

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

**Minutes of Meeting  
March 9, 2015**

**PRESENT:** Cynthia J. Chaston, Chairman  
David C. DiCicco, Vice-Chairman  
Thomas M. Jacob, Member  
Michael J. Retzky, Member  
Matthew M. Toolan, Member  
Patricia M. Carey, Director  
Robyn G. Fink, Assistant Director

**GUESTS:** Chris Gerstel, Candidate for Park and Recreation Commission  
YMCA Board: Janet Jakowiak, Connie Kaufman  
Community Center of Needham: Katy Dirks, Jo-Anne Ochalla, Georgina Ruetenik

Mrs. Chaston called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM in the Charles River Room at the Public Services Administration Building. She welcomed Ms. Fink to her first meeting.

1. **Minutes of Meeting – February 23, 2015:** Mr. Jacob made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 23, 2015 meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Toolan and the minutes were approved unanimously.
2. **Director’s Report:** Ms. Carey informed the Commission that DPW borrowed the Town of Natick’s ice melter this past weekend to melt snow in the parking lot of DeFazio. The melter clogged up and it was decided that DPW would now manually remove snow from the parking lot or spread it for melting. Ms. Carey reported that most of Memorial Park’s parking lot was cleared out so it is at full capacity. Ms. Carey has asked Recreation Supervisor Brendan Croak to assist with the creation of a flyer for the public about the need to stay off of the fields as the snow melts. Mr. Toolan questioned the \$20,000-\$30,000 that was estimated for snow removal from the fields. Ms. Carey said it was for three fields, the use of specialty equipment, and the removal of large quantities of snow from the premises. Mrs. Chaston asked if the Needham High Athletic Director was still planning on spending the money to have the fields plowed. Ms. Carey said that indoor locations have been secured, but not enough funding for the current estimates. The High School is authorized to begin practices on March 16<sup>th</sup>, but will not have outdoor space at this time.
3. **Program Report:** Ms. Fink highlighted the April vacation programs of archery, glass art, Lego’s, and American Dolls.
4. **Discussion Items**
  - a. **Community Preservation Projects**

- i. Rosemary Pool:** Mr. Jacob will be presenting on Rosemary Pool at the Community Preservation Committee's (CPC) public hearing. He reviewed what would be presented, and Mr. Retzky suggested adding why no other sites were studied. Mrs. Chaston noted that the Finance Committee (FinCom) Chairman asked why full design funds were requested when the process is to begin with a feasibility study. Mrs. Chaston explained that the feasibility was complete. Katy Dirks from Community Center of Needham (CCN) would like for the Commission to re-evaluate adding a structure over the new pool to make it a year round facility. Mrs. Chaston stated that the Commission had determined not to move forward with that concept, but Ms. Dirks suggested that not enough research had been done, and that it seemed that it was not on the list due to cost, but there were at least 8 in the area with bubbles. Jo-Anne Ochalla from CCN noted that there were a number of residents requesting a year-round pool, particularly for competitive swimming. Mr. Toolan noted that the size of the pool could be smaller in order to accommodate a bubble or other cover. Mr. Retzky noted that it would be important to compare public costs and maintenance, and not private. Ms. Dirks mentioned the possibility of a public-private partnership. Mr. Retzky questioned whether the Town was ready to support the cost of a year round facility. Connie Kaufman of the YMCA Board said that the YMCA is open to whatever might make it work and that they definitely want a partnership. Mr. Retzky that no formal proposal for a partnership has been presented for review. The Commission reviewed the statistics provided by Ms. Carey. Mr. DiCicco was concerned that it appeared that 20% of the passes were provided as scholarships, a much greater percentage than he has seen in youth sports programs. Ms. Carey noted that the majority of requests came from families living in Housing Authority homes, with school guidance counselors also submitting requests for families. Mr. Jacob and Mr. Toolan felt that the scholarships were justified when providing a Town service. Mr. DiCicco raised a concern that not enough revenue was collected to justify the construction costs. Mr. Jacob stated that it mattered more how much use there was, and Mr. Retzky stated that a new pool would bring in more patrons.
- ii. Mills Field:** no discussion
- iii. Boat Launch:** no discussion
- iv. Newman/Eastman:** no discussion
- v. Rail Trail:** no discussion
- vi. Student Conservation Association:** no discussion

**b. Board of Health Concussion Study:** Mr. DiCicco and Ms. Carey attended the Board of Health's public meeting on their proposed concussion regulations. The general consensus was the teams prefer a policy over fines. Ms. Carey said that the leagues are supportive of the concept, but confused on how to put everything in place with volunteer

organizations. The Board of Health listened and is working on alternatives to make it easier to comply. Mr. DiCicco pointed out that the fines would only penalize the volunteers. Mr. Jacob said there has been a major step taken around education and he doesn't feel they need the regulation. Ms. Carey said the Board of Health will hold another public hearing when they have updated information.

