

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

**Minutes of Meeting
November 24, 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
Matt attended the PPBC meeting, representing the Commission
- GUESTS:** Dan Shapiro, Cricket neighbor
Connie Kaufman, YMCA Board
Katy Dirks, Community Center of Needham

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 – November 10, 2014:** Mr. DiCicco made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 10, 2014 meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Jacob. Mrs. Chaston asked that the next agenda include a discussion on the possible trash program. She also asked if there was a payment plan for the Soccer Club fee. Mr. Jacob explained that the check would be sent in as one payment. The motion was approved unanimously.
- 2. Director's Report:** The Commission reviewed the written report. Ms. Carey reminded the Commission that they would be moving into Executive Session, under Exception 6, at the conclusion of the regular meeting.
- 3. Program Report:** Ms. Carey provided a written report. She noted that the annual Turkey Hunt was a success, and that Recreation Supervisor Brendan Croak and Administrative Specialist Kristen Wright did a great job putting together a fun program. Mrs. Chaston visited with Mr. Croak and Ms. Wright while they were putting together the program and noted their excitement.
- 4. Discussion Items**
 - a. School Feasibility Study:** Since the last Commission meeting, the Finance Committee Chairman has notified the Commission that a FinCom member intends to make a motion to include Cricket Field within the feasibility study for the Hillside School. Mrs. Chaston has spoken to the FinCom Chairman who explained that residents should be able to see the costs related to building at Cricket, as opposed to building at DeFazio and moving DPW to accommodate the school at DeFazio. He stated that FinCom was looking at the financial implications, and he felt that there was a major cost savings with the use of Cricket Field.

Ms. Carey provided an initial draft of a letter that could possibly be sent to the FinCom prior to their December 3rd meeting. Mrs. Chaston does not believe the cost savings are as high as some on FinCom may believe, as there are still major costs for DPW whether they are moved to another site or not, and costs related to Hillside demolition and the rebuilding of the athletic fields. Mr. DiCicco felt that members of the FinCom should understand that it would be difficult to pass an override with a Cricket Field school site option included. He would like FinCom to understand the impact on athletic fields, and feels the Selectmen should state their objections to including Cricket Field on the study. Mr. Jacob stated that a site under School Committee jurisdiction should be considered. He noted that the MSBA Director is aware that Cricket Field is not an option, and that if there is controversy, the MSBA will likely move forward to other needed projects. Mr. Retzky would like Town Counsel input on whether other Town boards can vote to include Cricket in any study without the permission of the Park and Recreation Commission. He would also like Town Counsel to review the Commission's votes to insure they cannot be overruled by another Town board. Cricket neighbor Dan Shapiro stated that continuing the discussion on use of Cricket would delay the project, and possibly jeopardize MSBA funding or passage of an override due to the conflict. He asked if studying Cricket was possible with Town funding, after the Commission had voted that it was not to be included in a school site study. Katy Dirks from Community Center of Needham asked if a temporary school at Nike Site could then be used as the future YMCA facility. Ms. Carey noted that it will be more than 10 years before the final use of a temporary school is completed, which is far longer than the YMCA hopes to wait until they have a new facility. Mrs. Chaston will finalize the letter to the Finance Committee and copies will be sent to the Board of Selectmen, School Committee and PSAB. She will also be speaking at the Needham Heights Association on December 1st, and anticipates there might be some questions from proponents and opponents of the use of Cricket Field as a school site.

- b. Town-Wide Facilities Study:** Mr. Toolan is representing the Commission at tonight's PPBC public meeting on the study.
- c. Joint Field Scheduling Policy:** Mr. DiCicco stated that Trustee of Memorial Park Jim Healy has asked for two representatives from the Commission to attend the December 17th Trustees' meeting. Mr. Healy would prefer not to have a joint meeting at this time. The Town Manager will also be attending the meeting that night. Mrs. Chaston and Mr. Retzky will attend, and if Mr. Retzky has a conflict, Mr. DiCicco is available to attend in his place.
- d. Trails Projects:** Ms. Carey reported that the Conservation Commission held a public hearing on the sections of the proposed rail trail under their permitting authority. They have determined that permits are not required, and that the Conservation Director can work with DPW and the contractor under a set of conditions that will insure the safety of adjacent wetlands. Ms. Carey and other Town staff has met with staff from the Walker School to discuss their concerns related to safety and privacy. The Town Manager is submitting a funding application to CPC in the event that there are not enough funds for the project. Bay Colony Rail Trail Association has raised \$115,000 for construction, and the state is providing \$70,000. BCRTA also has raised \$50,000 for abutter mitigation.

