

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

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

January 24, 2014

*Background notes for Monday, January 27th
Park and Recreation Commission Agenda*

MEETING TIME

In order to attend another meeting at 5:30 PM, the Park and Recreation Commission meeting time and location have been changed. The Commission will meet at **7:30 PM** at **Town Hall** in the Highland Room, located on the lower level of Town Hall.

SIGN REQUEST

The Commission will review a request from a youth sports program to put up advertising signs for a full season at two parks. The Commission has a standing policy not permitting this use so it isn't possible to vote on the request at this time, but to begin a discussion about the policy and whether it should remain in place or be changed.

This is the current policy on signs:

Signs:

Signs, billboards or other forms of advertisement may not be placed at any park under the Park and Recreation Commission's jurisdiction or administration without a majority vote of the Park and Recreation Commission, with the exception of an area at Claxton Field as listed below. Signs can be approved for on-site activities, but may only be placed 72 hours prior to an event, and must be taken down within 72 hours after the conclusion of the event. Needham Public Schools must authorize individual requests for signs to be placed on property under its jurisdiction prior to the Commission's vote.

The Park and Recreation Commission allows signs to be placed on the Claxton Field fence near the exit to the Recycling and Transfer Station. Signs may only be placed to advertise upcoming events sponsored by Needham non-profit organization, and may be placed two weeks in advance of the event, and taken down within 72 hours of the event's conclusion. All materials used to hang the sign must be removed.

Signs, billboards or other forms of advertisement may not be placed at Memorial Park without a majority vote of the Trustees of Memorial Park. The dedicated sign boards may only be used by organizations or individuals who have received permission through the current Rules for Use, as established by the Trustees of Memorial Park.

CANADA GEESE

Handling Canada Geese is certainly an on-going issue, with no easy solutions. There is no perfect solution, so it must include several scare tactics being used at the same time. Currently, DPW Parks and Forestry is using (a) fake coyotes who get moved around to

different locations; (b) a bird “banger” – a loud noise similar to the sound of a gun; and (c) a laser pointer – which doesn't work great in full sun. A company has been hired periodically in the past to bring in a trained dog, but it is a difficult expense to continually pay. There is a dog that belongs to a Needham resident who appears to have the natural instinct to scare the geese away, so it is possible an agreement will be reached with the resident to borrow the dog for this purpose. Some trials have been done and appear successful, even on days when the dog is not with the DPW staff person, as the geese begin to associate the DPW truck with the dog. Since some of the issues with Canada Geese are at Memorial and DeFazio, we'll need to consult with the Town Manager on the use, as the current by-law does not allow dogs at either park.

PLAYGROUND MAINTENANCE

The Personnel Board approved a new position for our department, which is a part-time position with no benefits. I have adjusted some of the funding in our budget request to partially pay for the position, and also submitted a DSR-4 request for additional funds so that I could hire a person to work an average of 12 hours a week on playground maintenance projects. I'll begin the hiring process in February, so that I can have someone ready to start in March within the funding that exists in our current budget, which averages about 7 hours a week, but will discuss with the person hired the possibility of increased hours if the budget request is recommended to Town Meeting and approved.
