

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

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

September 19, 2008

*Background notes for Monday, September 22nd
Park and Recreation Commission Agenda*

PRESENTATION

Please remember to bring the copy of *Design Concepts for Needham Town Park at Rosemary Lake – May 2008* to the meeting. The students from the Landscape Institute at the Arnold Arboretum who completed a class project on the camp property will present their final concept projects.

OCTOBER MEETINGS

Due to the Monday, October 13th holiday, the Commission has already agreed to move their meeting to Monday, October 6th. The location will be announced prior to that meeting. The Monday, October 27th meeting conflicts with Special Town Meeting. Please bring your calendars to the meeting so that an alternate date can be chosen.

GRADUATION

Assistant Director Karen Peirce attended a 6 session workshop throughout the summer with staff who hold similar positions in other departments. The workshop was offered by Leadership Management, Inc. and was entitled *Effective Personal Productivity*. Though it was a lot of work for Karen during the busy summer months, it was an outstanding learning opportunity and a great chance for the ten participants to build a strong working relationship to assist each other. The presenter has already given the workshop to many department managers, and will be offering the workshop to others later in the year. He will also be offering a customer service program for many staff members.

GEOCACHING

The Police Chief has discussed the geocaching permit with his staff. We are in agreement that those participating will put a specific sign in their windshields and only park in the Horsford parking lot at the Town Forest when participating on Saturday nights. A sign is being developed in the office and will be sent to the group for their website along with some basic regulations.

PLAYGROUNDS

The DPW Parks and Forestry Division is appointing a staff member to work with me on playground inspections and maintenance, to complement the work done by a private contractor. Public Facilities is working with me to have the senior custodians at the elementary schools trained to help with observations and simple maintenance. We've had a great private contractor, but it isn't always efficient to deal with observations and quick repairs due to his schedule on other jobs.

A private contractor has been hired to paint the four-squares and other events on the newly paved asphalt at the Hillside and Mitchell schools. It is hoped the work will begin this weekend. A Needham resident will be painting the US maps at both sites from a template that I've purchased.

TRAVELING VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL

The Town Manager has brought together a group of Town staff who will be working with the Memorial Park Trustees and community volunteers to bring this effort together. The *Wall That Heals* will arrive on Wednesday, October 29 to be set up at Memorial Park in the parking lot. The wall and traveling museum will be open to the public for 24 hours a day from Thursday, October 30 through Sunday, November 2 and then be taken down on Monday, November 3. There are names of Needham residents on the wall, so they will be highlighted, and all names will be read by volunteers over the four days of the display.

PARK BATHROOMS

A new five year contract has been signed with the cleaning company for the High School. The company that has held the contract for the last three years will continue, and they will now handle cleaning the park bathrooms under Park and Recreation's jurisdiction as well as those at Memorial Park. The new contract starts on October 1st. We've been working with a small company for a few years, providing all the materials, but the new contract covers all the materials, too.

The Director of Public Facilities Operations Chip Laffey has been working with the private contractor on the Claxton bathroom project, trying to get that work completed so we can finally open those restrooms to the public. He has also added a roof replacement for that building into his capital project list.

HIGH ROCK HOMES

The Needham Housing Authority is pleased to be holding an Open House on Wednesday, September 24 from 2-4 PM to celebrate the completion of the first condominiums. This project was partially funded through Community Preservation funds.

TOWN HALL RENOVATION

The Board of Selectmen have voted to have the architect design "Option 4" that would extend the tower addition from "Option 1" creating additional office space in an annex behind Town Hall. Special Town Meeting will have a warrant article seeking support for this option in preparation of the May 2009 vote for construction funding. A request for partial funding will be submitted to the Community Preservation Committee in December. The CPC is currently working on setting up a process to review the project request.

The design work for the new administration building at 500 Dedham Avenue is progressing, and construction funding will be requested at the Special Town Meeting on October 27th. Park and Recreation is scheduled to move permanently to the new

building, most likely in December 2009. Our offices will be the first floor, just inside the main entrance. All DPW offices will be on the second floor, so we'll share the first floor with the Building Department, Development Offices (Planning, Conservation, Board of Appeals, and Economic Development) and Public Facilities (Operations and Construction.)

MINUTES

I haven't completed the draft of the minutes from the September 2nd meeting, so those will be presented for review and acceptance at the October 6th Commission meeting.

NEW ENGLAND PARKS ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

I attended the New England Parks Conference down the Cape last week. The sessions were all relevant to projects that I'm currently working on and included Liability, Building Sustainable Trails, Crime Prevention in Parks, and Creating New Park Advocates. Next month, I'll be attending the National Recreation and Park Association's Conference in Baltimore, MD. At the end of October, the Massachusetts Recreation and Park Association will be holding their annual conference, too.
