

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

**Minutes of Meeting
January 12, 2015**

- 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:** Robyn Fink, Assistant Director
Brendan Croak, Recreation Supervisor
Christopher Coleman, Assistant Town Manager
Chris Gerstel, Needham Resident
Micah Hauben, NHS Athletic Director
John Gallelo, Chairman, Trustees of Memorial Park & American Legion Baseball
YMCA Board: Janet Jankowiak, Connie Kaufman
Community Center of Needham: Katy Dirks
Needham Track Club: John Hrones, Michelle Geddes
Temple Aliyah Men's Softball: Robert Brown
Temple Beth Shalom Men's Softball: Eric Goldstein
Needham Baseball and Softball: Bill Monahan
Needham Soccer Club: Mark Miskin, Sabatino Sodano
Charles River YMCA: Sheri Kovalchek, Marcus Nelson
Needham Girls Lacrosse: Beth Putnam, Steve Hoffman
Needham Boys Lacrosse: John Barker
Needham Adult Frisbee: Bill Gallagher, John Roefaro
Needham Summer Baseball: Jeremy Moore

Mrs. Chaston called the meeting to order at 6:38 PM in the Charles River Room at the Public Services Administration Building. Mrs. Chaston welcomed Assistant Director Robyn Fink and Recreation Supervisor Brendan Croak to the Park and Recreation staff and offered the support of the Commission to them. Ms. Fink and Mr. Croak left the meeting to attend a meeting with the school support group for parents of children with special needs to discuss summer recreation opportunities.

- 1. Minutes of Meetings – November 24, 2014, November 24, 2014 Executive Session, December 8, 2014:** Mr. Jacob made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 24, 2014 meeting, the November 24, 2014 Executive Session, and the December 8, 2014 meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. DiCicco. Mr. DiCicco made a motion to amend the November 24, 2014 minutes adding the following text to Topics for Future Agendas, “Mr. DiCicco expressed his disappointment in a requested meeting with the Town Managers office. At that meeting with the Assistant Town Manager, Mr. DiCicco requested a performance evaluation of the Park & Rec Director and exit interviews of all the office employees that left Park & Rec in the past two years.” The motion was seconded by Mr. Jacob. Assistant Town Manager Christopher Coleman asked to respond, and stated that personnel records are not available for public record. The Town doesn't have a policy for formal exit interviews and doesn't go back to past employees to do exit

interviews. He will review the possibility of a formal exit interview policy. The motion to amend the November 24, 2014 minutes was approved unanimously, and the motion to approve the November 24, 2014 amended minutes, the November 24, 2014 Executive Session minutes, and the December 8, 2014 minutes was approved unanimously.

2. **Director's Report:** The Commission reviewed the written report. Ms. Carey explained that the next two agendas would have a request from the Soccer Club to have a one hour extension for use of athletic field lights for one night of the Memorial Day Tournament. The Commission can vote whether to approve or not at the second meeting after a discussion, or at a subsequent meeting. If approved, the vote would be forwarded to the Board of Selectmen for their support, under the permit requirements for athletic field lights.
3. **Program Report:** Ms. Carey provided written information on winter program registrations. Mrs. Chaston noted that the Town Manager has scheduled a meeting with Town departments/boards who oversee programs, including Park and Recreation, School Department, Youth Services, Health Department, Library and Council on Aging. The purpose is to review where there might be duplications or conflicts.
4. **Discussion Items**
 - a. **Town-Wide Facilities Study:** Mr. Toolan attended the PPBC's public hearing on the Facilities Study in December. The final report is being drafted and will be completed within the next month. Mr. Toolan noted that some concerns about Cricket Field were raised during the hearing. He recommended that the Commission continue to talk with other boards about the importance of the projects supported by the Commission.
 - b. **FY'16 Operating and Capital Budgets:** Mrs. Chaston and Ms. Carey met with Finance Committee Liaison Lisa Zappala and then presented the budget to the Finance Committee. The discussion was limited to the operating budget, and there were no major concerns.
 - c. **Community Preservation Projects:** The projects are currently under review. Mrs. Chaston suggested talking with members, including the liaisons, during the review process. Ms. Carey will provide the list of liaisons.
 - d. **Trails Projects:** There will be a public input session on Thursday, January 15 at 7 PM for the Reservoir Trail design. Mr. DiCicco indicated he would attend. The MWRA permit has been submitted requesting use of the Aqueduct for a trail. The RFP is drafted for the rail trail project, and is nearing completion. The Bay Colony Rail Trail Association has donated \$115,000 for the project, along with the state's contribution of \$70,000.
 - e. **Memorial Park Trustees:** The Commission viewed notes from the recent meeting of the Trustees attended by Mrs. Chaston and Mr. Retzky. Mrs. Chaston suggested that the boards try to meet together at least once a year to discuss any scheduling issues. She asked Ms. Carey to continue to send information regarding Memorial Park scheduling in advance of the final document. The Trustees would like to consider a change in the time frames for using athletic field lights, which would require the Trustees meeting with the ZBA for a

