

Town of Needham, Massachusetts
Community Preservation Committee
Meeting Minutes
January 25, 2023

Place: Hybrid Meeting, Highland Room, 1471 Highland Avenue, Needham
The Board will attend in person or remotely. The public may attend in person or via Zoom.

Present: Chair, Peter Pingitore; Vice-Chair, Robert Dermody; Dave Herer, Jeanne McKnight

Remote: Joe Barnes, Laura Dorfman, Reg Foster, Dina Hannigan, Rick Zimbone

Absent: None

Staff: Stacey Mulroy, Park & Recreation; Cecilia Simchak

Call to Order

At 5:30 p.m., Chair Pingitore called the meeting to order, read the Open Meeting Law statement and disclosed the meeting is being video recorded.

Chair's Updates

See the update below for FY2024-04: Claxton Field.

FY2024-03: DeFazio Playground Presentation

Stacey Mulroy shared the presentation with CPC members.

- Park & Recreation is asking for \$35,000 for design funding.
- Playground Strategies:
 - Needham has 18 playgrounds. A 2021 Playground Assessment identified a priority list.
 1. Identify the next playground to renovate and/or replace.
 2. Improve - All future playground renovations will include PIP (poured in place) surfacing and ADA & Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB) requirements.
 3. Commit - Create a specific maintenance plan for all playgrounds including High & Low Frequency inspections, assessments and audits when applicable.
- The average life of a playground is 15-20 years. DeFazio is approximately 26 years old.
- Photos of safety concerns were reviewed.
- Cost estimates are \$200,000-\$400,000 and could include PIP surfacing, fencing, and equipment replacement.

CPC members discussed the project with S. Mulroy.

- DeFazio Tot Lot will be designed for children in the 2 - 5 age bracket.
- Grass, trees, shrubs and wetlands will be preserved; keep shade in place.
- Capital Plan 5-year needs alternate, with design one year and construction the next year. Design then construction every other year is the ongoing plan for 18 playgrounds.
- Playgrounds which require renovation include Perry Park followed by Mills or Cricket.

- Park & Recreation mapped out a 10 year plan assessing unmet recreational needs tallied by the Active Assets Recreation Working Group. The information will be available at the end of April and will be factored into the Capital Plan. CPC would like to see the 10 year plan.
- Park & Recreation would request some CPA funding for the \$200,000-\$400,000 project. PIP rubber surfacing may not be eligible for funding; playground equipment would be eligible.
- The Tot Lot is near the middle school and is a Town rather than a neighborhood feature.
- It will take 8 years to renovate 4 playgrounds; why not renovate more than one at a time? Park & Recreation has project needs for fields and courts to be renovated concurrently.
- Maintenance was identified as a serious concern by CPC. What has Parks done to put a dollar amount on the issue?
 - Budgeting - There was \$10,000 in the playground maintenance budget. We moved forward with the \$25,000 received at Town Meeting. In the past, we had a part-time playground person to check playgrounds. We moved the line item for that position to the budget as well as the next level person to come in and do work, as well as a third level cost for the vendor who can install something ordered. We've shored up the maintenance line item significantly. The \$25,000 received will almost exclusively go to upgrade Eliot.
- S. Mulroy defined operational changes made to address maintenance issues. There are four types of assessment: (1) high frequency assessments include daily or weekly assessment of trash and broken equipment; (2) low frequency assessments are more in-depth but happens less often (stairs tilt in the wrong direction); (3) playground assessments; and (4) playground audits, if standards change or new standards are added.
- P. Pingitore appreciates that Park & Recreation put a couple of projects on the board for the fiscal year, but this is not an endorsement from the CPC for the next 5-8 years.
- Members discussed use and assessment of the need for a playground renovation. There is concern "if you build it, they will come." There may be a big demand with only 1 or 2 tot lots.
- S. Mulroy discussed the Open Space & Recreation Plan (OSRP) versus the Active Recreation Assets Working Group assessment of unmet recreational needs. A Warrant Article may be developed to bring the OSRP back to the table for FY2025 so Parks & Recreation can get a full OSRP.
- The Select Board and Park & Recreation put together the Active Recreation Assets Working group to assess the unmet recreational needs in Town from all users including three groups who wanted a skate park, pickleball, and off-leash dog areas. If we think the needs are a priority, where can we place the skate park, parking, and have accessibility? S. Mulroy described the OSRP as more data-driven toward Open Space versus recreational facilities.
- How much of the \$200,000-\$400,000 need is due to lack of maintenance? Members discussed how much of needed renovations are due to safety standards that have changed versus conceptual principles that changed. What constitutes a good playground? The Parks & Recreation Maintenance budget last year was \$10,000 (\$555 per playground) and \$25,000 this year (\$1,389 per playground). Due to lack of playground maintenance, Parks & Recreation is left with using all the funds to fix the one worst playground. Equipment does wear out even after you've maintained it.
 - S. Mulroy will answer due diligence questions for Park & Rec by 2/1/23.

