

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

**Minutes of Meeting
February 23, 2015**

- PRESENT:** David C. DiCicco, Vice Chairman
Thomas M. Jacob, Member
Michael J. Retzky, Member
Matthew M. Toolan, Member
Patricia M. Carey, Director
- ABSENT:** Cynthia J. Chaston, Chairman
- GUESTS:** Chris Gerstel, Candidate for Park and Recreation Commission
YMCA Board: Connie Kaufman
Community Center of Needham: Katy Dirks, Jo-Anne Ochalla

Mr. DiCicco called the meeting to order at 7:07 PM in the Charles River Room at the Public Services Administration Building. He noted that the Commission's meetings on January 26 and February 9 had been cancelled due to weather conditions, so all business from those meeting agendas would be covered at this evening's meeting.

1. **Minutes of Meeting – January 12, 2015:** Mr. Jacob made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 12, 2015 meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Toolan and the minutes were approved unanimously.
2. **Director's Report:** The Commission reviewed the written reports for the 1/26, 2/9 and 2/23 meetings.
3. **Program Report:** Ms. Carey provided written information from Assistant Director Robyn Fink and Recreation Supervisor Brendan Croak outlining the current registration information for programs. She noted that the vacation week programs had been successful. Mr. Retzky asked if refunds were provided for individual days missed due to weather conditions. Ms. Carey said that the first attempt is to provide a make-up day for most programs. If dates cannot be made up, then refunds for the missed dates are provided. The exception is for the adult programs that run from October through May as they already pay a low rate for the long seasons.
4. **Discussion Items**
 - a. **Soccer Club Waiver Request:** The Needham Soccer Club is requesting a one hour extension for use of the athletic field lights on DeFazio # 1 and # 2 on Friday, May 22, 2015 as part of the Memorial Day Weekend Tournament. They are requesting one additional hour, with an extension until 10 PM. Mr. DiCicco explained that the policy requires that the waiver be discussed on at least two Commission agendas prior to there being a vote. Mr. Toolan felt that individual waiver requests were reasonable, and easier than going through a process of requesting a change in authorized times through the ZBA. Mr. Jacob and Mr. Retzky did not have any objections. Mr. DiCicco stated this topic would be on the next agenda as an action item, for additional discussion and a vote.

- b. Board of Health Concussion Study:** Mr. DiCicco reminded the Commission of the Board of Health Public Hearing on Tuesday, February 24 at Town Hall. He will attend, as will Ms. Carey. Mr. Toolan has been discussing the draft regulations with others involved in youth sports and the medical profession. He asked what actual problem was trying to be resolved through the regulations. The solution would be different based on what was perceived as the issue. Mr. Jacob noted that the draft regulation stated the four purposes, including education, development of written plans, best practices to mitigate risk, and collection of data. Mr. Toolan asked how the Board of Health developed those as issues. Mr. DiCicco has worked with the Board of Health through their discussions. Early on, he noted, the Board didn't feel that youth sports had an understanding of the issues related to concussions, but following the survey, realized that more was being done than originally thought. Mr. DiCicco and Mrs. Chaston recently attended a meeting with representatives of the Board of Health, Selectmen, the Town Manager, and staff from the departments. He and Mrs. Chaston noted the Commission's support for education, including training and requiring a note from a doctor before an athlete returns to a team. Mr. Retzky stated he does not object to the goals of the regulations, but did not support the fines that were listed in the regulation. He asked if enough research on program liability insurance requirements had been done. Mr. Toolan added that the reporting mechanism had to be consistent, and not include personal information on any injured athlete. Mr. Toolan suggested that he was more supportive of a policy than of a regulation with fines. Mr. Jacob agreed that the fines were counter productive. Mr. Toolan asked if the programs using indoor facilities had been invited to the public hearing. Ms. Carey said that she provided the contact information to the Health Department, but she also sent the information to those groups. Mr. DiCicco will ask the questions from the Commission and will state the consensus opinion that they are supportive of a policy but not of a regulation that includes fines.
- c. School Feasibility Study:** Ms. Carey noted that there is a meeting at the Hillside School on Tuesday, February 24 to discuss the mitigation for the past MDL contamination issue. There is some work scheduled for the summer months. Mr. Jacob will try to attend the meeting. Mr. DiCicco's understanding is that new borings will be done to help show solutions. He also has expressed his disappointment to representatives of the Selectmen that there hasn't been more support from the Selectmen in recent months regarding the Commission's decision on Cricket Field.
- d. Town-Wide Facility Study:** Mr. Toolan noted that a draft of the final report had been reviewed and the document is being finalized. He noted that discussions need to continue about the jurisdictions of some Town-owned parcels.
- e. FY16 Operating and Capital Budgets:** Ms. Carey reported that the Town Manager's Budget recommendations have been reviewed by the Finance Committee, and there is general agreement. There does not appear to be any recommended changes to the Park and Recreation operating budget, but some agreed upon adjustments for other budgets.
- f. Rosemary Pool Project:** The CPC is still reviewing the request for design funds. Mr. DiCicco noted that it was his understanding that two of the CPC members had spoken of their opposition at the recent CPC meeting. Mr. Jacob noted that each of those members

