

TOWN OF NEEDHAM TRUSTEES OF MEMORIAL PARK

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, May 3, 2018 – 7:00 PM – Park Fieldhouse

PRESENT: John Gallelo, Chair; Mark Forbes, Vice Chair; Jim Healy, Clerk; Bill Topham; Dan Matthews – BOS Chair / Representative to TMP

ABSENT: Chuck Mangine

GUESTS: Matt Borrelli, Selectman, Memorial Park Fieldhouse “User Rep”; Mike Retzky, Public Facilities Construction Division; Bill Dermody, Dave DiCicco

The meeting was called to order by Chair Gallelo at 7:02 pm. A quorum was declared. The minutes of the Trustees meeting on April 18, 2018 were approved 5-0.

Healy advised that on April 24, the Board of Selectmen unanimously voted 5-0 in favor of the new fieldhouse project.

A Needham citizen, Gale Endyke, sent a letter to the Town Manager, who forwarded it to the Trustees asking if the archway could be re-painted black and the letters (Memorial Park) be re-painted gold (and not yellow). Endyke provided three examples – the archways/entryways to the Massachusetts State House, Mass. Bay Community College and Mass. General Hospital. Topham wanted to know who would pay for this work, and how much would it cost. Forbes stated the change might look good. The Trustees agreed to table this issue until we are provided with information about the involved costs and what Department’s budget would be tapped.

The Trustees discussed our current meeting practice of not “voting” on requests until they are discussed at two meetings. Topham moved that we change this practice and vote on matters whenever a Motion is made (excluding ZBA requirements on the use of field lights). Forbes seconded the Motion and it passed 5-0.

The Trustees then engaged in a lengthy discussion about the proposed reconstruction of the fieldhouse building and the related “Interim Rules and Regulations for Use of Memorial Park Fieldhouse”. Topham stated he was told that in 2014 the Town could have spent just \$750,000 to make the existing building handicap accessible and for other small renovations. Topham also said the entire building could be renovated for no more than \$2 million, and accordingly he is still against the current project cost estimate. Topham stated he will go to Town Meeting and talk to those bananas.

Matthews and Borrelli stated they had no knowledge of Topham’s claims.

Topham also stated the Memorial Park land is not part of the Needham High School, and that he doesn't care about the High School. Topham criticized those who were involved in the new High School addition because they didn't read the census. Topham then brought up the Rosemary Pool project, where he stated the voters were treated unfairly and the project only passed because of a slush fund. Topham then turned to the proposed Public Safety building, which he said is getting out of hand because the BOS were not watching the bottom line. Topham concluded his remarks by stating this is a stupid way to run a Town and the BOS are out of control.

Gallelo said the Trustees and the Town don't have the right to give away a portion of Memorial Park unless you go to the State legislature. Forbes inquired what it is that anyone is "giving away?" Forbes said a reconstructed fieldhouse will still be under the Trustees jurisdiction and the Rules governing "use" of the building will be set by the Trustees.

Healy stated that the Architects and the Town's Permanent Public Building Committee have done a great job analyzing the current very poor condition of the building and making recommendations that will address these issues as well as making the building handicap accessible.

Topham stated we are giving away too much in the proposed Rules. Healy responded by stating that we are the entity that approves the Rules, and accordingly, we are not giving anything away. Healy again reminded the Trustees that we don't meet frequently enough to be able to consider requests for use of the building on a daily basis.

Gallelo stated he doesn't agree with the final proposed design and the Architects and PPBC didn't listen to him – and that we were manipulated. Borrelli stated that all issues and suggestions related to the design and whether a renovation could effectively be done were fairly and fully considered. Some of our ideas were not feasible, some were not good construction practices, but the vast majority of what the Trustees wanted in a new building has been implemented. Borrelli also stated the Architects and Public Facilities Construction Division made a number of presentations to the Trustees all through the Feasibility and Design processes. Borrelli also stated many Town Boards have jurisdiction over certain land areas, but our Charter requires that the Town Manager have legal control over the Town buildings situated on these land areas, with the Boards setting the policies for use of the building, which is exactly what is being done here. Borrelli stated a reconstructed fieldhouse is much needed and will touch the lives of many Needham-mites, including our veterans.

Forbes agreed with Borrelli stating we shouldn't want anything for us, but rather for Needham's citizens. Forbes also stated he, too, has heard some complaints that the cost is higher than expected, but he understands this is the result of the current cost of public construction. Forbes also said he has heard a lot more support in favor of a reconstructed fieldhouse.

Gallelo said he represents the veterans. Matthews then addressed the general discussion by stating that Town Counsel has approved the legality of this project and the proposed Rules for Use. The Trustees will continue to have jurisdiction over this land and that is not changing. But all of our Town Boards need to work together for the Town's common good, like the Parking Agreements the Trustees entered into with the School Department and Park & Recreation so their respective new building projects could move forward. The use of the building will be handled just like the use of the playing fields, the Trustees will set the policy for use of the building with the proposed Rules, just like we set the policy for use of the fields under our Joint Policy with Park & Rec. Matthews said that the current cost of public construction is very high, as a result of the current high cost of materials, supplies and labor, and also because of the Commonwealth's construction laws and requirements. Matthews stated he believes a new fieldhouse is needed and it will well serve the Town for many years, but ultimately, Town Meeting will decide this issue.

Topham's Motion to Reject the reconstruction project was put back on the table and it failed 3-2 (Forbes, Matthews and Healy voting against). Healy then moved that the Trustees approve this project and recommend adoption of the related Warrant Article 30. Forbes seconded the Motion and it passed 3-2 (Forbes, Matthews and Healy voting in favor).

Topham Moved to reject the proposed "Interim Rules and Regulations for Use of Memorial Park Fieldhouse", which was seconded by Gallelo. Topham stated we don't need the Town Manager to have the final say on requests to use the new building, and we don't need her at all.

Forbes again stated the Town needs to be involved in this permitting process because we don't meet on a regular basis, and for the same reason the Town needs to be responsible for the daily care, maintenance and repair of this Town building.

Healy stated the proposed Rules are mostly directed to use of the 2nd floor function room, and that we Trustees are setting the policy for this use through our approval of these Rules. We are not giving up anything. Healy also reminded the Trustees that all other Town Boards have such "use" policies for Town buildings, including the Center at the Heights, the Library, Powers Hall, and Park & Rec. Matthews stated that having a Trustees agreed-upon set of Rules for "use" is an essential component of this project.

Topham's Motion to reject the proposed Rules was defeated 3-2 (Forbes, Matthews and Healy voting against). In order that there is no misunderstanding, and although this issue was just favorably voted at our last meeting on April 18, Healy again moved to approve the "Interim Rules and Regulations for Use of Memorial Park Fieldhouse", which motion was seconded by Forbes and voted in favor 3-2 (Forbes, Matthews and Healy voting in favor).

Matthews then Moved to authorize Healy to represent the Trustees during the proponents' presentation of Warrant Article 30 at Town Meeting, which Motion Forbes

seconded and passed 3-1-1 (Forbes, Matthews and Healy voting in favor, and Gallelo abstaining).

A Motion to Adjourn was made, seconded and approved 5–0 at 7:50 PM.

END OF MINUTES.

The next Trustees meeting is tentatively set for Monday, June 18, 2018, at 7:00 p.m., at the fieldhouse.

Respectfully submitted,

James G. Healy, Trustee and Clerk