

PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION TOWN OF NEEDHAM, MASSACHUSETTS

Minutes of Meeting September 22, 2008

- PRESENT:** Cynthia J. Chaston, Chairman
Brian S. Nadler, Vice Chair
William R. Dermody, Member
Christopher R. Dollase, Member
Patricia M. Carey, Director
Karen A. Peirce, Assistant Director
- ABSENT:** Philip V. Robey, Member
- GUESTS:** Residents : Bob Cohen, Diana Kleiner, Ed DeMarrais, Nancy Kamwer,,
Nancy Lankford
Landscape Institute: Elizabeth Westling, Paul Van Broekhoven
Town Meeting Member: Susan Abbott
Needham Friends of Woods and Waters: Sam Bass Warner, Josephine
Fogarty , Ginny Stevens, Harriet Goldin, Lew Benjamin
League of Women Voters Needham: Susan Mc Garvey
Conservation Commission: Lisa Standley

The meeting convened at 7:01PM in the Selectmen's Meeting room located in the Town Hall.

1. **Minutes of Meetings:** None presented.
2. **Financial Report:** Ms Carey presented the August 2008 Financial Report. Ms. Carey noted the summer 2008 revenue and expense report will be available in October showing calendar year information.
3. **Correspondence:**
 - A. **Letter to Ms. Carol Henderson re: Hemlock Gorge:** Ms. Carey responded to a letter from Ms. Henderson regarding poison ivy at Hemlock Gorge indicating that Hemlock Gorge is under the jurisdiction of the Department of Conservation and Recreation. In the letter she reviewed the Town of Needham IPM policy and included some informational material on chemical treatments near water resources.
4. **Assistant Director's Report:** The following programs are full: The 2nd Annual Turkey Hunt, 3 tennis tykes classes, 3 senior exercise classes, 1 senior yoga class, badminton, 4 adult golf classes, 4 ice skating classes and 5 adult tennis classes. 3 youth tennis classes filled immediately. The tennis instructor agreed to offer 2 more classes which took 20 people off the waiting list. Ms. Peirce is currently looking for ice skating staff and Kids Night Out staff. Former summer employee Andy Wise recently competed in power lifting in the Para Olympics held in Beijing, China. A reception will be held for him in Natick on September 27th.

5. Discussion Items

A. Director's Report: Submitted in writing prior to the meeting. Ms. Carey reported that she is finalizing the sign and the rules and regulations for the night time geocaching at the Town Forest. Once it is completed she will forward it to Wendy Birchmire to post on the geocaching website. The sign will need to be placed in the cars parked at the Town Forest to inform the police. Ms. Carey stated that she has met with DPW staff to discuss their assistance in some playground maintenance. Mr. Dermody asked if DPW helping to maintain the playgrounds would affect the budget. Ms. Carey indicated the budget would remain the same and she would still hire outside help. She is also creating a form the school custodians can use to do daily checks of the playground area and to report incidences of vandalism or unsafe conditions. Mr. Dermody asked about the traveling Vietnam Memorial and the field scheduling at Memorial Park during it's visit. Ms. Carey is working on rearranging the schedule while the Vietnam Memorial is located at Memorial Park.

B. Landscape Institute Student Presentation: Camp Property: Mr. Paul Van Brokehoven and Ms. Elizabeth Westling from the Landscape Institute each presented their design concepts for the area surrounding Rosemary Lake. Mr. Brokehoven's concept included creating a handicapped accessible 2/3 mile trail around the lake creating wooden boardwalks for access to the water and across the water, a wildflower meadow, a "green" nature center, a marsh garden, a community garden and a conservation meadow. The design concept presented by Ms. Westling recommends removing Rosemary Pool from the area to create a nature center. She would also include 2 trails one surrounding the lake and one surrounding the perimeter of the lake and the camp property, a play area/tree house to for outdoor education, a marsh garden, an ice skating pond in a meadow, a flowering understory using boardwalks, restrooms and improve vehicular access to the camp property. Mrs. Chaston thanked Mr. Brokehoven and Ms. Westling for their research. Mr. Nadler asked about budget considerations. The students noted the design concept was created with no budgetary constraints. Mr. Sam Bass Warner summarized the presentation indicating the concepts deserve some attention. He feels that grants could be available to assist in making the trails handicapped accessible. He also noted the Friends of Woods and Waters would be able to fund raise for this project. He asked that the Friends of Woods and Waters work with the Park and Recreation Commission to place the Rosemary Lake trail project at the forefront of the town projects. Mrs. Chaston indicated the Trails Committee has recommended using universal design to create a trail at the Reservoir but the Commission will continue to look at the camp property. Mr. Nadler also suggested finding ways to work with the Friends of Woods and Waters.

