

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

**Minutes of Meeting
May 20, 2019**

PRESENT: Christopher J. Gerstel, Chairman
David C. DiCicco, Member
Michelle S. Geddes, Member
Patricia M. Carey, Director
Angela O'Connor, Assistant Director

ABSENT: Cynthia J. Chaston, Vice Chairman
Matthew M. Toolan, Member

GUESTS: Hank Haff, Construction and Design Project Manager
Ed Olsen, Superintendent of Parks and Forestry

Mr. Gerstel called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM at the Rosemary Recreation Complex.

1. Minutes of Meeting – April 22, 2019: Mr. DiCicco made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 22, 2019 meeting. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Geddes. The minutes of April 22, 2019 were approved unanimously.

2. Discussion Items:

A. Emery Grover School Administration Study: Mr. Gerstel welcomed Hank Haff, the project manager for the PPBC study. Mr. Haff explained that the anticipated size of a new building for School Administration would be equivalent to the Public Services Administration Building (PSAB) on Dedham Avenue. BH+A has been hired to do the study of the current location, as well as some alternate sites. The PPBC and Mr. Haff are requesting permission to study a parcel of land adjacent to Dwight Field on Dwight Road, and the former gravel pit off of Greendale Avenue. Mr. Haff reviewed both sites. Mr. DiCicco asked if either parcel was parkland, but Ms. Carey noted that both had been transferred from the Select Board to Park and Recreation Commission for recreation purposes. There might some wetlands near the former gravel pit, but do not appear to be any conservation restrictions at Dwight. Mrs. Geddes asked if parking would be impacted at Dwight, but Ms. Carey said that it would be improved but still available for use. Mr. Haff noted that the School Committee has chosen not to include DeFazio parking lot in the study, so that it will remain available for any possible future school. At Hillside, the building will be used temporarily for Police, Mitchell and Pollard projects, so would not be available for re-use for a number of years, but it will be considered, moving the “swing space” to something in the DeFazio parking lot. Mrs. Geddes asked about neighborhood impact on Greendale Avenue. Ms. Carey reminded the Commission that they had been part of a public hearing on that property with an Eversource request, and neighbors raised concerns about the loss of trees. Mr. Gerstel was concerned about additional traffic on Central Avenue for use of the Dwight parcel. Mr. Gerstel asked if

there were safety concerns that would require doing the project in the near future. Mr. Haff said that major repairs have been postponed while waiting for a decision on the building's future, and that there is no ADA access. Ms. Carey noted that the study would provide additional information to the Commission for any possible future discussions about the property, but did not provide approval for re-use. The consensus of the Commission was to support the study of the two parcels, though Mrs. Geddes restated her concern about neighborhood impacts.

B. Summer Field Projects – Synthetic Turf Replacement, Cricket Field: Mr. Gerstel welcomed Parks and Forestry Superintendent Ed Olsen. Mr. Olsen stated that both projects are now in the contract stage. He is pleased with the contractors for both projects. It is anticipated that DeFazio will start in June and take 3-4 weeks. Memorial would start after 4th of July and also take 3-4 weeks. Ms. Carey will work with the late June/July field users at DeFazio on alternate spaces, as well as the early August users from Memorial. Mr. Gerstel asked if there will be impacts on the parking lot due to space needed for construction vehicles and supplies. Mr. Olsen believes that most of the storage will be at the field site, but will confirm with the contractor. Mr. DiCicco asked about the old turf. Mr. Olsen will do a change order to the contract and have pieces reused in the batting cages and at the dog park. The bulk will be recycled, and a receipt of delivery to a recycling center will be provided. The Cricket project will start in late June and take about 4 weeks. The Cricket program will still have green space for their use.

C. Athletic Field Capital Plan: The Commission reviewed an outline of each park and athletic field that Ms. Carey put together for the discussion. Mr. DiCicco noted how much work has been done during Mr. Olsen's tenure, with funds that had not been available in prior years. He also noted that the Town Manager had come to the Commission to ask that field use fees be raised, and since that time she has supported funding the construction projects. Ms. Carey noted that the success of the projects has also brought in private trainers and non-permitted groups to use the fields, which has impacted the field conditions. Mr. Gerstel asked if there was an update on repairing basketball poles at Newman and High Rock. Mr. Olsen noted that they repairs are on the Building Maintenance Division's list. Mr. DiCicco asked about the building drains at Newman. Mr. Olsen noted they have failed and are sending water down to the fields, so he is coordinating with Building Maintenance on the need for repairs. Mr. Olsen noted that it is challenging doing work on school fields, as the principals prefer that work not be done during the school day, but that is also the same hours as the DPW work hours. Ms. Carey stated that it would be helpful for Commission members to speak to School Committee members on this topic. Reviewing the list of projects, Ms. Carey reminded the Commission that Mr. Toolan had asked that projects at Claxton reflect that it is a varsity field for Girls Softball, and consider an outfield fence. Mr. Olsen will look at some options to bring back to the Commission. Mr. Olsen has a major athletic facilities improvement plan, but separate from that is a capital request for Asa Small diamond, based on discussions about a partnership with Needham Baseball and Softball. The Dwight project from last fall is also not on the list. The Commission will discuss the priority of both at an upcoming meeting. For the track renovation project, Mr. DiCicco

