

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

**Minutes of Meeting
January 27, 2020**

PRESENT: Christopher J. Gerstel, Cynthia J. Chaston, Matthew M. Toolan, Angela O'Connor, Kristen Wright

ABSENT: Michelle S. Geddes, David C. DiCicco

GUEST: Kate Fitzpatrick, Town Manager
Stacey Mulroy, Guest
Daniel Matthews, Select Board Member
Hank Haff, Building Design & Construction
Steven Popper, Building Design & Construction
Antony DelGaizo, Town Engineer
Christopher Burnham, Park & Recreation
Kimberly Parsons, Park & Recreation

Mr. Gerstel called the meeting to order at 6:47 PM at the Rosemary Recreation Complex.

Mr. Gerstel took item 5A out of order to be presented first.

5A. Town Manager: New Director

Mr. Gerstel welcomed Ms. Kate Fitzpatrick, Town Manager. Ms. Fitzpatrick introduced Stacey Mulroy to the Commission and gave her recommendation for Ms. Mulroy to serve as the Park and Recreation Director. Mr. Gerstel thanked Ms. Fitzpatrick for including the Commission members throughout the interview process. Ms. Fitzpatrick thanked the Commission for their participation. Mr. Toolan asked when Ms. Mulroy would be available to begin. Ms. Fitzpatrick stated that she could begin the last week of February.

Mr. Toolan moved that the Commission accept Ms. Mulroy as the new Park and Recreation Director. Ms. Chaston seconded the motion and it passed unanimously, 3 – 0.

1. Minutes of Meeting – December 16, 2019

Mr. Toolan made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 6, 2020 meeting. Ms. Chaston seconded the motion and it passed unanimously, 3 – 0.

2. Director's Report

The Commission reviewed the written report.

Mr. Gerstel took item 4A and 4B out of order to be presented next.

4A. Director of Building, Design & Construction: Feasibility Study

Mr. Gerstel welcomed Mr. Hank Haff, Building Design & Construction. Mr. Haff discussed current options the Emery Grover working group is evaluating. Mr. Haff focused the discussion with the Commission on Options 4 and 5 as they are designed where the current Steven Palmer

building, and Greene's field are located. Mr. Haff stated that Options 4 and 5 support objectives of the School Department including a meeting room space to fit all school staff, space to support a Day Care, and space to move the School ITC department to the Administration Offices. Mr. Toolan noted that when this project was originally discussed with the Commission Greene's Field was not identified as a parcel that they should be considered. Ms. Chaston stated that she and Mr. Gerstel were included in a Chair's meeting that discussed this location in regard to the feasibility study for Emery Grover. Mr. Gerstel asked what the current timeframe to acquire the Steven Palmer building. Mr. Steven Popper, Building Design & Construction, stated that the School Department would like to move forward as soon as possible and would recommend accelerating the buy-out. Mr. Toolan asked where the lay down area would be for either option 4 or 5. Mr. Haff stated that the lay down would be in the parking lot for option 4. Mr. Gerstel asked what the timeline would be if option 5 was the chosen option. Mr. Gerstel asked if they would take down Steven Palmer building, create the field and then construct the building on the field side. Mr. Popper stated that the construction would start on the building first and then the field construction would begin so the field would offline for several years. Mr. Toolan asked if the buy-out would be a part of the overall construction budget for the School Administration Building. Mr. Popper stated that would be a separate project. Mr. Haff stated that each option has constraints, unknowns and advantages. Mr. Haff stated that the current location is not ADA compliant and needs repair. Mr. Toolan stated that Greene's Field was a large investment that the Town and the Town residents funded recently, and he is not in favor of using Greene's Field as an option. Ms. Chaston stated that she currently likes the aesthetic of having green space visible when you enter the downtown area, but she is not as strongly opposed to moving Greene's Field. Mr. Gerstel stated that he is undecided on the matter especially as the field would have to be offline for an extended period and the fact that the Hillside site is not currently available. Mr. Gerstel stated that further input would also need to be gathered from the Park and Recreation user groups. Mr. Popper stated that further input would be gathered if option 5 became the preferred option. Mr. Toolan shared his concern about this option especially the timing of the project. Mr. Popper said that both options 4 and 5 would provide more parking for the Greene's Field facility. Mr. Gerstel stated that Park and Recreation would like to remain involved in the process. Mr. Haff welcomed Park and Recreation's input as this is not an easy decision. Mr. Gerstel asked what the plan is for the current Emery Grover building. Mr. Popper stated that nothing has been discussed at this time. Mr. Gerstel thanked Mr. Haff and Mr. Popper.