has already expressed differing views, one who has a different view of what the Rosemary site should be, and one who has a different view of the type of pool there should be. Community Center of Needham representative Jo-Anna Ochalla asked how the Commission would bring this project to Town Meeting if the CPC wasn't fully supportive. Mr. DiCicco stated that all projects require lobbying and expressing support to Town Meeting members. Mrs. Ochalla suggested the concerns of the two CPC members and their supporters could be shown to be included in the concepts when it is presented. She asked that there be a formal process for community input during the design phase, and show that different points of view will be represented during the design phase. Community Center of Needham representative Katy Dirks asked that other issues be put back on the table during the design phase, including the option of a bubble over the pool. She expressed her concern that the estimates from Weston & Sampson were not reliable, and asked how confident the Commission was in moving forward with those estimates. Mr. Retzky reminded her that a feasibility study is an overall concept of a project, and that estimates need to come from the design phase. He noted that estimating was difficult due to changing circumstances, but better done with specific information decided on during design.

- g. Rail Trail Advisory Committee:** Ms. Carey explained that the Board of Selectmen was putting together this group to help guide the process during construction and creation of the trail. Mr. Retzky offered to represent the Commission on the committee. Mr. Toolan offered to serve as a back-up to Mr. Retzky in the event he has conflicts with scheduled meetings.
- h. Town Department Programming:** The Commission reviewed a listing of programs provided by Park and Recreation, Youth Services, Council on Aging, Library and Health departments. Community Education participated in a recent meeting, but did not provide their listing of programs. Ms. Carey provided the recent adult education catalogue, a division of Community Education. Mrs. Chaston, Ms. Carey and Ms. Fink attended a recent meeting with representatives from these boards and departments. Additional conversations will need to be held, but a decision was made that there needs to be more communication about what programs are offered, and that information needs to be more accessible to residents. Ms. Carey, Ms. Fink and Mr. Croak will be meeting with the Health Department and Assistant Town Manager Christopher Coleman to discuss the current Youth Center programming. Ms. Carey also noted the difficulty in scheduling space for summer programs, due to maintenance projects and the amount of space being used by school programs. Public Facilities is making the Broadmeadow School available for Park and Recreation to insure enough space is available for currently offered programs.
- i. Community Preservation Projects:** The CPC meeting on Wednesday, February 25 will include formal review of the Newman, Eastman, Mills and canoe launch projects. Mr. DiCicco will attend to answer any questions on behalf of the Commission.
- j. Trails Projects:** Ms. Carey did not have an update, as most trails are covered under snow. The Eastman trail and Rail Trail projects are under review at CPC for funding. The Reservoir Trail is in design phase.

- k. **Spring/Summer Field Scheduling:** The input of information is continuing, and coming close to being finished. It is not known when any fields will open for the spring season. Ms. Carey said that coaches and athletes will need to be educated about staying off the fields until they are ready, and that shoveling is not an option at any field, most especially the synthetic turf fields.
- l. **Commission Goals Reports:** No new information was available.