noted that it might be a candidate for funds from the Athletic Facility Fund. Mr. Olsen and Ms. Carey have discussed using tournament fees to do a sand injection project at High Rock and Memorial 90' to assist with drainage. It worked well at High Rock, but only about 2/3rds of the multi-purpose field was done initially. The Commission supported the project, and Mr. DiCicco might have a donation source that could assist with the funding. Ms. Carey also noted that the donation of a lacrosse wall is also under discussions. Mr. Olsen has an estimate of \$30,000 for an outfield fence at McLeod, which would help create a safety barrier, but also help create a walkway to reach Brock Field which has been on the Commission's list. This could be funded from Clinic Fees.

D. Friday Family Fun Nights: Ms. Carey stated that Ms. O'Connor is coordinating with Needham organizations to host the Family Fun Nights for 8 Friday nights over the summer. In the past, the staff handled all the activities, but with the outside groups, they may be looking to do some special activities. The Commission's consensus was that small activities could be coordinated by the staff, and that large types of events would come before the Commission for approval. An example of a small activity would be Needham Community Council bringing in pre-made slush cups to hand out, with a food permit in place. Ms. O'Connor said that the activities would be planned around the program weekly themes.

E. Rosemary Recreation Complex – Construction, Operations, Memberships, Celebrations: Ms. Carey provided a membership update, which is attached as Appendix A. The spray deck has been prepared to be repainted, as some areas didn't hold the paint last year. The contractor has struggled to find a length of time that the temperatures are appropriate for painting, and that it isn't raining. The staff has all been hired, with a few final hires submitting paperwork. Applications are still being accepted, especially for candidates who are available late in the summer, who might be able to take over for people leaving early for school. Ms. O'Connor was pleased with the selection of candidates. Mrs. Geddes reviewed the tasks for the opening celebrations. Roche Bros. will donate \$200 worth of food for either day. The "ribbon cutting" thank you party will be Friday, May 31 from 7-8:30 PM, with alcoholic beverages and simple appetizers. Mr. Gerstel will submit the request for the permit. Ms. Carey will help with the invitation and getting it out to the boards. Mr. DiCicco asked that it remain a celebration and not be political. Mr. Gerstel will look for ribbon and large scissors for the ceremony. On Saturday, June 1st, there will be a luau, with activities throughout the day. Mr. Gerstel is talking with the Exchange Club about cooking hotdogs and hamburgers, and will see if the Village Club might have the grills. Ms. O'Connor has been looking at decorations and leis that could be handed out. The staff will primarily focus on pool operations, but will help volunteers with activities.

3. **Director's Report:** The Commission reviewed the written report. The re-organization of the Commission will take place at the next Commission meeting. Mrs. Geddes will not be able to attend the June 24th meeting.
4. **Program Report:** The Commission reviewed the written report. Ms. O'Connor reported that most spring programs are coming to an end this week. The Girls on the Run 5K will be

on June 1st. Mr. Gerstel has seen a number of participants using the pop-up skate park at Mills. His son participated in stocking the Reservoir prior to the Family Fishing Festival and enjoyed the experience. He commended the social media presence of the Touch the Trucks event.

5. Action Items:

A. Special Event Request – Cub Scout Pack 4: Ms. Carey noted that this was an annual event and there were no conflicts. Mr. DiCicco made a motion to approve the request from Cub Scout Pack 4 to hold their family BBQ at Claxton Field tot-lot on Sunday, June 2 from 3-6:30 PM with a raindate of June 9th. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Geddes and approved.

B. Special Event Request – Charles River Center Ellie Bloom Special Olympics: Ms. Carey noted that this is an annual event with no concerns. Mrs. Geddes made a motion to approve Charles River Center's request to host the Ellie Bloom Special Olympics at DeFazio track and Carleton Pavilion on Saturday, September 14 from 6 AM – 2 PM. The motion was seconded by Mr. DiCicco and approved.

6. Issues Not Reasonably Anticipated by Chair within 48 Hours: None presented.

7. Topics for Future Agendas: Mr. Gerstel asked for an update on the Big Belly deployment. Ms. Carey will check with DPW. Mr. Gerstel asked about the DeFazio signs. The signs have been ordered and will be put in place this summer. The solar speed sign will be ordered this summer. Mr. DiCicco wondered if a sign board, similar to the large board at Memorial, could be added to Claxton. Ms. Carey said that it could be done, within the guidelines of Sign By-Law. Mr. DiCicco suggested it might be a good Eagle Scout project.

8. Adjournment of Meeting: Mr. DiCicco made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:33 PM. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Geddes and the meeting adjourned at 9:33 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia M. Carey, CPRP
Director