

PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION TOWN OF NEEDHAM, MASSACHUSETTS

Minutes of Meeting July 14, 2008

PRESENT: Cynthia J. Chaston, Chairman
Brian S. Nadler, Vice Chair
William R. Dermody, Member
Christopher R. Dollase, Member
Philip V. Robey, Member
Patricia M. Carey, Director
Karen A. Peirce, Assistant Director

GUESTS: Bob Cohen, Resident
Lisa Standley, Chairman of the Conservation Commission
Janice Berns, Health Department Director
Ed Connolly, Board of Health Chairman
Alan Stern, School Physician
Tara Gurge, Environmental Agent, Health Department
Lauren Plumley, Intern, Health Department

The meeting convened at 7:03PM in the Selectmen's Meeting room located in the Town Hall.

- 1. Minutes of May 27, 2008 Meeting:** Mr. Robey made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 27, 2008 meeting. Mr. Dermody seconded the motion and the motion was approved

Minutes of June 9, 2008 Meeting: Mr. Robey made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 9, 2008 meeting. Mrs. Chaston recommended under Discussion Items: That the donation to Claxton was approved without any long term use of the field and that it may be a one year investment depending on the future use of Memorial Park.

Mr. Dermody recommended removing the word *poles* in the sentence listed below under Discussion Items: A. The first sentence should read as follows: *Mr. Retzky indicated that Junior Football would like to donate money to replace the lights (remove the word poles) at Claxton Field so that Junior Football can use the field more effectively after dark in the fall.* Mr. Dermody seconded the motion. The amended minutes of the June 9, 2008 meeting were approved.

Minutes of the June 16, 2008 Field Scheduling Summit: Mr. Robey made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 16, 2008 Field Summit. Mr. Dollase seconded the motion and the motion was approved.

- 2. Financial Report:** Ms Carey presented the May Financial Report and the June draft financial report. Ms. Carey indicated the revenue was lower due to the pool being closed for 10 days due to equipment repairs.
- 3. Correspondence:**
 - A. Needham Center Study Information:** Discussed later in the meeting.
 - B. National Citizens Survey:** Discussed later in the meeting.

4. Assistant Director's Report: Discussed later in the meeting

5. Discussion Items:

- A. **Draft Recommendations on Synthetic Turf:** Discussed later in the meeting.
- B. **Fall Scheduling Information:** Discussed later in the meeting.
- C. **Little League: Storage:** Discussed later in the meeting.
- D. **Little League: Claxton:** Discussed later in the meeting.
- E. **Geocache: Town Forest:** Discussed later in the meeting.
- F. **Director's Report:** Discussed later in the meeting.
- G. **Other Business:** Discussed later in the meeting.

6. Action Items:

A. Needham Trails Master Plan: Dr. Lisa Standley, Chairman of the Conservation Commission presented the draft Comprehensive Trails Plan. The consultant began looking at existing trails, mapped them out and developed a map for possible future trail connections. The Trail Advisory group will maintain and oversee the trails. They are seeking funding to hire a part time trails coordinator to oversee the volunteer efforts. Dr. Standley shared a copy of the maintenance plan map. Brochures outlining the trails will be available at the trail kiosks and on the Town website. Creating a handicapped accessible trail around the Needham Reservoir is a high priority for the group. They are planning a kick off event for the fall of 2008. The next step is to start educational outreach to the community and to get rid of rogue trails that are not on the maps. Mr. Dermody made a motion to endorse the Trails Master Plan as presented by Dr. Standley. Mr. Dollase seconded the motion and the motion was approved.

4. Assistant Director's Report: Ms. Peirce suggested hosting the Staff Appreciation party on Monday August 11th after the Commission meeting. She reported that programs and the pool were doing well. The pool is still running short 2 lifeguards but the staff members are making it work. Ms. Peirce met with a representative from the Peak Software Company to discuss on-line registration options. Roger MacDonald and Matthew Tocchio from the Technology Department and Chip Laffey from Public Facilities were also present. The Peak Software representative will be forwarding us more information that will help in the decision making process.

5. Discussion Items

A. Draft Recommendations on Synthetic Turf: Mrs. Chaston thanked the members of the Health Department and Board of Health for attending the meeting. The draft report Recommendations on Synthetic Turf Fields was presented by the Board of Health Chairman Peter Connolly and Health Department Director Janice Berns. One of the concerns is the temperature on a turf field is higher then on a grass field. Dr. Stern reviewed the Child Care Weather Watch chart that is currently being used by the schools. Lauren Plumley, a student intern for the Health Department, showed the group the thermometer she used to measure the turf temperature. All readings were taken during the day and not during evening hours. Mr. Connolly noted testing of fields could cost between \$400-\$500 per field. Dr. Stern recommended

educating the public about field temperature issues. Mr. Robey suggested being proactive testing the fields from the very beginning. The Health Department is working on the Recommendations on Synthetic Turf draft to present to the Board of Selectmen. Ms. Carey suggested staff from the Health Department, DPW, Park and Recreation, School Department, High School Athletic Director, coaches and the Principal get together to discuss temperatures, hydration and other issues concerning the use of synthetic turf fields. Mrs. Chaston thanked the group for sharing the information with the Park and Recreation Commission. Mr. Nadler applauded the efforts of the group and asked that we follow the CDC guidelines and share the most up to date information to educate the public.