5. Action Items

- a. **Special Event Request – Needham Baseball and Softball:** This request is to hold summer clinics in June for baseball. Ms. Carey stated these fall under the Clinic fee of the policy. Mr. Jacob made a motion to approve the request of Needham Baseball and Softball to hold baseball skills clinics at DeFazio Small and Warner fields on June 22-25, 2015 from 8 AM – 12:30 PM and June 29-July 2, 2015 from 8 AM – 12:30 PM, with a Friday rain date for each week. The motion was seconded by Mr. Retzky and approved.
- b. **Special Event Request – Cub Scout Rocket Day:** Ms. Carey explained this was an annual event, and Mr. DiCicco added that he has attended in the past and it is a great event. The Commission discussed the possible impact on the event due to the weather conditions. Ms. Carey supported the approval of the event, with a suggestion that she work with the program to determine how it can work around the snow impact. Mr. Jacob made a motion to approve the request from Needham Pack 4 Cub Scouts to hold the annual Rocket Day at Claxton Field on Saturday March 14, 2015 from Noon – 4:30 PM, with a raindate of Saturday, March 21, 2015. The motion was seconded by Mr. Toolan and approved.
- c. **Special Event Request – Pack 4 Cub Scouts:** Mr. Toolan made a motion to approve the request of Needham Pack 4 Cub Scouts to hold an annual barbeque at Claxton tot-lot and Claxton # 2 on Saturday, June 6, 2015 with a raindate of Sunday, June 7, 2015 from 3:30 – 6:30 PM. The motion was seconded by Mr. Jacob and approved.
- d. **Special Event Request – Track Club:** Mr. Retzky made a motion to approve the request of the Needham Track Club to hold the Needham Youth Classic at DeFazio Track, Conroy Field and Founders Field on Friday, July 31, 2015 from 2-8:30 PM and Saturday, August 1, 2015 from 7 AM – 6 PM. The motion was seconded by Mr. Toolan and approved.
- e. **Special Event Requests – YMCA:** The Commission reviewed two requests from the Charles River YMCA. The first was for their Healthy Kids Day that they would like to host on April 25th on the Newman fields. The Commission expressed their concern that the fields would not be dry enough for use after the amount of snow coverage this winter. With the volume of programs in the spring, and the back-up for all of their programs, Ms. Carey did not feel that an alternate outdoor site would be available on that day. Mr. Jacob made a motion to approve the request of the Charles River YMCA to host Healthy Kids Days on Saturday, April 25, 2015 from 9 AM – 1 PM at the Newman fields, with the understanding that the fields are only available if dry enough for use. Mr. Retzky

seconded the motion and it was approved. The Commission also reviewed the request for the YMCA Summer Kick-Off. Mr. Toolan was concerned that the request did not provide the required details. Ms. Carey stated that a tentative approval could be given, with a follow-up review of the information to determine whether to rescind the vote or not. Mr. Jacob made a motion to give tentative approval to the Charles River YMCA to host Summer Kick-Off at Greene's Field on Saturday, June 13, 2015 from 9 AM – 1 PM, with a raindate of Sunday, June 14, 2015, with the understanding that program information is required before final approval is given. The motion was seconded by Mr. Retzky and approved.

- f. **Special Event Request – Boys Lacrosse:** Ms. Carey explained this is an annual request within their regular permit time. As it is a round-robin, and Needham teams aren't involved in all games, it needs to be requested as a special event, with the requirement, if approved, that representatives from Needham Boys Lacrosse must be at the event at all times. Mr. Jacob made a motion to approve the request of Boys Lacrosse to host round-robin Friday nights games on April 3, 10, 17, 24, May 1, 8, 15, 22, June 5, 12 from 6 PM – 9 PM at DeFazio Founders Field. The motion was seconded by Mr. Retzky and approved.
- g. **Special Event Request – St. Joseph's School:** Ms. Carey noted that, last year, this request was made well after the permit was completed, and the requested time conflicted with an existing permit. This year, it has been submitted early. Mr. Jacob made a motion to approve the request of St. Joseph's School to host a Field Day at Greene's Field on Friday, June 12, 2015 from 9 AM to 12:30 PM and set-up time, with a rain date of Monday, June 15, 2015. The motion was seconded by Mr. Retzky and approved.
- h. **Special Event Request – 128 Lacrosse:** Ms. Carey explained that this program does not have games involved, so it is considered a clinic under the policy. Mr. Jacob made a motion to approve the request of 128 Lacrosse for practice time at DeFazio # 1 and # 2 from 4-8 PM on Tuesdays and Thursdays in late June and in July. The motion was seconded by Mr. Retzky and approved.
- i. **Special Event Request – Rocket Lacrosse:** Mr. Toolan made a motion to approve the request of Rocket Lacrosse to hold a three day clinic at DeFazio # 1 and # 2 from 8 AM – 3 PM on June 29, June 30 and July 1, 2015. The motion was seconded by Mr. Jacob and approved.

6. Topics for Future Agendas: No additional topics were discussed.

7. Adjournment of Meeting: Mr. Retzky made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 PM. Mr. Toolan seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia M. Carey, CPRP
Director