

Town of Needham – Park and Recreation Commission

ROSEMARY POOL RECREATION COMPLEX

Frequently Asked Questions

Based on the current design – some changes to the design might be required when in the permitting stages. The renderings do not reflect all components of the design concepts.

Background documents available at www.needhamma.gov/rosemaryrecreationcomplexdocuments

Pools

- Will you need to drain the lake and the pool every spring? *One requirement for the design was that it could not involve draining the lake. The design of the original pool required the drawdown of the lake, to relieve pressure against the walls. The new design will be able to have the pools drained without draining the lake. The permit to draw down the lake expires in September 2016, so this is the last spring for the drawdown for pool maintenance.*
- Will there be shallow water for young non-swimmers? *Yes, the recreation pool will have zero depth entry with access directly from the concrete deck.*
- Will there be sand? *The deck on all four sides of the pool will be concrete. There will still be sand on the end beaches.*
- Will there be shade? *The current concept is to have a trellis at the pools, to provide some shade. The current concept is to have some umbrellas at the concrete deck. Natural shade areas will still be available on the tiers.*
- Will the pools be handicap accessible? *Yes, both pools will be accessible. The recreation pool will have zero depth entry plus a lift in the deeper water. The fitness pool will have lifts.*
- What type of filter system will be used? *Chlorine will still be the primary disinfectant, with a secondary UV filter for the recreation pool. Two sand filter systems will be utilized. MA Department of Public Health regulations guide the options available for public pools.*
- What will be the daily schedule and length of the season? *Operational decisions will be worked on over the next year including hours of operation and length of season. The pools will likely be open for about 3 months. A new spray park/splash pad is in the current plan, and can be open for use for about 5 months a year.*
- What will be the fees for use? *Fees will be discussed over the next year. The Park and Recreation Commission's intention is to keep the fees affordable, yet increase to cover more of the actual costs of operation. The current revenue is approximately \$75,000 and the current operating costs average \$150,000. Approximately \$15,000 is provided in fee assistance to insure all families have access and children have the ability to learn to swim.*
- Why are two pools in the current design plan, and is it a more expensive option? *The cost of building the two pools is equivalent to the cost of building a large pool. Having two individual*

pools will provide more decking space for patrons. Clear separation is provided during swim meets. One pool can be guarded on quiet days. In the event of some type of failure (mechanical or chemical) in one pool, the other could remain in use. One pool will be for fitness, competition and high level swim lessons. The second pool will be for recreation use, for non-swimmers and young swimmers, along with those using longer lap lanes for water walk or fitness swimming. Swimming lessons will also be held in the recreation pool.

- How big will the pools be? *The current size is about 20,000 square feet. The combined for the two new pools will be less than 14,000 square feet.*
- Does it save construction costs to reduce the size of the pools? *In order to realize true savings, only one of the pools could be built. As both are small as stand-alone pools, it is unlikely that many residents would choose to stay in Needham for summer swimming.*
- Will the lap lanes be regulation length? *Yes, the lanes will be regulation length. For those who like the longer lanes, they will be located in the recreation pool and will have a consistent depth of water. The depth of the fitness pool will be deeper on the end with the diving board.*
- Will emergency vehicles be able to access the pools? *There will be two access points – one from the Rosemary Street end of the facility and the second from the parking lot. The Police and Fire Departments will be guided to the most direct option.*

Pool Program

- What features will remain? *There will be shallow water for young children learning to swim. The recreation pool will have two long lap lanes, for water walking and for those who want to swim longer distances. The diving board will be located in the fitness pool. There will be 8 lanes for competitive swim, and a number of those will be available daily for fitness swimming. Swimming lessons and swim team will continue at Rosemary, and we hope to bring back programs, including Lifeguard Training. The two end beaches will still have sand for play, including sand volleyball.*
- What new features will be added? *Some water features are in the current plan for the shallow water. A fun slide component would be added in the recreation pool. Decking area around the pools will be available for patrons, though some areas will be designated only for lifeguard staff. With an indoor programming space available, the summer Outdoor Living Program can be moved from Ridge Hill to the Rosemary Recreation Complex, with daily use of the pool, the trails and open space on the other side of the lake, fishing and boating in the lake, and indoor space for activities on rainy days.*
- Will less people be able to use the pools if they are smaller than the current pool? *The technical calculation is “bather load” which is 880 for the current pool. The two smaller pools, combined, will have a bather load of 789. This is the number of people who would be in the pool at one time, but does not reflect how many people would visit in one day. Currently, there are days*

when there are more than 600/day visitors at Rosemary, with swimming lessons, swim team practice, daily admission and swim meet participants and spectators, and that number would rise with the new facility.