3. Correspondence:

- A. Needham Center Study Information:** Ms. Carey presented the Needham Center Study Information.
- B. National Citizens Survey:** Ms. Carey reviewed the National Citizens Survey. Overall Recreation and Parks received supportive scores.

5. Discussion Items- Continued

B. Fall Scheduling Information: Ms. Carey reviewed the fall field schedule submitted by the High School Athletic Director for field use at Memorial Park. There has not been any discussion regarding the payment for the lights necessary for night games. Ms. Carey and Mr. Nadler will evaluate the information from the Field Summit meeting, reviewing the questionnaires and answers from the user groups. Ms. Carey also indicated that the Needham Soccer Club may take over the oversight of the adult soccer clubs.

C. Little League Storage: The Needham Little League has made a request to place a storage bin at the Dwight field parking lot. Currently they have a locker at the Memorial Park field house which does not provide enough square footage for the equipment for over 80 teams. Ms. Carey indicated more work needs to be done town wide in reference to storage. If Little League were to remove their equipment from Memorial Park it may free up some space for the Parks and Forestry Department who will need to store equipment related to the synthetic turf field. In the past requests have come from groups looking for permanent storage at DeFazio and the Commission refused the request. Ms. Carey suggested she work with the Parks and Forestry Superintendent Lance Remsen to come up with a storage policy to present to the Town Manager. Mrs. Chaston will let Little League know that their request is under review.

D. Little League: Claxton: The Needham Little League has made a request to convert the Claxton diamonds into two 60 foot diamonds with infield grass, proper mounds, removable outfield fencing and lights. The project would be paid for by Needham Little League. One of the major issues related to this proposal is the location of the High School Varsity softball team. Mitchell School field is not big enough for JV and Varsity to play at the same time. Avery Field could be an option for one team. Ms. Carey recommended more discussion is needed and suggested including Parks and Forestry Superintendent Lance Remsen, High School Athletic Director John Palmer, Girls Youth Softball Director Al Shapiro, the High School softball coaches and the Principal. Mr. Robey stated this is a long term decision and

should be a Park and Recreation Commission decision, not a decision made by coaches and the Athletic Director. Mr. Nadler noted there are many, many questions to consider regarding this proposal. One of the suggestions was to wait and see how the new field situation works out before making a decision. Ms. Carey stated she cannot absorb another project at this time. It was suggested that the Commissioners come up with a list of questions to discuss at an upcoming meeting. More time and information is needed before moving forward on this request.

E. Geocache: Town Forest: Wendy Birchmeire restated her request to geocache at night in the Town Forest. Mr. Dollase will schedule a time to go to the Town Forest prior to the next meeting.

F. Director's Report: Submitted in writing prior to the meeting.

G. Other Business: Mrs. Chaston thanked Mr. Dollase for his hard work and leadership during his term as Chairman of the Park and Recreation Commission.

6. Action Items:

A. Needham Trails Master Plan: Discussed earlier in the meeting.

B. Request: Friends of Woods and Water: Ms. Carey mentioned the report being circulated by Mr. Bass Warner regarding the Camp Property. Mr. Bass Warner has been working with students from the Harvard University Arnold Arboretum Landscape Institute to research the Camp Property. Ms. Carey noted two appointments were scheduled with the professor from Harvard and he cancelled both meetings. The report being circulated has not been seen by the Park and Recreation Commission. Ms. Carey will request a copy of the report and ask Mr. Bass Warner attend a meeting in September to present the report. Ms. Carey will inform Dr. Standley of the meeting so she can attend. Ms Carey will contact Mr. Bass Warner to invite him to a meeting in September.

C. Request: MetroWest Musical Festival: Mr. Dollase made a motion to approve the request to hold the MetroWest Musical Festival at the Claxton quarry area on August 9, 2008. Mr. Dermody seconded the motion and the motion was approved. Mr. Dollase thanked Ms. Carey for taking the time to guide the young men who are organizing this event as a fund raiser for the American Heart Association.

D. Request: Kevin Youklis: "Hits for Kids": Mr. Dermody made a motion to decline the request for the Kevin Youklis Hits for Kids event due to the field construction at Memorial Park and DeFazio Park this summer. Mr. Robey seconded the motion and the motion was approved to decline the request.

E. Refund Request: Mahoney: Mr. Dollase made a motion to approve the request from Mrs. Mahoney for a refund for a Rosemary Pool Family pass. Mr. Robey seconded the motion. A vote was taken and Mr. Dermody, Mr. Robey, Mr. Dollase and Mrs. Chaston voted to approve the request. Mr. Nadler voted not to approve the request. Ms. Carey will send Mrs. Mahoney a letter stating the refund will be processed once the pool passes are returned to the Park and Recreation Department.

F. Refund Request: Walsh: Mr. Dermody made a motion to approve the request for a refund for swimming lessons from Mr. Walsh. Mr. Dollase seconded the motion and the motion was approved.

G. Executive Session: Mr. Dermody made a motion to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property at 10:00PM and not return to the regular meeting. Mr. Dollase seconded the motion. There was a roll call vote and the motion was approved. Mrs. Chaston –yes, Mr. Nadler- yes, Mr. Dollase-yes, Mr. Dermody-yes, Mr. Robey-yes.

7. **Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 10:00PM to go into Executive Session.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen A. Peirce, CPRP, CTRS
Assistant Director