

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

**Minutes of Meeting
March 23, 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
Jo-Anne Ochalla, Community Center of Needham
Connie Kaufman, YMCA Board Member
Brian Nadler, Citizen
Janet Jankowiak, YMCA Board Member

Mrs. Chaston called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM in the Charles River Room at the Public Services Administration Building.

1. **Minutes of Meeting – March 9, 2015:** Mr. Toolan made a motion to approve the minutes of the meetings of March 9, 2015, March 16, 2015, and March 9, 2015 – Executive Session. The motion was seconded by Mr. Jacob, and all three sets of minutes were approved unanimously.
2. **Director’s Report:** Ms. Carey reported that Edward Olsen, Superintendent of Parks and Forestry coordinated the spreading of two bags of infill on the turf field with a private contractor at Memorial Park to assist with melting the snow.
3. **Program Report:** Ms. Fink highlighted the April 11th Town-wide Clean-up that would be taking place and asked the Commissioners to help spread the word.
4. **Discussion Items**
 - a. **Community Preservation Projects**
 - i. **Rosemary Pool:** Mrs. Chaston reminded the Commission that the Community Center of Needham has requested at the next phase of planning to ask the designer what it would take to enclose the pool. Mr. Toolan mentioned that they are not necessarily requesting a bubble, but a retractable structure. Ms. Carey informed the Commission that the request for funds from the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) for the Rosemary Pool Project was passed with a 7-1 vote. The recommendation will go to Town Meeting for a request to approve the funding.

event. Mr. DiCicco asked if the company who is hired to do the removal of the railroad ties has to disclose how much money they receive for the scrap metal. Mr. Retzky said they do not have to disclose the amount.

ii. Reservoir Trail: Ms. Carey and the working group met with the Commission on Disabilities and said they are very supportive of the plans to make the Reservoir Trail handicap accessible. The Disabilities Commission asked if a rope could be hung along the trail for the visually impaired, which will need to be researched. She also mentioned that parking could be an issue as one to two handicap accessible spots would need to be added to the parking lot. The designers are working on parking options.

iii. Aqueduct Trail: The MWRA is in the process of discussing an agreement with Babson related to use of property over the Aqueduct, and will then meet with the Town on the proposed trail. Both Babson College and Olin College have expressed support for the pedestrian path. Mr. Jacob mentioned a cell phone app that High School students are developing for the Historical Society's walk. He suggested Ms. Fink look into it to see about having one for our trails.

g. Spring Summer Field Scheduling: Ms. Carey reported that Parks and Forestry Superintendent Ed Olsen believes there will be significant melting this week on all fields. The fields will then need to dry out before they can be used. Ms. Carey and Mr. Olsen will keep the fields closed on April 1 but re-evaluate the field status for April 8th. Mr. Toolan said that other towns are not opening their fields until April 15th and questioned if Needham should do the same. Ms. Carey replied that currently they are looking at April 8th for the fields to open, but on April 1st the fields would be re-evaluated. At that time the decision will be made if the fields will open April 8th or if it will be pushed back to April 15th. Ms. Carey also stated that when the fields open, the baseball infield diamonds would likely be off limits and only sneakers would be allowed on the outfield. Mr. Toolan suggested placing a rope around the infield to keep people off that area. Ms. Carey will try to work with the major groups on some temporary use of synthetic turf fields during the closed field period, working around the High School practice schedule.

h. Commission Goals Reports: No updates.

5. Action Items

a. Set 2015 Pool Fees: Ms. Chaston believes this is not the time to go up on fees as the Commission wants the Town's support of the new pool. Mr. Toolan suggested that the fees should be lowered to encourage usage this year. Mr. Retzky felt there should be no change in fees. Mrs. Chaston

questioned the low number of seniors that come to the facility after 6 PM and suggested they be allowed to enter for free. Ms. Carey questioned what the seniors who purchase senior season pool passes would do as many of them use their passes after 6 PM. Mr. DiCicco questioned the high dollar figure for fee assistance and wanted to know what the breakdown of individuals and families are. Ms. Carey said she did not have the exact figures and would get the figures for the Commission. Mrs. Chaston asked if there was a policy to say how many times fee assistance would be issued by Park and Recreation. Ms. Carey said there was no limit to the amount issued, rather a limit on how a family or individual can utilize it each year.. Mr. DiCicco suggested that too many scholarships might be given out as \$16,000 was a lot of money to lose. Mrs. Chaston noted that the fee assistance is not necessarily money the pool is losing as those people would not be using the pool without the assistance and therefore they were offering a service to the citizens of the Town. Mr. Jacob made a motion to keep the fees for Rosemary Pool admission in 2015 the same as they were for 2014. The motion was seconded by Mr. Retzky and approved.

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

Mrs. Chaston read and presented Mr. Jacob with a proclamation for his term with the Park and Recreation Commission.

7. Adjournment of Meeting: Mr. Jacob made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 PM. Mr. DiCicco seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Robyn Fink, CPRP, CPSI
Assistant Director