

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

**Minutes of Meeting  
February 29, 2016**

**PRESENT:** David C. DiCicco, Chairman  
Cynthia J. Chaston, Member  
Christopher J. Gerstel, Member  
Patricia M. Carey, Director  
Robyn G. Fink, Assistant Director

**ABSENT:** Matthew M. Toolan, Vice Chairman

**GUESTS:** *Town of Needham:* David Davidson, Mike Retzky  
*Needham Residents:* Ben Kerrigan, Michelle Geddes  
*Community Center of Needham:* Jo-Anne Ochalla, Deb Whitney

Mr. DiCicco called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM in the Charles River Room at the Public Service Administration Building (PSAB).

- 1. Minutes of Meetings: January 25, 2016:** Mrs. Chaston made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 25, 2016 meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gerstel and the minutes were approved unanimously.
- 2. Director's Report:** The Commission reviewed the written report. Ms. Carey pointed out an article on a synthetic turf study. She pointed out that there are now many different options for infill mix and they would be looking at them as they move into replacing turf fields down the road. She also reminded the Commission that Needham's synthetic fields are tested annually. Mrs. Chaston asked Ms. Carey to share the video of trails projects that Conservation Director Matt Varrell and Ms. Carey shared with the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Gerstel noted the high amount of usage on the rail trail that he has seen.
- 3. Program Report:** The Commission reviewed the written report. Ms. Fink gave a re-cap of the February Vacation programs that were well received and a great success.
- 4. Discussion Items**
  - A. Rosemary Recreation Complex Funding – Assistant Town Manager**

**David Davison:** Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director David Davison spoke with the Commission about funding concepts for the Rosemary project. His current financing plan is based on a possible \$10 million project, with about 70% coming from CPA funds and 30% from Town funds. Once the project is known, and a determination is made with the CPC on percentages, the financing plan can be updated. The Town's portion will be paid for with existing funds, but the CPA may choose to use a combination of existing funds and debt. Mr. Davison said that fundraising is very difficult due to the

restrictions the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has in place. If gifts from donors were received, they would have to be without a return benefit. For example, a person couldn't donate to the project and receive a lower pool admission rate. In Needham, fundraising is typically done through a third party, which is non-profit. An example would be Friends of the Needham Public Library. Mrs. Chaston asked if a non-profit could raise funds for the Rosemary project. Mr. Davison stated that it is difficult to raise funds, and to depend on the amount being raised, so it is easiest for fundraising to be done for aspects that don't impact the major project. The spray park might be an example of a fundraising effort, as it is a desired amenity, but does not delay construction of the major facets of the project. Mrs. Chaston noted that some members of FinCom had asked about the possibility of partnering, but Mr. Davison noted that the Facility Financing Plan assumes that only public financing is used. He noted that residents had already shown their support for the project, and CPA and Town Meeting had already shown support through the initial funding. Mrs. Chaston asked if it would be expected to have pool fees utilized for repaying debt, but Mr. Davison said that it would not be an expectation. Jo-Anne Ochalla from Community Center of Needham (CCN) asked if there is a time frame for fundraising. Mr. Davison said that the project would not be dependent on fundraising, so there was not a set deadline. He noted that the Commission has a naming policy that would be used for any discussion on naming rights for a donation. Mrs. Ochalla asked if members of the Commission could provide information to help with fundraising. Mr. Davison said that all information was public record and the Commission could participate in providing the project information. In general, it is best for the Commission not to directly ask for funds, to avoid conflicts.