change in the Memorial Park permit. Mr. DiCicco noted the Trustees have expressed concerns about lights being left on when not in use, and noted individual incidents of lights not being on one night, and a group having to return to finish a game as the lights went out at 9 PM. Assistant Town Manager Christopher Coleman noted that he and the Town Manager also met with the Trustees, and are reviewing several requests, including how to handle emergencies if lights are needed.

5. Action Items

- a. **School Feasibility Study – Study of DeFazio:** Mrs. Chaston stated that DeFazio Park is held under the jurisdiction of the Board of Selectmen, the School Committee and the Park and Recreation Commission. Mr. Jacob made a motion to support the Chairman of the Park and Recreation Commission signing the resolution that states, “It is hereby resolved by the Board of Selectmen, School Committee and Park and Recreation Commission that the Permanent Public Building Committee is authorized to include the DeFazio Field Complex in the Hillside School Feasibility Study as a potential school site.” The motion was seconded by Mr. Toolan. Mr. Jacob referenced a recent article in the Needham Times that suggested some members of the School Committee were upset that a formal process was now required to study parcels of land for building projects. Mr. Jacob agreed that the process had been done informally in the past, noting that the committee studying senior center sites as an example. That committee approached the School Committee to see if there was an objection to studying DeFazio Park as a site for the senior center, and chose not to pursue the site when objections were raised by the School Committee. The informal process was not followed for the study of Cricket Field, so the process has now been formalized. The Commission voted, unanimously, to approve the motion.
- b. **Soccer Club Special Event Requests:** Mr. Toolan made a motion to approve the request of the Needham Soccer Club to host the annual Memorial Day Weekend Soccer Tournament on May 22 – May 25, 2015 at DeFazio, Cricket, High Rock and Pollard. The motion was seconded by Mr. Jacob. Mrs. Chaston reminded the Commission that the agreed upon fee would be \$15,000. The motion was approved unanimously. Mr. DiCicco made a motion to approve the request of the Needham Soccer Club to host summer clinics on August 10-13 and August 16-19, 2015 at DeFazio Park. The motion was seconded by Mr. Toolan and was passed unanimously.
- c. **Needham Baseball and Softball Special Event Requests:** Mr. Jacob made a motion to approve the request of Needham Baseball and Softball to host Opening Day on Sunday, May 3, 2015, with a raindate of Saturday, May 9, 2015 at Greene’s Field and DeFazio Park. The motion was seconded by Mr. Toolan and passed unanimously. Mr. Jacob made a motion to approve the request of Needham Baseball and Softball to host baseball and softball clinics for participants in the Kindergarten/First Grade/ and Single A programs at Mitchell and Broadmeadow on April 6-10, 11-12, 15-16, 27-30, May 1-3, and 17, 2015. The motion was seconded by Mr. Toolan and was passed unanimously. Mr. Toolan made a motion to approve the request of Needham Baseball and Softball to host a Coaches Challenge on May 31, 2015 at DeFazio Park. The motion was seconded by Mr. DiCicco and approved unanimously. Mr. DiCicco made a motion to approve the request of

Needham Baseball and Softball to host Williamsport Games for District 3 on June 27, 28, 30, July 1, 5, 7 and 8, 2015 at DeFazio Park. The motion was seconded by Mr. Jacob and approved unanimously. Mr. Jacob made a motion to approve the request of Needham Baseball and Softball to host a softball clinic at Claxton Field on August 24-27, 2015. The motion was seconded by Mr. Toolan. Mr. DiCicco asked if a fee was charged. Needham Baseball and Softball representative Bill Monahan explained it was part of the in-season training. Mr. DiCicco asked if the clinic conflicted with Junior Football use. Ms. Carey stated that Junior Football did not use Claxton in August, as they were primarily at Memorial Park with Broadmeadow as a secondary site. The motion was approved unanimously.