Ms. Carey will attend a Board of Selectmen public hearing on November 25th on the possible submission of a permit to MWRA for use of the Sudbury Aqueduct as a pedestrian trail. More than 200 abutters were notified of the hearing. Mr. DiCicco asked if the Commission could take a position on any CPC applications. Ms. Carey said that Mr. Retzky represents the Commission on the CPC and can forward comments or official standings of the Commission.

- e. **FY'16 Operating and Capital Budgets:** Ms. Carey recently met with Selectman Matt Borrelli, Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick, and Conservation Director Matt Varrell at the current canoe launch on South Street, under the jurisdiction of the Park and Recreation Commission. The Selectmen would like to support improvements to the site, and would like to have an application for design submitted to CPC. The Commission will review the draft application and take a vote at their next meeting on whether to support the application. Superintendent Dan Gutekanst has requested that the CPC application for the Eastman Conservation area be submitted, in addition to the one for Newman athletic fields. The Commission also reviewed a draft application for the purchase of land. This is a place-holder submitted each year in the event a parcel becomes available.
- f. **Rosemary Pool Project:** Conservation Director Matt Varrell, at a recent meeting with Mrs. Chaston and Ms. Carey, noted that he has reviewed permitting documents for Rosemary Pool and believes the final date on the permit is September 2016. He will continue to review to determine how the former Conservation Director had given the 2018 date. The CPC application is submitted.
- g. **Newman/Eastman Conservation Project:** As noted earlier, the School Committee will submit the CPC application for the Eastman part of the project.
- h. **Board of Health Concussion Study:** Mr. DiCicco continues to reach-out to speakers for a late January concussion awareness event for coaches and parents. The date is to be determined, but Ms. Carey will place a brief announcement in the Winter/Spring brochure. Mr. DiCicco may look to have it set-up so that people in attendance can take the CDC on-line test. Mr. DiCicco will try to attend the next Board of Health meeting to discuss the outline of the evening.
- i. **Commission Goals Reports:** Most goals were discussed as part of prior agenda items this evening.
- j. **Harold J. A. Street, III Trust:** No updates, provided.

5. Action Items

- a. **Set Additional Winter/Spring Program Fees:** Mr. Jacob made a motion to approve the request of the Director to charge \$35 per class for the Glass Arts and More program and \$98 for a four day session of archery lessons during April vacation week. The motion was seconded by Mr. Retzky. Mr. DiCicco asked for the breakdown for the Glass Arts

program. Ms. Carey stated that \$25 would go to the program, \$5 would go to the General Fund, and \$5 would help cover department costs through the Revolving Fund. The motion was approved.

- b. **CPC Request - Cricket Building:** Mr. Jacob noted that the Commission had discussed this at the last meeting, including the request from the Town Manager to hold off on submitting, due to the number of requests going to CPC this year. The Town Manager has asked other Town departments to work with Ms. Carey on short-term projects to keep the building safe. Mr. Jacob initially felt it should move forward, but in light of the current discussions related to Cricket Field, he now feels it should wait. Mr. Retzky stated that FinCom should be made aware of the Commission's plans for the Cricket building, but that he supported waiting to submit the request. Mr. DiCicco is concerned with the estimate for the Cricket building, and would prefer to wait, so that the Newman athletic fields project would not be jeopardized. By consensus, the Commission decided not to make the request for the Cricket building on December 1st.
6. **Topics for Future Agendas:** Mrs. Chaston would like the Commission to discuss the possible project for keeping trash off of the parks, and a vote will be taken on whether to support the CPC application for design of the canoe launch improvements. Mrs. Chaston noted that she had participated in the 2nd round of interviews for Assistant Director with Ms. Carey, Conservation Director Matt Varrell and Natick Recreation and Parks Director Jon Marshall, meeting with four qualified candidates with different backgrounds and personalities. She stated she felt comfortable with any of the four candidates becoming the Assistant Director. Mr. DiCicco was upset that Mrs. Chaston had not been involved for the whole process as he feels that there have been problems with how staff has been treated by the Director for two years. Mr. DiCicco expressed his disappointment in a requested meeting with the Town Manager's office. At that meeting with the Assistant Town Manager, Mr. DiCicco requested a performance evaluation of the Park and Recreation Director and exit interviews of all the office employees that left Park and Recreation in the past two years.
 7. **Adjournment of Meeting:** Mr. Jacob made a motion to move into Executive Session under Exception 6 – to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property, and not to return to regular session at the conclusion of the Executive Session. The motion was seconded by Mr. Retzky. Mrs. Chaston polled the Commission, and Mr. Retzky, Mr. DiCicco, Mr. Jacob and Mrs. Chaston voted yes. The regular meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM and the Commission moved into Executive Session.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia M. Carey, CPRP
Director