- What types of programs will be available for different age groups? *The recreation pool will have shallow water with play features for young swimmers/non-swimmers, spray park, sand, swimming lessons and special events. Older children through the teen years will have the slides, diving board, outdoor games, boating, swim lessons, swim team and Lifeguard Training. Adults and senior adults will have lap lanes, water walking lanes, outdoor games, boating, and water programs.*
- Can the diving board and lap lanes be used at the same time? *With the exception of a swim meet, the outer lane lines can be used for fitness swimming, while the diving area is used in the inner lanes, with the lane lines removed for that use.*
- Will the Needham Sharks Swim Team still be able to use the new pool? *Absolutely! Originally a Park and Recreation program, the Needham Sharks has been overseen by a parent volunteer organization for many years, but in Summer 2016, it is shifting back to the Park and Recreation Department with the same great coach.*
- Is it true that the majority of current season pass holders are from out of town? *The vast majority of season pass holders and daily visitors come from Needham. A comparison report is available on the website.*

Site

- Will the parking lot be improved? *The lower lot and the upper lot will both be rebuilt and be able to accommodate about 100 vehicles. The ADA spots will be located near the entrance to the building. Both lots will be paved. The lower lot's current design is for a porous asphalt surface, and the upper lot would be traditional asphalt. Both lots will be lined for more orderly parking patterns. The driveway will be moved down lower on Rosemary Street, so that the steep incline can be reduced.*
- What other outdoor recreation features will be added? *A spray park/splash pad will be added next to the recreation pool and will be able to be used during the pool season, and in the warm months before and after the pool season. As the site is sloped, it will be challenging to determine what other features might be added, but the hope is that they would be available outside of the pool season. Better access to the lake for canoes/kayaks will be provided. A separate project would improve the trails that go from the pool site over to the camp property on the other side of the lake.*
- Can additional facilities be added to the site? *It is possible to add parking, more outdoor recreation features or additional building space, but all will be expensive requiring retaining walls to create spaces within the slope. A third floor cannot be added.*

- Will the site be handicap accessible? *The building and site will meet all codes for accessibility. From the parking lot, there is a ramp to bring people down to the plaza level. A ramp will then bring people down about 8 feet to the pool deck level, plus provide access to the two lower tiers on the hillside. Access to the second floor is also from the parking lot.*
- What are the advantages and disadvantages to the site? *Advantages: The new pools are being built within the confines of the current pool. As an area that is “already excavated” this is a savings over a typical pool construction project. The building is designed into the hillside, so that ramps can provide access to either floor. The site will have natural areas and will not be all asphalt or concrete, a benefit to the environment and a way to control heat. Rosemary Lake became the public swimming facility in the 1930’s through 1969, and then has continued to serve in that role since 1972. The centrally located park makes it easier for residents to come from various parts of town, and older youth to ride their bikes. The bus line has stops on Highland Avenue at Rosemary Street. Disadvantages: The sloped site doesn’t have many natural flat areas for future development. The current driveway is steep, which is a particular concern in the cold months, so needs to be rebuilt. Part of the design review was to look at raising the level of the pools so that the deck would be at the same level as the entrance from the parking area. It was found that the pool serves as part of the flood plain for the area, so in order to replicate that capacity elsewhere on site would cost approximately \$1.5 million, so that option was removed, and some additional ramps were added to the design.*

Building

- Where will the bathhouse be located? *The new building will use part of the foundation of the existing building. The entry and bathhouse will now be located at the lower level of the new building. From the parking lot, there will be a ramp or stairs to bring you through the entry arch to check in on the left, with the bathhouse, and other functions for pool operations located on the right.*
- Why is the bathhouse so large? *Plumbing codes and public pool codes set the number of toilets and showers required based on the bather load formula, so there are more toilets and showers than are likely used on a daily basis. There will be family restrooms along with the larger men’s room and women’s room. There will be some outdoor washing stations (outdoor showers) within the site.*
- What will be located on the second floor? *A large vestibule will be just inside the entry. To the right will be a 2,000+ square foot multi-purpose room. To the left will be a small conference room. Office space will be provided for the Park and Recreation Department and the Health Department.*
- Can you reach the 2nd floor from the pools? *For safety reasons, fencing will prevent full access between the levels once you are at the pool. People at the pool can return to the main outdoor*

entrance to use stairs or ramp to move up to the 2nd level. There will be emergency access areas between the levels.