- Members discussed that although DeFazio playground is the only Tot Lot exclusively for children 2 - 5 years of age, other playgrounds have equipment for 2 - 5 year olds, but also contain equipment for multiple age groups.
 - Yes, Park & Rec cooperate with residents in fundraising campaigns.
 - Playground maintenance - Park & Rec does not have a dedicated maintenance person which delays repairs. Most funds go to an outside vendor for maintenance; some funds are used to hire DPW personnel, and some goes to the Park Ranger,
 - CPC would like the 5-8 year maintenance costs incorporated into the Park & Rec Operating Budget. Town Meeting suggested \$25,000. It was not enough. It costs the Town money in the long-term when we let it go and don't maintain it.
 - For new projects, Park & Rec is asking designers to project maintenance costs over 5, 10, and 15 years. They are creating maintenance plans for all facilities to find out what they can do to get to the next level with all the facilities.
 - CPC will hold a public hearing on 3/16/23. They plan to present the amendment for the CPC Plan at the hearing. They are waiting for stakeholders to contribute amendments to the plan. Park & Rec can send bullets to C. Simchak.

D. Hannigan left the meeting.

FY2024 CPC Applications – Updates and Discussion

- **FY2024 - 01: NHA Linden Chambers Redevelopment**
Liaisons, R. Dermody, L. Dorfman, R. Zimbone
 - CPC liaisons met with the Housing Authority and consultants at kick-off meeting to gain a more in-depth understanding of complex projects. This will be discussed at the 2/8 meeting. Liaisons will distill the information for the CPC meeting and Town Meeting.
 - Housing Authority will shift 60 units from State funding to federal funding. The reasons are complex.
 - Five year view - What does a preservation, redevelopment initiative look like for CPA funding versus how much outside funding is being leveraged? Liaisons will review.
- **FY2024 - 02: NHA Seabeds Cook Preservation**
 - One request for \$250,000 is 20% of the predevelopment cost with no further CPC funding.
 - Is it eligible? Does CPC want to fund development costs or wait to spend it on hard costs?
- **FY2024 - 03: DeFazio Playground**
 - Due diligence questions posed to Park & Rec will be reviewed after received on 2/1/23.
- **FY2024 - 04: Claxton Field**
 - The Claxton Field presentation has been pushed back to 3/1/23 as Park & Rec is in discussions with DEP and the Town regarding the project's scope. The placeholder remains the same at \$1,000,000. CPC will discuss the presentation at the 3/8 meeting.

Follow Up on Due Diligence Questions

The question about community use of the DeFazio playground was answered.

Updates to CPA Plan

Reg Foster and Rick Zimbone played a significant role in draft revisions to the CPA plan. Everyone has been working hard on it. Members discussed the edits which included particular language of the Statute for what CPA actually funds. Glossary definitions were added for 4 areas including **maintenance**, what is **capital improvement**, what is **rehabilitation**, what is **preservation**, as well as support of **community housing**. Send your comments to C. Simchak. A revised draft will be considered at the next meeting. Members requested an approved projects list.

Matters not reasonably anticipated by the Chair 48 hours in advance - There were none.

MOTION: P. Pingitore moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:13 pm.

SECONDED: D. Herer

VOTE: J. Barnes, aye; R. Dermody, aye; L. Dorfman, aye; R. Foster, aye;
D. Herer, aye; J. McKnight, aye; P. Pingitore, aye; R. Zimbone, aye.
Unanimously approved.

MOTION CARRIES: 8-0

Informational

The meeting materials packet is available at: <https://www.needhamma.gov/Archive.aspx>

Respectfully submitted,

Dale Michaud
Recording Secretary