4B. Town Engineer: Rosemary Sediment Removal Project, Walker Pond, Rail Trail Trailhead

Mr. Gerstel welcomed Anthony DelGaizo, Town Engineer. Mr. Gerstel expressed concerns about timeline of the dredging project. Mr. DelGaizo stated that the contract states all work must be completed by May 15th and that the currently project timeline is showing a completion date near April 13th. Ms. Angela O'Connor, Assistant Director, asked if the April 13th date included full restoration of the beach. Mr. DelGaizo stated that it was a part of the contract for the beach to be restored. Mr. Toolan stated that the beach needs to be a priority and restored by April 15th to not interfere with the Pool opening. Mr. Gerstel asked if the contractor can clear the beach first and the cove second. Ms. O'Connor stated that she is concerned about what condition the beach will be in. Mr. Toolan stated that it does not appear to be protected as the contractor had

presented to the Commission. Mr. Gerstel stated that he appreciates the noticeable progress that has been made on the project, but there is concern about the delayed start. Mr. Gerstel asked Mr. DelGaizo to provide an update to the Commission at a meeting scheduled in the end of March or early April. Mr. DelGaizo stated he would continue to provide updates and had confidence in the progress the project is currently making. Mr. Gerstel asked how long it will take for the lake to be re-filled. Mr. DelGaizo stated that they have schedule two weeks but expects it to be less than that.

Mr. Gerstel asked Mr. DelGaizo about the project that was recently brought forward by the Walker Pond Watershed Association and that the Park and Recreation Commission is interested in starting a working group to see that project keeps progressing. Mr. DelGaizo agrees that improvements need to be made to Walker Pond but there are other considerations. Mr. DelGaizo stated that the EPA did not select Walker Pond as one of Town's priorities. Mr. DelGaizo shared that Rosemary Lake, the Reservoir, Fuller Brook, and the Charles River from Dover Road Bridge to Chestnut Street and from Chestnut Street to the Newton border were identified by the EPA. Mr. DelGaizo further shared that the DEP recently approved a product that treats vegetation. Mr. DelGaizo stated that this product was recently approved by Needham Conservation Commission and it is currently being used in a private pond. Mr. Gerstel asked what the current timeline for the Reservoir project. Mr. DelGaizo stated that it is on the Capital Project list for FY2021/2022.

Mr. Gerstel asked Mr. DelGaizo asked about the Fisher Street Trailhead on the Rail Trail. Ms. O'Connor asked about the walkway through the fencing as there did not appear to be one on the drawing that they reviewed at the last meeting. Mr. DelGaizo stated that it was a conspetual drawing that was intended to gather feedback on the design but that there would be a walkway between the parking area and the trail. Mr. Gerstel thanked Mr. DelGaizo for the updates on all three projects.

3. Program Report

The Commission reviewed the Program report.

4C. Capital/Operating Budget

Mr. Gerstel updated the Commission on the items discussed at the Finance Committee.

4D. CPC Proposals

Mr. Gerstel stated that there isn't a timeframe for the project, but it was deemed eligible by CPC. Mr. Gerstel stated that Mr. Olsen gave great presentations for both the DeFazio and Claxton projects. Mr. Gerstel previously mention that the Walker Pond proposal had been withdrawn and that Ms. Debbie Anderson, Director of Conservation, gave a great presentation about the Trail Improvements with the main concerns of the CPC regarding the maintenance of the trails going forward.

