

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

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

April 10, 2015

Background notes for Monday, April 13th

Park and Recreation Commission Agenda

THANK YOU, COMMISSIONER JACOB

One of the great opportunities of my job is getting to work closely with members of the Park and Recreation Commission, many over the years who have served two or more terms. The sad part, is that at some point, each of those members retires from the Commission – some to serve on another board or local organization – and some are just ready to take a break from attending meetings! Tom Jacob was elected to the Commission in April 2009, and re-elected in April 2012. He served as Chairman of the Park and Recreation Commission from April 2011-April 2012.

I first got to know Tom with his work with Little League...now known as Needham Baseball and Softball. Tom always had a smile – and an idea! Those were the days when he first heard me say, “There are no bad ideas from individual programs – it is just how it works when mixed in with everything else!” His enthusiasm and hard work went towards the *Fields of Dream* project at Memorial Park and DeFazio Park, and he joined the Commission as everything started up on the new fields. During Tom’s tenure, in addition to the new fields, he worked on a spreadsheet and with the youth programs on scheduling the fields with requests continuing to increase each year, despite the number of fields remaining constant. What was originally known as the “Lifelong Learning Center” became a regular topic at Commission meetings – and we now know that group as the Community Center of Needham. The property at 174 Charles River Street was purchased and Walker-Gordon Field was rebuilt. Lots of meetings were held on the possible use of Greene’s Field for a building – that eventually remained a park with an amazing new playground and fields. DeFazio parking lot still isn’t paved – but it now has what we call “Olsen Chips” to help with the use...and Tom and the Commission have been part of a dialogue about a possible school at DeFazio...with a paved lot. The Cricket Field discussion, during Tom’s tenure, was a continuation of the discussion about renovating the building, and then took a turn into a discussion about it being a possible school site. And Rosemary Pool has been on just about every agenda during Tom’s tenure...first as a discussion about how to rebuild that turned into three legal issues related to draining the pool and lake – all resulting in judges’ rulings on behalf of the Town...and now, a feasibility study complete and the hope of receiving funding at Town Meeting for the design phase.

Thank you, Tom, for all your efforts on behalf of the residents of Needham and your support of the department. Your thorough analysis, ability to have people with differing opinions talk and come to resolutions...and your humor will all be missed.

ELECTION

April 14th will bring a new day to the Commission. There are two Commission seats on the ballot and two names on the ballot. Vice Chairman Dave DiCicco is running for re-election after three busy years, and Chris Gerstel will join the Commission for his first term. Chris grew up in Needham and his raising his young children here, so will bring a great perspective to the board. Chris has been attending Commission meetings for a few months, so it will be great to have him at the table as part of the formal discussions! The Commission will hold a re-organization meeting during their second April meeting to vote on their new Chairman and Vice Chairman

RECREATION SUPERVISOR

The Walpole Recreation Department has been operating without a Director or Assistant Director. After searches for both positions, the Town Administrator reached out to Brendan Croak and offered him the Assistant Director position, to have him return with his years of knowledge of programs, and keep the department running while the search continues for the Director. Brendan has decided to return to Walpole and will leave Needham on April 17th. One of our former summer recreation supervisors will return to work with the department for the summer pre-season and season, and we'll work on hiring a replacement Recreation Supervisor to start in the fall. We had several qualified candidates on the last search, and hopefully some of them would consider re-applying, particularly those who have stayed in touch with me for guidance on finding positions in the field of recreation and parks.

Though only here for 6 months, Brendan has made his mark on the department. He coordinated a new early release school day program with Glass and More, and re-instituted some half day programs for April school vacation week. He has assisted me with the field scheduling, and worked with our on-line registration company to make some steps easier. Brendan quickly learned the operations of our current programs, and insured the quality continued, and provided enhancements where needed.

UPCOMING DATES

- Saturday, April 11 – Town-Wide Clean-Up
- Saturday, April 11 – *Take a Hike* - Rail Trail Walk (rescheduled from earlier date)
- Monday, April 13 – Commission Meeting
- Saturday, April 25 – *Take a Hike* – proposed Aqueduct Trail (rescheduled from earlier date)
- Monday, April 27 – possible Commission Meeting (TBD)
- Monday, April 27 – League of Women Voters Warrant Meeting
- Thursday, April 30 – *Take a Hike* – Rosemary Trail with Cindy Chaston
- Thursday, April 30 – *Tyke Hike*

Someday in April, the athletic fields will actually open, too, and we'll all feel like spring has begun!

CALENDARS

The Commission typically meets on the 2nd and 4th Monday of each month. The Commission will need to determine the status of the April 27th meeting, as it conflicts with the League of Women Voters Warrant Meeting. In May, the first meeting conflicts with Town Meeting, and the second meeting falls on Memorial Day. The Commission will reschedule these meetings.

NEEDHAM GOLF CLUB

The Needham Golf Club has announced its availability to Needham residents, based on the current lease. Non-members who are Needham residents may use the Golf Club on Sundays and Mondays, excluding holidays, from 3 PM to closing. On Tuesdays, it is from 7 AM until closing, and this is the day they host Park and Recreation's Senior Golf League. In the past, opening time was 8 AM, but the Selectmen have approved a trial weekday start time of 7 AM. Rates are \$65/18 holes or \$38/9 holes; senior rates are \$47/18 holes or \$28/9 holes. There are also junior rates.