- C. Trails Master Plan Update:** Ms. Carey announced that the Board of Selectmen would not be addressing the Trails Master Plan at tomorrow night's Board of Selectmen's meeting. Lisa Standley, Ms. Carey, Mrs. Chaston and Kristen Phelps from the Conservation Commission met last week to review plans for the next step. To kick off the new Trails Master Plan, they have planned a guided trail walk on November 8, 2008 at Ridge Hill Reservation. On that day they will hand out trail brochures, refreshments and possibly install the first kiosk on the site. Dr. Standley announced the following:
Trail maps and information will be cross linked on the Town's website through the Park and Recreation, School and Conservation Commission web pages.
The group will be working on organizing a corps of volunteers to lead groups to help maintain the trails.
She is working with the DPW to come up with a plan for a universal trail design around the Reservoir.
A graphic design competition will be announced for the High School art students to create a logo to be used on the kiosks and other materials.
She will be working with Eagle Scouts offering to build the trail kiosks as Eagle Scout projects.
At this time the Trails Advisory Committee has officially completed their task. Dr. Standley hopes to create a sub committee to involve people from Park and Recreation, Conservation, DPW and the School Committee to carry on the trails work and create a gift fund to be used for trail projects.
Mrs. Chaston thanked Dr. Standley for attending the meeting and updating the Commission on the Trails Master Plan.
- D. Field Construction Update:** Ms. Carey is working with NSTAR to complete the finals plans for the transformer to be installed at Memorial Park. The Memorial Park dugout stone was installed with the incorrect material and is being replaced with the correct material. The old bleachers are up and can be used at this time. Mr. Nadler asked about signage for the parks. Ms. Carey recommended discussing signage needs at an upcoming meeting. She noted the DeFazio Field project is coming along with turf being installed in mid October. The Memorial Park Field dedication was held on September 12th the evening of the Needham High School Football season opener under the lights.
- E. Directors Current Project List:** Ms. Carey reviewed the current project list and was pleased to report some items were completed and action was taken on others.

F. Other Business: Ms. Carey will have information sent to Wendy Birchmire regarding the approval for Saturday night geocaching in the Town Forest. Ms. Peirce announced that the new High School Student Council liaison for the 2008/2009 school year is Zoe Peirce. Mr. Nadler suggested having a Commissioner assigned as a liaison to the Needham Woods and Waters group. Mr. Nadler hopes that a meeting will be held shortly to determine Needham Highs Softball field usage.

6. Action Items:

A. Accept Donation from Condon Realty for Playhouse at Perry Park:

Mr. Dollase made a motion to accept the donation from Condon Realty of a playhouse for Perry Park. Mr. Nadler seconded the motion and the motion was approved

B. Accept Donation of Riverside Park Donations from Hanover

Company: Mr. Dollase made a motion to accept the donation of Riverside Park from the Hanover Company. Mr. Dermody seconded the motion and the motion was approved

C. Reschedule 2nd October Meeting Date: The Commissioners confirmed the October meeting schedule. The first meeting will be held on Monday, October 6th at 7PM, location to be announced. The second meeting will be held on Monday, October 27th at 6:30PM at the Newman School prior to the Special Town Meeting.

7. Adjournment: Mr. Dollase made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:45PM. Mr. Dermody seconded the motion and the motion was approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen A. Peirce, CPRP, CTRS
Assistant Director