

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

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

January 9, 2009

*Background notes for Monday, January 12th
Park and Recreation Commission Agenda*

HOLIDAY OFFICE SCHEDULE

The office will be closed on Martin Luther King Day, which is Monday, January 19th this year.

ATHLETIC FIELD CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

From 12/19 notes: Except for some punch list items and returning to check on items after the winter, the majority of the work at DeFazio Park is done in the “northern” section near the Golf Course and in the center. DeFazio South is close to done with the final work being done prior to top soil and seeding. It is likely the top soil and seeding will wait for the spring, to avoid weed growth. The parking lot will be cleaned up and fencing will be reduced to allow residents use of the synthetic turf fields and the track. *Update: the weather conditions during the holiday season prevented much progress on the punch list items, but work will progress over the next few weeks, weather permitting.*

SCOUT PROJECTS

Karen and I have had several meetings with potential candidates for the Girl Scout's Gold Award and the Boy Scout's Eagle Scout Badge. The Gold Award candidate will have some trail work and clearing of an approved invasive species completed this spring. The Eagle Scout candidates are a few years of the need to complete their projects. We are discussing a variety of projects from the Open Space and Recreation Plan and the Trails Master Plan, as the four candidates all seem to have an interest in completing work that is outdoors and can be done by hand.

NEWMAN TRAILS

Because of weather, the meeting with the Needham Science Center related to trail work behind the Newman School has been postponed. We are trying to coordinate a Newman community event to get the needed trail work done, and the Needham Extended Day Program has also asked to be a part of the project. Combining this project with a possible Eagle Scout project, we could accomplish a lot within the next year.

ON-LINE REGISTRATION

We are in the process of drafting the RFP to purchase a software package and service for on-line registration this spring, along with a facilities scheduling package that would be used by Public Facilities – Operations for scheduling buildings, and Park and Recreation for scheduling fields.

SAFE SLEDDING AND SKATING

The regional news has included several stories about accidents and fatalities related to winter recreation activities...skating, sledding, and snowmobiling. Even though there are no ponds with a good layer of ice, youth in Needham have been seen skating on ponds! I've sent a *Letter to the Editor* to the Needham Times and Needham Hometown Weekly with the hope of reminding at least some of the people that each individual has to make the appropriate choices for safety.

MODULAR HOMES

There have been two requests in the past month to use the DeFazio parking lot to store modular home units for several weeks. Each company has been told that the request has to be in writing to be reviewed at a Commission meeting, but that since it's a private use of a public park, the Commission is likely to deny the request. As of this time, none of the builders have written a letter.

GREENE'S FIELD

There is currently a study committee looking at options for a new Senior Center. One parcel that continues to return to the discussion is Greene's Field. The two town-wide facilities studies (Kaestle Boos in 1999 and DiNisco in 2006) have viewed this site and not recommended it for a variety of reasons. As the use of this site for a building and parking area would eliminate an active park, I am asking for the Commission to have a discussion about Greene's Field, as the board's opinion is likely to be sought by the study committee. Greene's Field is under the jurisdiction of the Board of Selectmen, and under the administration of the Park and Recreation Commission, similar to Avery, Dwight and Perry parks.

FENCES

The split rail fences have been replaced at Greene's Field and Cricket Field. As noted last fall, the fences were replaced with wooden guard rails that are sturdier and will handle people sitting on them, along with keeping cars from entering. The contractor was under an agreement with DPW Highway Division, so I was able to procure the project under that contract. There are still other fences to replace, including the chain link fence at Cricket Field.

TRAILS MASTER PLAN and OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN

Most of the written report in the Trails Master Plan is now ready to go up on the website. Kristen Phelps and I are trying to coordinate this with the IT Department. There are some corrections needed on the maps, and once those corrections are made, those will also go on the Town's website. The Open Space and Recreation Plan still needs some changes made to the text. I'll be meeting with Kristen Phelps next week to try and move forward on completion of the final text, so that everything can be published.