

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

**Minutes of Meeting
October 20, 2014**

- PRESENT:** Cynthia J. Chaston, Chairman
David C. DiCicco, Vice Chairman
Thomas M. Jacob, Member
Matthew M. Toolan, Member
Patricia M. Carey, Director
- ABSENT:** Michael J. Retzky, Member
- GUESTS:** Kate Fitzpatrick, Town Manager
Christopher Coleman, Assistant Town Manager
Janet Jankowiak, YMCA Board Member

Mrs. Chaston called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM in the Charles River Room at the Public Services Administration Building.

- 1. Minutes of Meeting – October 6, 2014:** Mr. DiCicco made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 22, 2014 meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Toolan and was approved unanimously.
- 2. Director’s Report:** The Commission reviewed the written report. Ms. Carey noted that the Rail Trail plan will be discussed at the next Selectmen’s meeting. There was one abutter at a recent public meeting who has raised objections to the pedestrian path being created, so he may speak at the Selectmen’s meeting. Mr. Toolan stated that he would attend the PPBC meeting on November 10th to represent the Commission at the public meeting on the Facilities Study. Mrs. Chaston invited the members to attend a reception in memory of former Town Moderator Dick Melick prior to the start of Special Town Meeting on October 27th.
- 3. Program Report:** Ms. Carey provided a written report with information on the instructors for Senior Exercise and Ice Skating. She provided copies of the “treat” that Park and Recreation gave to participants on the Spooky Walk, created by Administrative Specialist Kristen Wright. She also provided copies of the training manual for skating instructors, as an example of the framework provided to staff for all programs.
- 4. Discussion Items**
 - a. Board of Health Concussion Study:** Mr. DiCicco attended the recent Board of Health meeting, as did a representative of the Needham Soccer Club. He explained to the

Board of Health that the Park and Recreation Commission was in full support of the education efforts on concussions, but not of the process of fining organizations not following the by-law. Mr. DiCicco feels that the primary steps that the Board of Health would want to be required by all groups is that all coaches go through the CDC on-line training and require a doctor's note in order for a participant to return to play after a concussion. Mr. DiCicco recommended planning a training session for leagues, with some medical professionals who specialize in concussions. He will reach out to Dr. Stern from Boston University to see if something can be put together for the winter. Ms. Carey will help coordinate the location and invitations to sports leagues and parents.

- b. Trash in Parks:** Mrs. Chaston and Mr. DiCicco took a tour of parks with Parks and Forestry Superintendent Ed Olsen. Both commented on how nice Walker-Gordon looked following its recent renovation. Most parks did not have a lot of trash, and Ms. Carey commended Needham Junior Football and Needham Baseball and Softball for the clean-ups from their games/special events over the long weekend. Mrs. Chaston noted there was trash along the Highland Avenue side of Memorial Park that had come from products purchased at stores across the street. Mrs. Chaston and Mr. DiCicco both believe that more barrels are needed at parks, and in particular one should be added on Highland Avenue at Memorial Park. They both supported Mr. Olsen's concept for having the Town hire a part-time person to visit parks to pick up trash and go to complaint areas each week.
- c. Review of Special Town Meeting Warrant:** The Commission reviewed the warrant.
- d. Commission Goals Reports:** Mrs. Chaston stated that this item would be on each agenda, giving the Commission an opportunity to give brief updates on any of their goals, if the topic isn't a specific agenda item.
- e. School Feasibility Study:** No update was provided.
- f. Harold J.A. Street, III Trust:** There was no update on the topic. Ms. Carey noted that the purchase of some covered trash barrels at parks could assist with the improper use by some for private trash.
- g. Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick:** Mrs. Chaston welcomed Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick and Assistant Town Manager Christopher Coleman. Ms. Fitzpatrick reviewed a list of projects that the Town has accomplished with the Commission and/or for recreation services in Needham. She highlighted the purchases of property, including the addition to Walker-Gordon parcel. Ms. Fitzpatrick and the Commission agreed that the park was well built and is an improvement to the neighborhood. The Commission transferred a parcel of land along Rosemary Brook to the Conservation Commission as part of the exchange of property that included the change in jurisdiction of Avery, Dwight and Perry to the Commission. Members of the Commission, Ms.

Carey and Rep. Garlick worked hard to promote the change in wording in the CPA legislation that allows for more uses for recreation funds. Greene's Field was one of the first projects done under the new eligibility and along with the support of residents for the playground, it has been another successful project. Mr. Jacob asked if there was consideration for moving the jurisdiction of Greene's Field under the Commission, and Ms. Fitzpatrick noted it was on a list for discussion. The Athletic Facility Fund was created and has more than \$900,000 raised, which was its target, but Ms. Fitzpatrick would like to speak to the Selectmen about increasing the goal. She thanked the Commission for raising the Field Maintenance fee which is assisting with meeting the maintenance goals of Parks and Forestry, along with some additional operating budget funds. The dog park has recently opened, with the support of an active group of volunteers. The Center at the Heights opened last year, and will be a place for additional programming in the future. The Park and Recreation Department budget was increased for the hiring of a part-time playground maintenance specialist and some expenses for playground maintenance. Ms. Fitzpatrick would like to host a collaborative meeting between various Town boards and departments on programming to determine how best to support each other and not duplicate efforts. Mrs. Chaston noted that she had reached out to the Council on Aging. Mr. Toolan would like to know what is needed, and what needs are not being met. Ms. Fitzpatrick asked the Commission to determine which option would give the department dedicated year-round programming space, mentioning options that included the Cricket building, the pool bathhouse, Ridge Hill, a rebuilt Memorial Park building, or if an agreement was reached, the YMCA building on Great Plain Avenue. Mrs. Chaston stated that the Commission believes that the pool project moving forward is vital, and Mr. DiCicco noted that having year-round opportunities indoors and outdoors at the site was important. Mrs. Chaston would like to consider having year-round indoor space at both Cricket and the pool bathhouse.

- h. Town-Wide Facilities Study:** Mr. Toolan reminded the Commission about the meeting on Wednesday night with other boards to review the draft master plan. Questions he asked them to consider, include: (a) How do jurisdictions change? (b) How realistic are the projects over a ten year span? (c) How realistic is the timeline? (d) What is Park and Recreation's best scenario for the use of Parcel 74?
- i. Rosemary Pool Project:** No update was provided.
- j. Newman/Eastman Conservation Project:** Mr. DiCicco stated that the study was not complete without having information about the cost of the installation of athletic field lights, even if current user groups did not have interest in using lights. He will contact the project manager Ed Olsen.

5. Action Items

- a. None Presented:**

- 6. Topics for Future Agendas:** Mrs. Chaston would like to have the discussion about future programming space on the next agenda.
- 7. Adjournment of Meeting:** Mr. Jacob made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 PM and the motion was seconded by Mr. Toolan. The meeting adjourned at 9:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia M. Carey, CPRP
Director