- How will the multi-purpose room be utilized? *Currently, Park and Recreation does not have year-round programming space. This room would provide space for new programs, particularly during the school day when other spaces are not available. The majority of programs would be new offerings for toddlers, school age, adults and senior adults. Some existing programs may be moved to this room, too. Training sessions for staff and volunteers would be scheduled in this room. A curtain would be able to provide physical separation between more than one program, but will not provide sound protection. There isn't sufficient space to have a solid wall divider without removing other important elements. Other Town departments and community organizations will also be able to schedule time in the multi-purpose room for their events and activities. Possible users of the room might be Parent Talk or Needham Youth Services. The small conference room can be used evenings or weekends for small activities or something related to use of the large room.*
- Will there be any programs for teens? *As noted above, there will be options for all age groups. Some current programs are too large to completely move to the new space (Youth Center TGIF, as an example) but others will be moved on site. Community programs such as 5th Quarter or Plugged In concerts are possibilities. Some Needham High classes use the Rosemary trails and may look to do some classroom work at the building prior to going on the trails. As the site is developed, more outdoor options will be available, too.*
- What are the features of the multi-purpose room? *A small kitchen area will be located just off the multi-purpose room, so that activities can include use of a stove/oven, refrigerator, and freezer. There are many crafts activities that will be enhanced with the use of the kitchen. Some events with snacks or that requires the serving of food will have use of the kitchen. Storage closets will hold activity materials as well as tables/chairs when not in use. The ceiling will be sloped, but higher than a typical room height, to provide more flexibility for use. A large window will overlook the lake, but be able to be closed off when active games are scheduled. A projector would be available for presentations/training, including movies for our Kids Night Out program.*
- If the offices are designed for Park and Recreation Department and the Health Department, how will the area be flexible for future needs of those departments or other departments? *The departments have chosen to have a joint office space so that there is flexibility on where staff is able to work. There are additional desk spaces for future use and the open areas can be reconfigured if needed.*
- Why were the two departments chosen to be in the building? *In an effort to use buildings to their full capacity, the option of having year-round office space was considered. As it is a Park and Recreation site and facility, the Park and Recreation Department was one of the chosen departments. The Town Manager chose the 2nd department to be the Health Department. Their office suite at Town Hall is too small for their needs. Both departments currently work together*

on projects and would be able to increase their interactions. Options for a 3rd department would take space away from the needed program space in the multi-purpose room, so were not pursued.

Funding

- How will the project be funded? *The funding will be a combination of Community Preservation (CPA) funds and Town capital funds.*
- What portion of the project will be funded by CPA funds? *The exact percentage needs to be determined during the next phase of design. The CPA funds for recreation are meant to be spent on outdoor recreation projects. Anything that is required for use of the outdoor recreation area is likely to be eligible for funding. The two pools, the filters, and the bathhouse are all likely to be eligible, along with portions of the parking required for the outdoor uses. The second floor and anything related to the second floor would not likely be eligible. CPA funds cannot be used for gymnasiums or similar type facilities. The architect will make a recommendation for a percentage of the project that is eligible and the Town's bond counsel will confirm the recommendation.*
- Will the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) vote to recommend funding for all portions that are eligible? *The CPC has not made a decision, but will review the December 2016 request from the Park and Recreation Commission and background information to determine how much of the eligible portion of the project they would recommend for funding. They can choose to use "cash" and/or bonding to fund their portion of the project. To date, they have reviewed funding scenarios to see how much funding capacity remains for future projects.*
- How will the non-CPC supported project be funded? *The Town Manager will need to know how much funding would be needed once CPC determines what they feel can be appropriated. A level of funding is already considered in the financing plan.*
- Why wasn't all the design funding requested at the May 2015 Town Meeting? *At the request of the Finance Committee, the initial partial design funding was requested to insure that the project could be built at the site. This second phase of funding is for the permitting stage and final construction documents.*
- What are the anticipated operating costs for the pools? *This is part of the next phase of study, determining the needs for staff, supplies and services, while also making decisions on the length of the season and hours, both of which impact operational costs. The costs for operating the spray park would be added to the operating costs. As the current pool is large, the staff is larger than at most pools, with 17 certified lifeguards (supervisors, instructors, guards) and 5 non-aquatic staff for maintenance and administration. It is not expected to be substantially more than the current \$150,000-160,000 per summer as there will be some savings balanced with some new costs.*

