

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

**Minutes of Meeting
July 14, 2014**

PRESENT: Cynthia J. Chaston, Chairman
Thomas M. Jacob, Member
Michael J. Retzky, Member
Matthew M. Toolan, Member
Patricia M. Carey, Director

ABSENT: David C. DiCicco, Vice-Chairman

GUESTS: Janet Jankowiak, YMCA Board Member
Connie Kaufman, YMCA Board Member
Nancy Sterling, Community Center of Needham

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

- 1. Minutes of Meetings - June 9, 2014 and June 23, 2014:** Ms. Carey will correct the attendance listing on the 6/23 minutes. Mr. Retzky made a motion to accept the minutes of the June 9, 2014 meeting and it was seconded by Mr. Jacob and passed unanimously. Mr. Jacob made a motion to accept the minutes of the June 23, 2014 meeting and it was seconded by Mr. Toolan and passed unanimously.
- 2. Director's Report** – No additional comments were presented.
- 3. Program Report** – Ms. Carey will provide updates on Park and Recreation programs under this new title. She noted that the start of the summer has been successful. She is working with the Administrative Specialist and Recreation Supervisor on the fall brochure and will have a request to ratify program fees at the next Commission meeting.
- 4. Discussion Items**
 - A. Town-Wide Facilities Study:** Mr. Toolan updated the Commission on the discussions at the most recent working group meeting. The DPW is being studied for placement on several sites, but the Commission's Parcel 74 on Greendale Avenue seems to be preferred by many. Mr. Toolan noted that there is a new set-back required from Route 128 which impacts how buildings can be situated on the property. If Park and Recreation supported the transfer of the parcel, an equivalent amount of open space would need to be placed under the Commission's jurisdiction. He suggested that the members begin thinking of parcels of value, as there would likely be other options that might require jurisdictional changes from the study. The total acreage does not have to be at one location. Mr. Toolan also stated that it appears that most options require that at least a temporary school be located in the DeFazio parking lot. This might necessitate moving the DPW in upcoming

years, to allow space on the site for a school. The location of a “community center” has also been discussed. The concept could be Town-owned, privately owned, or a public-private option. A Town-owned facility would not likely be built for ten or more years, but a public-private option could happen earlier. The Commission also reviewed information from Needham Youth Hockey with a concept for building an ice rink, possibly as a public-private project. Ms. Carey noted that both the request from the YMCA and Needham Youth Hockey are under discussion with the Facilities Working Group. Mr. Jacob stated that it will be a challenge to evaluate competing private requests for public land. Mrs. Chaston noted that the results of the Facilities Study are needed before the Commission can evaluate any options.

- B. NSTAR Vegetation Removal Notification:** Ms. Carey noted that NSTAR recently had to do some emergency removal of trees at DeFazio as they were creating sparks with the wires. The work was done in coordination with DPW Parks and Forestry, there was no damage to the park, and the youth sports programs scheduled were able to continue with their practices during the removal.
- C. School Feasibility Study:** Ms. Carey did not have an update. She has heard there has been some discussion about MSBA discussing the Hillside project at their September meeting.
- D. Harold J. A. Street, III Trust:** No new information available.
- E. Trail Projects:** Ms. Carey reported that one of the new easement signs for the Rosemary trail was cut down, possibly by the homeowner. Ms. Carey will investigate further. For the fall brochure, she has reached out to the trail stewards to see if any are willing to sponsor walks along the trails that they oversee, so that the “Take a Hike” free program can continue.
- F. Rosemary Pool Project:** Ms. Carey did not have additional information. Mrs. Chaston may reach out to the Town Manager for an update on the development of the financing plan for the pool project.
- G. Newman/Eastman Conservation Project:** Ms. Carey will meet with Weston & Sampson this week, with the Newman Assistant Principal, the Needham High Athletic Director and DPW Parks and Forestry Superintendent to get more detailed input on design concepts for the school. Within a few weeks, a working session will be held with community groups to get their input, using concepts that work for the Newman School as a base.

5. Action Items

- A. Special Event Request – YMCA:** Ms. Carey shared a request from the Charles River YMCA to host a YMCA Fun Day at Greene’s Field on August 23, 2014. Ms. Carey, and DPW Parks and Forestry Superintendent Ed Olsen, have expressed concern with the size of

the event on a field that is still in the early stages of growth, particularly as the two groups with permits have been asked to limit the heavy use of the field during these initial years. As the event also includes use of the YMCA building, their hope is to hold the event at Greene's Field rather than at another site, so Ms. Carey would ask that the outside use plan be adapted to reduce the heavy use of the park. There have been issues in the past with similar events with noise from the Radio Disney set-up. The consensus was that the YMCA should look at adapting their program to a different site or submit a revised plan that has less impact on Greene's Field.

B. Special Event Request: Charles River Center: The Commission reviewed the request from the Charles River Center to hold the annual Ellie Bloom Special Olympics at DeFazio Park track, Conroy Field and the Pavilion on Saturday, September 20, 2014. Ms. Carey said that there have not been any issues with this annual program. Mr. Jacob made a motion to approve the request of the Charles River Center to hold the annual Ellie Bloom Olympics at DeFazio Park on Saturday, September 20, 2014. Mr. Retzky seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

C. Request – North Hill Parking: Mrs. Chaston reminded the Commission that they had discussed this request at the June 9th meeting, but Ms. Carey wasn't present, so hadn't been given the questions to get answers to for the Commission's response. Mr. Retzky asked for the dates of use to be put into the request, time of use, and what tasks were being undertaken in lieu of a rental fee.

6. Topics for Future Agendas: Mrs. Chaston asked for the anticipated date for the annual thank you event for the staff. Ms. Carey indicated it would be Monday, August 11, after the Commission's meeting.

7. Adjournment of Meeting: Mr. Toolan made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 PM and it was seconded by Mr. Jacob. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia M. Carey, CPRP
Director