the chosen company to observe the process of draining the lake. Jo-Anne Ochalla from the Community Center of Needham Committee asked about the process and what is CCN’s role in the process. Ms. Carey replied that she and Mr. Jacob are on the selection committee to determine the firm to do the feasibility study. There will be some public meetings during the process to answer questions regarding the viability of the future of Rosemary Pool.

C. Community Preservation Proposals: Ms. Carey shared the list of proposals for CPC funding. The Community Preservation Committee has initially reviewed the list and deemed them all eligible for funding. A public meeting will be held in the spring prior to the May Town Meeting. Ms. Carey noted that 7 of the 10 projects on the list are now eligible since the change in legislation allowing CPC funds to be used for existing recreational facility improvement projects.

D. Proposed Rail Trail: Ms. Carey shared some of the areas that could be considered for access to the Bay Colony Rail Trail. She would like to schedule a walking tour for members of the Park and Recreation Commission and the Planning Board to see the area identified for the Rail Trail. Once a company is hired to do the feasibility study then the Park and Recreation Commission will work with the Bay Colony Rail Trail Association to schedule public meetings to inform and educate the community about the Bay Colony Rail Trail project.

E. Greene's Field Project: Ms. Carey reported that staff members are working on the design for the park and the fundraising group is seeking large donors for the project.

F. Trail Projects: Mr. Jacob asked if there were a way to create a phone AP for all of the Needham trails. Ms. Carey will speak to the IT department to see if that is possible. Eight people participated in a trail sign installation at Ridge Hill in early December. All but 2 trails were completed. The Rosemary and Farley trails will be completed in early 2013. One of the trail stewards announced that he cleared a trail at Ridge Hill without permission. Ms. Peirce and Conservation Commission Director Patty Barry are scheduled to walk the trail to see what has been done. During the trail installation it became clear that some of the trail names and colors needed to be updated on the map. Ms. Barry is working on that project. At the Trails Advisory Group meeting one of the goals discussed is to improve communication of trail maintenance needs and reporting when the improvements have been completed. Ms. Peirce will work with Parks and Forestry on this goal. The Swamp Trail at Ridge Hill is scheduled to begin construction in August 2013. The trail maps at the current kiosks are in the process of being updated. The Town Forest kiosk has been updated. The Trails Advisory Group is working on a draft policy for motorized vehicles on trails. Ms. Peirce will begin working with the State to include the aqueduct trails into the Town trail system in 2013.

G. Spring/Summer Field Scheduling: Ms. Carey is waiting for the final spring sports schedule from the High School Athletic Director. Once she has the High School schedule she can determine what is available for youth and adult field use. A "save the date" Field Summit notice has been sent to all field user groups. The Summit will take place on Monday, January 14, 2013. Ms. Carey mentioned that Little League has now absorbed Fastpitch Softball under their umbrella to create Needham Baseball and Softball. This action has disappointed those that have been involved in Needham Girls Softball "Bird League" for many years. Greg Atkinson, President of Needham Baseball and Softball explained merging softball with baseball will enhance the existing programs by offering a developmental program for girls focusing on training the trainer and skill development. Mr. Atkinson explained that Needham Baseball reached out to Al Shapiro from Needham Girls Softball to see about joining Needham Little League. Mr. Shapiro thought about the opportunity but declined to join this year. Mr. Atkinson noted that many other towns in the area have combined baseball and softball under one umbrella. Ms. Carey asked how the new group would manage with limited field space. Mr. Atkinson stated they would use the Fast Pitch field space and space typically used by his program's baseball teams. Mrs. Chaston noted that concerns have been shared with the Park and Recreation Commission from the groups that are impacted by this programming change. Mr. Atkinson assured the Commission he would reach out to Mr. Shapiro, again. Mr. DiCicco expressed his personal disappointment on how the changes were made, especially by gathering information on the status of softball from Fastpitch and not through discussions with Needham Girls Softball. He is hopeful that Mr. Shapiro will continue to run Needham Girls Softball. Mr. Atkinson explained that the spring season focus is on participation, the summer focus is on competition and the fall focus is slightly more competitive. The Commissioners agreed that it is not the role of the Park and Recreation Commission to oversee individual sports groups but they do not appreciate the discord between the groups. Mr. Jacob noted that Summer Baseball and Little League did not work together and Summer Baseball was not flourishing. Little League created a summer league which is now thriving. Mr. Retzky would like to see all of the groups working together focusing on the best interests of all the children.

- H. Preparation for Field Scheduling Summit:** Ms. Carey requested the Commissioners send her a list of topics and any field scheduling questions for the Field Summit agenda.
- 5. Action Items**
- A. Special Event Request: Parent Talk:** Mr. Jacob made a motion to approve the special event request from Parent Talk to host a Barn Babies event on June 2, 2013 at the DeFazio tot Lot from 10:00AM-12:00PM. Mrs. Chaston seconded the motion and the motion was approved unanimously.
- B. Hillside/Mitchell Pre-Feasibility Study:** Ms. Carey shared the Concepts and Options Narrative regarding the DeFazio parking lot. Public Facilities and Dore and Whittier are currently looking at the current uses of the DeFazio parking lot to help to clarify how the options could possibly be accommodated. At the conclusion of the Commission meeting, Ms. Carey and the Commissioners will attend the Public Facilities meeting to review the DeFazio study.
- 6. Topics for Future Agendas:** none presented
- 7. Adjournment:** Mr. Jacob made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 PM. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Chaston and approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen A. Peirce, CPRP
Assistant Director