

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

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**November 7, 2008**

*Background notes for Monday, November 10<sup>th</sup>  
Park and Recreation Commission Agenda*

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**PARK AND RECREATION BUDGETS**

The Chairman and Vice Chairman joined me in presenting the Park and Recreation operating and capital budget requests last Saturday to the Town Manager and others. Other department budgets will be reviewed throughout the month, so it will be some time before we know the Town Manager's recommendations.

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**ATHLETIC FIELD LIGHTS**

The athletic field lights at Memorial Park are now operating through the MUSCO computer system. Authorization for scheduling the lights is limited to our office, but user groups have representatives set up with authorization to turn the lights off early or to cancel a use ahead of time. We've had one week of service under the computerized system, and so far it is working. I am developing applications and information sheets to provide to the spring users. NSTAR has almost completed its work at DeFazio leading towards the energizing of those structures. MUSCO will then come out and do test levels and alter any light units that are not pointing in the proper direction.

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**WALL THAT HEALS**

With only about six weeks to prepare, Needham did a fantastic job presenting the traveling memorial to Vietnam veterans last week. The Wall arrived on Tuesday, October 28, was set up on the 29<sup>th</sup>, and was open 24 hours a day through Monday, November 3<sup>rd</sup> when it was packed up and started its journey to its next host site. The amount of volunteers was incredible, as was their dedication, particularly those who stayed over night. There were ceremonies each day, focusing on different aspects, and each beautiful in their own right. Special recognition is due to Assistant to the Town Manager Sandy Cincotta who was the site manager and primary contact with the Wall officials. She made sure all rules were followed, and that all details were covered. Special recognition also goes to Memorial Park Trustee David DiCicco who had one of the toughest jobs – organizing and finding almost 200 volunteers for the week-long event.

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**SPECIAL TOWN MEETING**

The October 26<sup>th</sup> Special Town Meeting authorized the funding to build the new Public Services Administration building at 500 Dedham Avenue. This will become the new home for the Park and Recreation department. Construction will begin this winter, and it is expected that we will move into the new building in December 2009, along with all Town Hall departments who will be located at 500 Dedham Avenue temporarily until the Town Hall renovation is complete, if construction funding is provided at the May 2009

meeting. Because there are more staff in Town Hall than what will be at 500 Dedham Avenue, and as departments are fitting into space created for other departments, not all departments will have their own dedicated space. It currently appears that Park and Recreation will be providing some file storage space for other Town Hall departments, and we will be located in our own offices and not moved to another location temporarily. Over the winter, we'll concentrate on cleaning up our areas in Town Hall, so that only essential items will be moved to the new offices.

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### **TRAILS PLAN**

The Board of Selectmen has approved the Trails Master Plan, along with the Conservation Commission, Park and Recreation Commission and School Committee, so it is now an official plan. We had hoped to have a kick-off celebration in November at Ridge Hill, but it seems that it won't be possible because of schedule conflicts. Hopefully, we'll be ready to go before the spring! As there is no additional staff to help oversee the plan or work with volunteers, the Conservation staff and Park and Recreation staff will work out how to get everything started. In some towns, a volunteer steps forward to help with some logistics, so we'll keep an eye out for someone who might be appropriate and work with our boards/departments.

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### **VIRGINIA GRAEME BAKER POOL AND SPA SAFETY ACT**

Last winter, Congress approved this safety act that requires drain covers to meet certain standards in public pools to decrease the possibility of swimmers being sucked onto the drains. I am meeting with some engineers next week to see what Rosemary Pool needs to have done to comply with the law.

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### **FENCING**

The split rail fencing will be replaced this fall at Cricket Field and Greene's Field through last year's capital funds. The DPW Highway Division has a contract for the wood guard rail fencing that replaces the split rail fencing, so I don't need to go through a lengthy procurement process for this type of fencing. The sturdier wood guard rails provide more protection, but also will withstand spectators sitting on them, which is a frequent occurrence at both parks. Other fencing projects will go through the procurement process over the winter.

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### **TENNIS COURTS**

The surfacing on the tennis courts at the High School has been applied, and the removable poles are installed. Nets are not up now, but may not go up until the spring. These courts will officially come on line in the spring, and give us the opportunity to go through the bid process for renovating the Mills courts in the spring or summer. I'll be working with DPW Engineering on the Mills courts, and will also see if the same contractor, as part of the project, can repair a crack that appeared at Newman this summer.