

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

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

February 5, 2016

*Background notes for Monday, February 8th
Park and Recreation Commission Agenda*

MEETING WITH BOARD OF SELECTMEN

The Commission is attending the Board of Selectmen's meeting on Tuesday, February 9th to discuss two projects: the Rosemary Recreation Complex concepts and a concept to change jurisdictions of some parcels of Town-owned land. Under discussion for Park and Recreation: gain jurisdiction of Greene's Field from Board of Selectmen, and all athletic fields at DeFazio from School Committee and Board of Selectmen; give jurisdiction of Greendale Avenue parcel, known as "Parcel 74" to the Board of Selectmen. There would be other swaps between School Committee and Board of Selectmen. If the three boards reach agreement, Town Meeting would be asked to approve the changes in jurisdiction, and the Greendale Avenue parcel would require the support of the State Legislature.

ROSEMARY RECREATION COMPLEX

In addition to discussing the project with the Board of Selectmen on Tuesday, the project will also go before the Needham Conservation Commission for its first official meeting on Thursday, February 11th. In order to continue to work on the design plans, there needs to be an official approval of the wetland boundaries, which will then be placed on all the plans, along with the official survey, and boundaries required by zoning. The project will return later this year for the permitting process. BH+A is now developing more specific plans, based on decisions made by the Park and Recreation Commission.

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

The CPC has met with the proponents of proposals, including representatives for the dredging of Rosemary Lake, drainage improvements to Memorial Park, and design funds for Rosemary Recreation Complex. At this time, the public hearing is scheduled for Wednesday, March 9th.

RAIL TRAIL UPDATE

We have been working on "punch list" projects. Some temporary barriers are being put in place where vehicles can easily access the trail. More permanent solutions will be worked on over the winter. At Fisher Street, we may put in some plantings, adjacent to the bollards. At Charles River Street, there is an easement for Eversource and a neighbor, so we'll need a different solution there. I've re-contacted the MBTA about the chain link fencing across the bridge over the river. It has been cut, again. They are assuring me, again, that they will bring a maintenance crew out to look and come up with a better solution for safety. We are getting an estimate to have the contractor install some additional safety fencing. One steep area is exposed, now that Eversource has done so much tree removal. Another section also looks steeper after building the trail. I'm

checking with the Needham High School Rail Trail Committee to see if they would like to paint some of the older fencing at Fisher Street, and possibly help create some benches and picnic tables. The trail is being used – walkers, runners, bicyclists, and cross country skiers - which is great!

DPW RECOGNIZED FOR EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

The DPW and their Water/Sewer Division have been asked by MWRA to present at a forum how they are prepared to handle an emergency to the water system, as a model for other communities. They have a plan in place to bring many Town departments together, along with the Town Manager, to quickly activate a response to the particular issue, and communicate to and educate the residents and businesses. The MWRA and MEMA have been involved in reviewing the plan, and providing input to strengthen it, and participated in an emergency planning round table discussion that included local businesses, schools and Town staff. DPW is also preparing educational material related to lead in water, to show the proactive work that is done to keep drinking water safe in Needham. In light of issues that we've recently read about in other states, it is comforting to work with a team that maintains high quality drinking water for all of us!

Park and Recreation is a long-time fan of our colleagues at DPW, and are pleased to celebrate National Public Works Week with them, again, at our annual Touch the Trucks event on Saturday, May 14th. This year, we are hoping to feature fun facts about the vehicles – for example, if we have a sidewalk plow on display, post on it the number of miles of sidewalks that are plowed.

HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR

The Town Manager is in the process of hiring a new director of human resources, due to a retirement. As a department that hires about 100 part-time employees throughout the year, we are an active “customer” to the HR Department, so I was fortunate to be on the first round interview panel, with six experienced and qualified applicants. Two will be back on Monday for a second round, and hopefully a new director will be in place by early March – as we go into high gear for our summer hiring.
