

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

**Minutes of Meeting
May 19, 2014**

- Present:** Cynthia J. Chaston, Chairman
David C. DiCicco, Vice Chairman
Thomas M. Jacob, Member
Michael J. Retzky, Member
Patricia M. Carey, Director
- Absent:** Matthew M. Toolan, Member – *attended PPBC meeting on behalf of Commission*
Karen A. Peirce – *attended Trail Stewards meeting*
- Guest:** Bob Cohen – resident

Mrs. Chaston called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM in the Great Plain Room at Town Hall.

- 1. Minutes of Meeting of April 30, 2014 and Minutes of Executive Session of April 7, 2014**
Mr. Retzky made a motion to accept the minutes of the April 30, 2014 meeting and the minutes of the executive session meeting of April 7, 2014. The motion was seconded by Mr. DiCicco and approved unanimously.
- 2. Director's Report**
There were no questions on the report. Ms. Carey indicated that she will not be able to attend the Commission's June 9th meeting.
- 3. Assistant Director's Report**
Ms. Peirce submitted a report in writing, as she attended the meeting of the Trails Stewards. Mr. DiCicco noted the success of the annual Fishing Derby.
- 4. Discussion Items**
 - a. Review of Town Meeting:** Mrs. Chaston noted that Town Meeting business was finished in three sessions. There were no major projects on the warrant for the Commission.
 - b. Rosemary Pool Study:** Mr. Retzky raised a concern that the Finance Committee has not been kept up-to-date on the progress of the study. Ms. Carey noted that the Finance Committee had members attend the major public meetings and had received the report information. Once a financing plan is drafted by the Town Manager and Board of Selectmen, the Finance Committee will then be a formal part of the process. Mrs. Chaston will informally discuss the project with the new chairman. The timing of the request for design money will need to be determined, as well as the funding source. If

CPC funds are involved, a request for review in the November Special Town Meeting would be needed in July.

- c. Town-Wide Facilities Study:** Mr. Toolan is attending tonight's PPBC meeting, at which public input has been sought on the priorities of the study. Ms. Carey shared a draft matrix for locating the DPW at various sites, including the current 470 Dedham Avenue, the RTS, Parcel 74 on Greendale Avenue, and a portion of the Town Forest near High Rock. Mr. Jacob suggested adding Ridge Hill/Nike to the list of possibilities. Mrs. Chaston and Ms. Carey will attend a working group meeting to review the scoring in each category.
- d. School Feasibility Study:** Ms. Carey noted that there is not an update on the MSBA process.
- e. Board of Health – Concussions:** The Commission reviewed the information from the recent survey sent to youth sports organizations. Mr. DiCicco noted that the groups were more informed about the issues related to concussions than the perception had been of their knowledge. Mrs. Chaston stated that the Commission supports the continued education of the youth organizations, coaches and families. Mr. DiCicco suggested that Park and Recreation offer an educational forum next winter.
- f. Unauthorized Use of Athletic Fields:** Ms. Carey noted that organized groups, without permits are using some of the fields, particularly Cricket and Memorial Park. She alerted the permitted groups, and some have contacted her with information. The issue will be monitored, with the hope that "sand lot" activities continue.
- g. Program Coordination with Other Town Departments:** Mr. Jacob raised the concern about Needham Public School's Community Education program continuing to add programs that were recreational based, as opposed to educationally based. Mrs. Chaston noted that the new senior center at The Center at the Heights should also be part of the discussion, so that additional programs can be offered. Mr. DiCicco has informally spoken to individual members of the Board of Selectmen about the concerns, and has been requesting information on the revenue collected by Community Education. Mr. Jacob will speak to a member of the School Committee about the duplicative efforts, to start a conversation about a resolution.
- h. Harold J.A. Street, III Trust:** Ms. Carey is not prepared to make a request to use additional funds from the donation. Mr. Jacob asked if there was additional information on the "Big Belly" trash containers. Ms. Carey said that the former RTS Superintendent had expressed a concern with them not being effective and difficult to maintain when large items similar to pizza boxes were put in the unit. She suggested that purchasing additional trash receptacles was a better use of funds. Mr. Jacob was concerned that weekend trash could not be handled, so that the compacting trash receptacles could help

with that issue, but Ms. Carey said that there were still empty trash receptacles most weekends, and large events were required to remove their trash at the end of the event.

- i. **Trail Projects:** Ms. Carey reported that the trail entrance signs had been ordered and an Eagle Scout will do the installation on the Rosemary trails this spring. Mr. Jacob believes that some planting was done along the trail at 170 Nehoiden Street, which was an agreement to resolve an encroachment issue. Ms. Carey will check on the property.

5. Action Items

- a. **Little Free Library Boxes:** Ms. Carey noted that the Board of Selectmen would make the formal decision for placement of a library box at Greene's Field, but would like the input of the Commission. Minuteman students built the boxes and Needham residents will paint them. Mr. Retzky made a motion to support the placement of a Little Free Library Box at Greene's Field, under the supervision of the Library Foundation of Needham. Mr. DiCicco seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.
- b. **Addendum to Soccer Club Special Event Request:** The Needham Soccer Club has made a request to allow the Lt. Manson H. Carter VFW Post #2498 to distribute poppies at DeFazio Park during the Memorial Day Weekend Soccer Tournament, to honor those who sacrificed their lives on behalf of the country. Many recipients of the poppies will also make donations to the Post that would directly benefit local veterans and their families. Ms. Carey explained that the Soccer Club and Post had informally agreed to the poppy event, but she asked them to follow the formal process for approval. Needham resident Bob Cohen expressed his concern that allowing an organization to collect donations when not directly related to the activities at the park would create a situation where more organizations use DeFazio Park as a fundraising site. As a member of the Post, Mr. Cohen felt that the project was promoted by a few members of the Post and not the general membership. The consensus of the Commission was that the activity was appropriate during Memorial Day weekend as a sign of respect. Mr. Jacob made a motion to approve the request of the Needham Soccer Club to invite Lt. Manson H. Carter VFW Post #2498 to distribute poppies at the Memorial Day Weekend Tournament at DeFazio Park on May 24-25, 2014, with the understanding that any donations made would be to support local veterans and their families. The motion was seconded by Mr. Retzky and was passed unanimously.

6. **Topics for Future Agendas:** Mrs. Chaston asked that the majority of agenda items be continued on the next agenda. She asked if there were funds to purchase the picnic tables for Greene's Field. Ms. Carey said there was sufficient funding remaining. Mrs. Chaston asked if there had been a resolution to a safety concern at Walker-Gordon raised by Needham Baseball and Softball. Ms. Carey noted that DPW Parks and Forestry had already agreed to paint a warning line on the field, and Needham Baseball and Softball was researching a temporary lightweight fence panel. Mr. Jacob stated his concern with the phrasing of a Town Meeting member who was looking to recommend increased funding for DPW Parks and Forestry. The wording seemed to indicate that the condition of all athletic fields was poor, but Mr. Jacob

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wanted to have it publicly noted that the statement did not reflect the actual condition of the athletic fields, nor did it reflect the capital investments made by the Town in recent years.

- 7. Adjournment of Meeting:** Mr. Retzky made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 PM and the motion was seconded by Mr. DiCicco. The motion was approved and the meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia M. Carey, CPRP
Director