4E. 2020 Pool Season

Ms. Kristen Wright, Administrative Specialist, provided an update on the membership sales. Ms. Chaston discussed a conversation that she and Mr. Gerstel had with Mr. Devin Cashman, Aquatics Specialist. Mr. Gerstel invited Mr. Cashman to the next Commission meeting. Ms. O'Connor stated that the opening of the Pool to prepare it for the 2020 season will begin the week of April 27th and that we are still awaiting an opening tasks list from the architect. Mr. Gerstel asked the staff to continue to follow up with Mr. Retzky regarding the scope. Ms. Chaston stated she will touch base with the Town Manager regarding Mr. Cashman's concerns.

4F. Project Update

Mr. Gerstel asked about the dock to be installed at Rosemary Lake. Ms. O'Connor and Ms. Wright stated they would get an update for the next meeting. Mr. Gerstel asked about the speed sign at DeFazio. Ms. Wright stated she is working with the Highway Department and finalizing the order with the vendor.

4G. Rosemary Recreation Complex: Polling Location

Mr. Gerstel stated that he would talk to the Town Clerk about the timing of the polling drop off at Rosemary Recreation Complex.

5B. Fees: Sharks & Needham 1775

Ms. O'Connor and Ms. Wright presented the Fees recommendations to the Commission. Ms. Chaston asked if this program was a revolving fund program. Mr. Toolan stated he is concerned about increasing the number of participants and the impact it would have for the rest of the Pool members.

Ms. Chaston moved to approve the fees for the Sharks 2020 season. Mr. Toolan seconded the motion and the motion was approved unanimously, 3 – 0.

Mr. Toolan moved to approve the fees for the Needham 1775 program. Ms. Chaston seconded the motion and the motion was approved unanimously, 3 – 0.

5C. Special Event Requests

128 Lacrosse - High School Clinics

Mr. Toolan moved to approve the Special Event Request for 128 Lacrosse – High School Clinics. Ms. Chaston seconded the motion and the motion was approved unanimously, 3 – 0.

128 Lacrosse - Youth Clinic

Mr. Toolan moved to approve the Special Event Request for 128 Lacrosse – Youth Clinic. Ms. Chaston seconded the motion and the motion was approved unanimously, 3 – 0.

SunLife

The request was deferred until the group can provide a brief description for the request form and the dates are confirmed to not conflict with the High School Athletic schedule.

Monsignor Haddad – 7th Grade Reenactment of Pickett’s Charge

Ms. Chaston moved to approve the Special Event Request for Monsignor Haddad – 7th Grade Reenactment of Pickett’s Charge. Mr. Toolan second the motion and the motion was approved unanimously, 3 – 0.

6. Items Not Reasonable Anticipated by Chair within 48 Hours

Special Event Request – Needham Baseball & Softball Opening Day

Mr. Toolan moved to approve the Special Event Request for Needham Baseball & Softball – Opening Day, including the request to use the Carleton Pavilion, provided that there is no conflicts with Needham Track. Ms. Chaston seconded the motion and the motion was approved unanimously, 3 – 0.

Parking Request – Arts in Bloom

Ms. Chaston moved to approve the use of the upper parking lot for the Arts in Bloom event that will take place March 7th and 8th. Mr. Toolan seconded the motion and the motion was approved unanimously, 3 – 0.

7. Topics for Future Agenda

Mr. Gerstel stated that at the next meeting Mr. Cashman will be present to discuss the upcoming 2020 season. Mr. Gerstel also thanked the Park and Recreation staff for attending the meeting.

8. Adjournment

Mr. Toolan moved to adjourn the January 27, 2020 Park and Recreation Commission meeting at 9:37pm. Ms. Chaston seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 9:37pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen Wright
Administrative Specialist