**c. School Feasibility Study:** Mr. Jacob attended the recent meeting at Hillside, which primarily focused on the on-going remediation of the former TCE contamination. Mr. Toolan added the costs of continuing to remediate with a new building are not overwhelming.

**d. Town-Wide Facilities Study:** Mr. Toolan reported that there are discussions underway about parcels of land. The final report has been published, and is on-line. Mr. Toolan and Ms. Carey have paper copies.

**e. FY16 Operating and Capital Budgets:** Ms. Carey said that the Finance Committee is expected to vote on the operating budgets, and no change is anticipated for Park and Recreation.

**f. Trails Projects**

**i. Rail Trail:** Mr. Retzky has been appointed to the advisory committee. Ms. Carey attended the recent Bay Colony Rail Trail volunteer meeting, that included some Needham High students from the Rail Trail Club who are working on a fundraising project. Ms. Carey reported that the bids for removal of the ties and rails have come in, with a large range. It is anticipated the cost will be about \$40,000. The Finance Committee may not support the funding request to CPC for the construction funds.

**ii. Reservoir Trail:** Ms. Carey updated the Commission on last month's public meeting. Though some neighbors were concerned with having use of the trail, overall the meeting provided helpful input. The designers will attend an upcoming Disabilities Commission meeting to get their input. Construction funds will be requested at the May 2016 Town Meeting.

**g. Spring/Summer Field Scheduling:** Ms. Carey reported that youth leagues are generally supportive of waiting for the snow to melt prior to using the fields. DPW Parks and Forestry worked on the fields in the fall, to prepare them for winter conditions, so hopefully all of that work will be helpful after the thaw. The frostline has been about 4 feet deep, so that takes awhile to melt.

**h. Commission Goals Reports:** No updates.

**5. Action Items**

**a. Soccer Club Waiver Request:** The request was discussed at the last meeting, and there were no additional comments. Mr. Jacob made a motion to approve the request of

the Soccer Club to a one hour extension for the use of the athletic field lights on DeFazio #1 and #2 on Friday, May 22, 2015 as part of the Memorial Day Weekend Tournament. The motion was seconded by Mr. Retzky and approved.

**b. DeFazio Synthetic Fields – Snow:** Ms. Carey noted that DPW Parks and Forestry Superintendent Ed Olsen has been researching the plowing of fields. It is expensive with the current quantity of snow on the ground. The Trustees of Memorial Park are waiting for additional information, and voted to have their Chairman be updated and then check with other members on whether to support plowing. The Commission did not take any action on the DeFazio synthetic turf fields.

**c. Special Event Request – NE Orienteering:** The New England Orienteering Club is requesting use of the Town Forest on Saturday, April 25 for an orienteering event.. Ms. Carey mentioned that parking could be an issue and they would not be allowed to use Claxton and weather could impact the use of the trails. Mr. Jacob made a motion to approve the request of New England Orienteering to use the trails at the Town Forest for an orienteering event on Saturday, April 25, 2015, weather depending. The motion was seconded by Mr. Retzky and approved. Ms. Carey will remind them to develop a parking plan that does not utilize Claxton Field or Central Avenue.

**d. Special Event Request – Msgr Haddad:** The Monsignor Haddad Middle School is requesting the use of Greene’s Field on Thursday, May 21, 2015, with a rain of date Friday, May 22 for a Battle of Gettysburg Reenactment. Ms. Carey mentioned that they have been doing this for several years without any problems or issues. Mr. Toolan made a motion to approve the request of Msgr Haddad Middle School to host a Battle of Gettysburg Reenactment at Greene’s Field on Thursday, May 21, 2015 with a raindate of Friday, May 22, 2015. The motion was seconded by Mr. Jacob and approved.

**e. Special Event Request – Norfolk Lodge:** The Norfolk Lodge A.F.&A.F. is requesting the use of Claxton Field to hold a family oriented picnic for the families and members of the lodge. Mr. Jacob made a motion to approve the request of Norfolk Lodge A.F&A.F to use Claxton Field on Saturday, August 8, 2015 for a family picnic. The motion was seconded by Mr. Toolan and approved.

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

**7. Adjournment of Meeting:** Mr. Toolan made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:48 PM. Mr. Jacob seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 8:48 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Robyn Fink, CPRP  
Assistant Director