- d. **Bay State Football Special Event Request:** Mr. DiCicco made a motion to approve the request of Bay State Football to host a clinic on August 20-22, 2015 at DeFazio Park. The motion was seconded by Mr. Jacob. Ms. Carey noted that this is a regional program, and that they pay the clinic fees. Mr. DiCicco noted the benefits to members of Needham High's football teams. The motion was approved unanimously.
 - e. **Parent Talk Special Event Request:** Mr. DiCicco made a motion to approve the request of Parent Talk to host a Barn Babies event at the DeFazio tot-lot on May 31, 2015. The motion was seconded by Mr. Jacob and approved unanimously.
 - f. **7:30 PM Field Scheduling Summit:** separate meeting notes were taken at the field scheduling summit, held immediately after the adjournment of the Commission meeting.
6. **Topics for Future Agendas:** Mr. DiCicco recognized the donation of \$300 from Norfolk Lodge for scholarships. Ms. Carey noted that Norfolk Lodge makes this type of donation every few years. The pool project and the programming meeting will be on future agendas.
 7. **Adjournment of Meeting:** Mr. DiCicco made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 PM. Mr. Toolan seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 7:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia M. Carey, CPRP
Director

**PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION
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**Field Scheduling Summit
January 12, 2015**

The Park and Recreation Commission hosted the annual Field Scheduling Summit. Chairman Cindy Chaston welcomed the representatives of the organizations requesting field space. She introduced the members of the Commission, and explained that the annual summit meeting had been created to give groups an opportunity to meet and work together. She congratulated the organizations for their efforts at working collaboratively.

Commissioner Dave DiCicco updated the organizations on the work being done on concussion awareness. He is hoping to organize an event this winter at Town Hall to provide information. He has met with the Board of Health who is looking to formalize the education process, and require a doctor's note before an athlete can return to play.

Director Patty Carey explained that the Trustees of Memorial Park are considering requesting a change of the athletic field lights permit under the Zoning Board of Appeals. They would like to consider extending the time on some nights of use. Ms. Carey asked if any groups had input to share.

John Sullivan spoke on behalf of Needham Junior Football. He explained that the most challenging nights are their Saturday game days. It can be difficult fitting in the full game schedule prior to 9 PM, so being able to schedule until about 9:30 PM would be helpful. Ms. Carey reminded groups of the Special Event process allowed under the permit. Needham Junior Football can submit a request, in writing, to the Trustees as part of their special event request. She suggested asking to schedule the lights until 10 PM on those specific game nights, so that they could finish their games and turn the lights off as soon as done. The Trustees would need to have a discussion at two separate meetings prior to voting on the request. If they approved, the request would then go to the Board of Selectmen for their approval.

Mark Miskin spoke on behalf of the Needham Soccer Club. It is difficult for the teams using the fields from 7:30 – 9:00 PM to get in their full practice, as they need to leave the field prior to 9 PM. An additional 15 minutes would give them a full practice time. Needham Baseball and Softball agreed that it could be viewed as some additional minutes for safety. Ms. Carey felt that a fifteen minute extension would need to be discussed with the ZBA.

John Gallelo spoke on behalf of the Memorial Park Trustees. Currently, lights can remain on until 10 PM at Memorial Park on Friday nights, and the Trustees would like to allow for that extension on Thursday and Saturday nights. One group that would utilize the extended time is American Legion Baseball for games or post-season play. Ms. Carey suggested that the specific game nights, and the suggested post-season game season could be submitted as a written special event waiver request to the Trustees. The post-season would not have specific dates, but those could be provided in writing once they were known they were needed.

Commissioner Tom Jacob reviewed some of the projects that the Town had funded on athletic fields, and acknowledged the support of Town Meeting and Town boards for these projects, and others currently being prepared for funding requests. Mr. DiCicco also commended the Town Manager for her recommendation to create an athletic field improvement fund, primarily to be used to replace the synthetic turf cover. The fund has more than \$900,000 at this time.

Ms. Carey reviewed the projects that had been done at each field, and those that are currently waiting for funding and scheduling. Ms. Carey reviewed the collaboration that is needed in order to maintain safe athletic fields. The Park and Recreation Department needs to control the scheduling, insuring that fields are not overburdened. The organizations need to set up practices and games to lessen the burden on the fields. DPW Parks and Forestry Division needs to do regular maintenance and construct fields to withstand heavy usage.

Ms. Carey reminded groups to read all information on the website related to permits, and insure that all special events and field request information is submitted by the deadlines.

The participants split into small groups to discuss scheduling issues.