

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

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**May 19, 2016**

*Background notes for Monday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>*

*Park and Recreation Commission Agenda*

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**TOWN MEETING**

The majority of articles with a connection to the Park and Recreation Commission passed at the Annual Town Meeting. Under CPC, the design funds to remove sediment in Rosemary Lake and the second phase of design funds for Rosemary Recreation Complex passed. The athletic fields at DeFazio under the jurisdiction of the Board of Selectmen and the School Committee were transferred to the jurisdiction of the Park and Recreation Commission. The DeFazio parking lot's jurisdiction was changed from Board of Selectmen to School Committee. Greene's Field was transferred from the jurisdiction of the Board of Selectmen to the Park and Recreation Commission. "Parcel 74" on Greendale Avenue remains under the jurisdiction of the Park and Recreation Commission. The transfer to the Board of Selectmen did not pass, but will remain a discussion as Town facility issues are reviewed. Additional funds were placed in the Athletic Facilities Fund for the future replacement of synthetic turf.

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**OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN**

Conservation Director Matt Varrell and I are in the process of finalizing a contract with a consultant to assist the Town with the update of the Open Space and Recreation Plan. This is the process to outline thoughtful planning and active stewardship of open spaces, critical plan and animal habitats, neighborhood parks, and quality outdoor recreation facilities. The requirements for the plan are provided by the state. The process will take about 10-12 months and will include working with an advisory committee that represents various constituency groups, and gathering public input through a survey and public forums. There will also need to be input from the Park and Recreation Commission, Conservation Commission, Board of Selectmen and Planning Board, and final adoption of the plan by these boards.

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**MILLS PROJECTS**

The bids were opened last Friday, and we are in the process of awarding a contract for installation of a single unit pre-cast restroom at Mills. Additional electrical work was needed in the "concession building" to correct some past donated electrical work so that it now meets code.

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**EVERSOURCE**

*Tree Removal:* With a few minor exceptions, the work to remove the trees under the transmission line is complete. An Eversource representative has been meeting with residents to plan the mitigation plantings. At DeFazio, an Eversource landscape contractor will work with the DPW Parks and Forestry Division on plantings near the Pollard entrance and at the track. DPW is trying to keep the slope low maintenance near

the synthetic turf areas – the less leaves, the better! They will also work with DPW on some plantings at the rail trail, in the area between Charles River Street and Fisher Street.

*Secondary Lines:* Eversource has compiled the feedback from the two public open houses held in Needham and West Roxbury related to the secondary set of lines to be installed between the two stations. More information will be available regarding the possibility of an easement on Park and Recreation property, to start the underground section of lines.

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### **AQUEDUCT TRAIL**

MWRA has sent official paperwork to the Town Manager to sign granting permission to use the Sudbury Aqueduct as a pedestrian path. Needham has two sections. The first enters from Wellesley, crossing Great Plain Avenue into Babson and Olin Colleges. Needham will be granted an alternate route around the athletic fields at Olin, as the Aqueduct is actually located under the fields. There will also be an alternate path around the Babson maintenance area. As the Aqueduct reaches Forest Street, the path returns to Wellesley and permits are being granted for use across the Wellesley Country Club. After crossing Hunnewell Street, the Aqueduct returns to Needham for our second section, traveling through the Eliot School parking area. It continues to St. Mary Street, at which time the path will have to travel down to Central Avenue and return to the Aqueduct on River Street. It then follows to Echo Bridge. The long-term goal of the MWRA is to have open pedestrian paths from Sudbury to the Chestnut Hill Reservoir. The Sudbury Aqueduct is not currently in use but is maintained as a back-up system. The four major project requests from residents during my tenure have included, (a) why can't we get official access to walk on the Sudbury Aqueduct?; (b) why can't we convert the "unused" rails to a rail trail (rails were still actually in use at the time)?; (c) when will there be a new Rosemary Pool?; and (d) when will the DeFazio parking lot be paved. Making progress!!!

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