- B. Skate Park Concept – Ben Kerrigan:** Ben Kerrigan has been running a “learn to skateboard” program with Park and Recreation over the last three and a half years. He held a public meeting to gauge interest on building a skate park in Needham. He had about 15 people attend and found that most people wanted open space to skate, but not huge ramps. He would like to see the park be for younger residents, but with aspects for older skaters. While skateboarding is not a team sport, he feels skateboarders need a place to meet and skate together to teach one another. Mrs. Chaston asked if he would suggest only skateboarders or if BMX bikers could use it as well. Mr. Kerrigan said that most people that use skate parks understand the skate park etiquette so they can co-exist. Mr. DiCicco questioned the suggested size for a skate park. Mr. Kerrigan said that Roxbury has new one that is 400ft x 300ft which cost about \$40,000. Mrs. Chaston asked if most skate parks have fences, locked at certain times, or certain hours. Mr. Kerrigan said that most places are sunrise to sunset and fencing depends on the location. Mrs. Chaston said she likes the idea and supports it, however, like most projects,

space/location becomes the major challenge. Mr. DiCicco asked if a “pop-up” facility might be an option in a parking lot that isn’t used. Mr. Kerrigan supported the idea as it could be a good way to gauge interest without spending a lot of money. Mr. DiCicco would like to learn more about the equipment and liability.

**C. Rosemary Recreation Complex Project and Pool Design Advisory**

**Committee:** Project Manager Mike Retzky reviewed the project schedule. The Commission has made design decisions, with a few more to make, which will then allow the consultant to begin working on the cost estimate. Town departments are providing input on the plans, to insure there are no major concerns, plus to assist with preparations for the permitting phase. The Commission reviewed the current design concepts for the second floor of the building. The multi-purpose room is more than 2,000 square feet, with a lobby, restrooms, storage and kitchen area. The office spaces continue to be developed, with shared space for Park and Recreation and a second department. Mrs. Chaston noted that Center at the Heights wasn’t typically used on evenings or weekends, so she was concerned that this room would not get full use. Ms. Carey said the Town Manager and Board of Selectmen support the use of the building for night and weekends. Custodial service and building monitor issues will be reviewed as operating costs are developed. Mr. DiCicco asked for additional information on building use if the Health Department is located. He would like to insure that there is enough parking, and that there is an expectation that the multi-purpose room will be used throughout the day by Park and Recreation. Mrs. Ochalla asked if there would be concessions. Mr. Retzky said that a small area would be set aside for vending machines. Mrs. Ochalla feels that a full concession area is needed, but Mrs. Chaston noted that she has been involved with that at another site, and it is difficult to manage. Rosemary is located in close proximity to food establishments, and many families currently have deliveries made. Mrs. Whitney raised the question of having a ramp go around the building as it would be an inconvenience for parents with small children to walk around the facility to access the top floor. Mrs. Ochalla asked if a third floor could be added to the building at a later date. Mr. Retzky said that a third floor would not be an option. Mr. DiCicco asked, if the Commission decided not to move forward with the project, if design funds would still be needed. Mr. Retzky stated that design funds would be needed to develop plans for decommissioning the pool and building. Deb Whitney from CCN asked if there would be a viewing room for parents to use for programs. Ms. Carey stated that the doors would have glass and parents would be able to see, or come into the room. Mr. DiCicco expressed his concern that there are still information that is needed in order to provide information to residents, including cost estimates. Some of the issues to still be determined, in addition to cost estimates, include how the multi-purpose room will be used, pool

season and hours, use of spray park, other uses of the site, parking needs for the offices, and operating costs. . Mr. DiCicco suggested that the Girl Scouts be asked about returning their summer camp to the camp property. Ms. Carey noted that Patriots Trail Girls Scouts had chosen to stop using the site, due to its challenges and need to consolidate programs onto larger sites. Park and Recreation would like to use its own property for its summer programming.

