

TRUSTEES OF MEMORIAL PARK

Article 46 - Appropriate Design Monies to Reconstruct Fieldhouse

The Trustees of Memorial Park are an elected five-person Town Board authorized by Mass. General Laws, Chapter 41, Section 105. Three of the Trustees must be veterans and two non-veterans. The Trustees oversee the land from the top of Admiral Gracey Drive (adjacent to the High School), down the hill to Highland Avenue, and over to Rosemary Street, including the Memorial area, all playing fields, gazebo, Gateway Garden, fieldhouse and parking lot. The undersigned Trustees respectfully ask for your vote in favor of **Article 46**, which seeks to appropriate \$375,000 to conduct a “**design**” of a reconstructed fieldhouse at the Park.

Frequently Asked Questions

- Q. What is the history of Memorial Park?
- A. The Park’s broad, flat plain (the current playing fields) was created in 1921 by citizen volunteers to honor those who had served in World War I. The original one-story brick fieldhouse/garage was constructed in the mid-1950’s. In October 1985, a 2nd floor was added by generous citizen volunteers. In 2008, the Park’s playing fields were entirely reconstructed and reconfigured (along with DeFazio Park), with \$5.5 million being privately raised and donated for this work.
- Q. What is the current condition of the Park’s fieldhouse?
- A. The fieldhouse has served Needham well for many years, but it has outlived its intended shelf-life and is in dire need of reconstruction. The building is out of compliance with the current building code and is not handicap accessible. The 1st floor is used to house equipment, machinery and chemicals, but not properly set apart from other occupied space. The stairs to the 2nd floor are precarious and the 2nd floor hallway is not level. There is no elevator to access the 2nd floor meeting and storage areas, and those storage areas may pose a fire risk. The public restrooms are in very poor condition and are also not handicap accessible.
- Q. Why is this project coming forward now?
- A. As with any 60-year old building, the fieldhouse has required an increasing number of repairs, most of which have been performed by the Town, but many by citizen volunteers. However, the building is now in such disrepair and out of code, it can only be improved by a significant reconstruction. When the Board of Selectmen conducted its 2014 study of Town buildings by HKT Architects, the fieldhouse was included, and it was noted that a substantial renovation was required (the full HKT report can be viewed on the Town’s website at needhamma.gov/index.aspx?NID=2119). Accordingly, the May 2016 Annual

Town Meeting appropriated \$50,000 to conduct a Feasibility Study of the fieldhouse, which has just been completed by Winter Street Architects.

Q. Why is this project important for the Town?

A. Winter Street Architects surveyed all groups that currently use the fieldhouse and found **it is used over 220 times a year**, including the following:

- Memorial and Veteran's Day Ceremonies
- Meeting space for the Trustees of Memorial Park and the American Legion
- Needham High School sports teams, including visiting teams (to gather at halftime and in violent weather, and also to treat injured players)
- Needham Exchange Club (as part of the annual July 3rd and 4th Celebrations)
- Needham Little League/Softball, Junior Football/Cheerleading; American Legion Baseball, Touchdown Club, Boys and Girls Lacrosse (use of the fieldhouse for meetings, sign-ups, and to store equipment in the off-season)
- Department of Public Works (storing equipment to maintain the fields, Memorial area and Gateway Garden)
- Park & Recreation's "Arts in the Park" programs, and ParentTalk's "Flicks on the Field" event
- The concession stand and public restrooms are part of the fieldhouse

Q. What are the Architect's key recommendations?

A. A complete reconstruction and slight expansion in order to: segregate the "garage" for DPW equipment, materials and supplies; remedy all code deficiencies; create handicap accessibility; construct "team rooms" on the 1st floor with restrooms; build larger/improved meeting space and a multi-purpose room on the 2nd floor, and renovate the public restrooms and concession stand area.

Q. What is the expected construction cost for this project and how will it be funded?

A. Total costs (including Design and Construction) are \$5.8 million. The construction Article will be brought before Town Meeting for a vote in May 2018. The Town-wide Financing Plan will be completed this week and will show this fieldhouse reconstruction project can be financed through a combination of cash and debt within the operating budget.

Memorial Park and its fieldhouse is centrally located in Town, encompasses our 2nd largest playing fields, is conveniently situated just below the High School and across from the Library and has a large parking lot. The Park is used every other day by so many Needham citizens and community groups. The Board of Selectmen unanimously supports adoption of **Article 46**, and for the compelling reasons listed above, the following Trustees respectfully ask for your vote in favor.

John Gallelo, Trustee and Chair
Mark Forbes, Trustee and Vice-Chair

Jim Healy, Trustee and Clerk
Chuck Mangine, Trustee