- D. CPC Public Hearing:** Mr. Toolan will present the Rosemary Recreation Complex Project and answer questions at the March 9<sup>th</sup> CPC meeting.
- E. New Hillside School Project:** Ms. Carey reported that the conceptual site plan for Hillside is being developed, with input from Town departments, including Park and Recreation.. It will have a field space for the school, a gym that can be used for community space, playground spaces, and the trails. Some of the outdoor space is located on land owned by the Town of Wellesley.
- F. FY '17 Operating and Capital Budgets:** Ms. Carey reported that the department's budget will be reduced, as energy funds are moved to a new Town-wide fund for energy resources. The new solar farm revenue will be included in this fund. At this time, it appears the FinCom will support the Town Manager's budget recommendations.
- G. Joint Field Scheduling Policy:** Mr. DiCicco has met with the Trustees of Memorial Park, and they do not express the need for changes to the policy. They have voted to support use of the fields for captains' practices. He stated if a field is open, and not permitted, that Needham youth should have use of the field. Referring to an issue last summer, Ms. Carey noted that the policy states that multi-purpose fields are closed in the summer for maintenance and do not re-open until official High School use begins. Ms. Carey asked that discussions about summer field use be held with Parks and Forestry Superintendent Ed Olsen in attendance providing his input, and she will remind him to place the Field Closed signs on those fields to avoid confusion.
- H. Land Swap Proposal:** Ms. Carey stated that the Selectmen haven't scheduled a public hearing for input. Memorandums of agreement would be developed, so that each board has an understanding of how properties would continue to be used if jurisdictional changes were made by Town Meeting.
- I. Spring/Summer Field Scheduling:**
- a. Summer Clinic Conflicts:** Mr. DiCicco is trying to work out an agreement so that both Bay State Football and Soccer Club clinics can be held. Ms. Carey noted that the conflict is the result of an earlier start date for NHS sports than usual.

- J. DeFazio Projects: Eversource, MBTA:** The MBTA work continues at the bridge, but is coming closer to being finished. Eversource has completed their work at DeFazio and has begun to clean up their work area. Ms. Carey and Mr. Olsen will continue to work with both groups on the appropriate restoration plan, signs, and mitigation. Ms. Carey reported that Eversource will be at the next Commission meeting to discuss a new power line going through some of their parcels of land.
- K. Commission Goals and Assignments:** The goals will be reviewed late April/early May after all seats on the Commission have been filled.

## 5. Action Items

- A. Special Event Request: 128 Lacrosse:** Ms. Carey said there were no issues with their request as they do not conflict with the Track Club usage. Mrs. Chaston made a motion to approve the 128 Lacrosse's request to use DeFazio Park June 12<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup>, and July 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, and 14<sup>th</sup> for 128 Lacrosse Practice. Mr. Gerstel seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.
- B. Special Event Request: St. Joseph's School:** Mrs. Chaston made a motion to approve Saint Joseph Elementary School's use of Greene's Field on June 10<sup>th</sup> (rain date June 13<sup>th</sup>) for Field Day. Mr. Gerstel seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.
- C. Special Event Request: Pack 4 Cub Scouts:** Ms. Carey said that with Needham Baseball and Softball using the same parking lot, parking could be tight, but was doable. Mrs. Chaston made a motion to approve Needham Pack 4 Cub Scouts use of Claxton Field on June 5<sup>th</sup> (rain date June 12<sup>th</sup>) for their Annual Pack 4 Cub Scout Family BBQ. Mr. Gerstel seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.
- D. Addendum to Special Event Request: NSC Memorial Day Weekend Tournament:** Mr. DiCicco asked if the Soccer Club would be charging for participation, but Ms. Carey noted that there would not be a charge. Mrs. Chaston asked about current use of Small diamond during the tournament. Ms. Carey said that it was used as a warm-up area. Mr. Gerstel made a motion to approve use of Asa Small diamond outfield area, only, for bubble soccer demonstrations during the Memorial Day Weekend Tournament. Mrs. Chaston seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

6. **Topics for Future Agendas:** Mrs. Chaston noted the Board of Selectmen's upcoming public hearing on food trucks. Ms. Carey noted that the Selectmen were reviewing the current by-laws, but that the Commission would not be expected to participate in the public hearing, though are welcome to attend.
  
7. **Adjournment of Meeting:** Mrs. Chaston made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:15 PM. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gerstel and the meeting adjourned at 10:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Robyn Fink, CPRP  
Assistant Director