- What are the anticipated operating costs for the second floor space? *As the building will be used year-round, there will be energy and maintenance costs, anticipated to be about \$70,000. The office staffing remains the same. The cost of operating programs in the multi-purpose room will be covered by the program fees.*

Other

- What permits will be required? *At this stage, it appears the following permits will be required. (a) Conservation Commission for the Wetlands Protection Act and the local wetlands by-laws; (b) DEP (Department of Environmental Protection) approving permits issued through the Conservation Commission; (c) Needham Public Health in collaboration with MA Department of Public Health for public pool permit; (d) Planning or Zoning Boards for parking requirements. Informal conversations have been held with staff for guidance on requirements during the permitting process.*
- Why can't this complex be part of a bigger Community Center? *Currently, there are already pre-built parts of a community center that are all located within short distance of each other. Center at the Heights is located on Hillside Avenue with many programs throughout the day offered, and additional programs being added at night and on some weekends. Rosemary Recreation Complex would be the next "leg" of the campus of spaces, with indoor and outdoor recreation opportunities. The Library is the next part of the campus community center, with space and programs for the community. Memorial Park is the final location with active and passive outdoor space, and plans to rebuild the facility to better serve the park uses and possibly some additional space for activities/events. (Memorial Park parking lot is not available during the school day, and has limited spaces when the fields are in use, so the amount of organized activity in the building is limited).*
- Can a 3rd floor be added to the building for future expansion? *The first obstacle to adding space to the building is the amount of available parking. Additional parking would need to be added, within the slope, which is more expensive than the two lots that would be built with this project. The new building isn't designed for an additional floor, but a lateral extension could be added. The easiest sections of the site are being utilized in the current design, so the cost to build into the slope of the site will be at a higher cost per square foot. The additional building space would require additional parking space.*
- Why can't we put an indoor pool at Rosemary? *The Rosemary site can not accommodate both an indoor and outdoor pool. This is both from a site feasibility perspective, and a business perspective. From a site perspective, covering portions of the outdoor pool with bubbles or other means was evaluated, but created complexities with permitting, accessibility, and the building. Both designers we engaged could only fit an indoor pool about the same size as the existing YMCA. This does not suit the needs of the Town. With this type of pool, we could not run large*

meets, which are main revenue drivers for standalone indoor pools such as those in Wayland. The Commission determined to move forward with an outdoor pool, but recommend that an indoor pool be built at a different parcel.

- What is the cost difference if this facility was built on a flat site? *There isn't currently a Town-owned flat site available for this project. It is challenging to compare an unknown parcel, but any under consideration would have to be evaluated for site amenities and site conditions which create expensive building site. Examples would be ledge or inadequate soil conditions, ability to connect to sewer, pre-disturbed property, and deed restrictions. Added to the new site construction costs would be the cost to decommission the current pool and site.*
- What is the cost of not moving forward with this project? *The decision not to move forward means that there won't be a public outdoor place to swim in Needham, so residents will need to choose to swim indoors in the summer at the YMCA or choose a private option, with one exception, out of town. The current pool would need to be removed and the bank along the lake would need to be restored. A decision on the building would need to be made. It currently is the year-round storage location for all Park and Recreation programs beyond what is needed for the pool. Partial funding for the original pool and site was provided through Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, so the site must remain a recreation site open to the public. The estimate, depending on decisions made for the site, is \$2-3 million.*
- Why weren't other sites studied? *Park and Recreation has been reviewing options for Rosemary since the 1960's when the decision to close down the lake for swimming was made. In 1999, a renovated pool (without lake draining) and improvements to the building and parking was studied and estimated to cost in the \$8-12 million range. Studies continued in the 2000s' and sites have been reviewed three times during the Facilities Master Plan work, and there are no excess Town-owned parcels available for this project. The central location of Rosemary has always been a major benefit.*
- Has this project scope changed in the past year? *The Park and Recreation Commission's goals over the years were to continue to provide a public space for outdoor swimming; to have a maintenance program that did not require draining the lake; to improve access to the lake and camp property for year-round recreational activities; and to improve the building for pool use as well as provide year-round programming space. Though many concepts were reviewed that would provide more year-round options, the only change to the original scope was to add the office space, providing a more robust community concept.*
- Will there be a public-private partnership for this project? *The facility will be operated by Park and Recreation. Community organizations will have opportunities to use the complex for their activities. There may be some opportunities for fundraising for certain aspects of the construction, but the major funding would be from the Town. It is hoped that the Charles River YMCA will be able to rebuild or relocate in Needham with an exciting new facility for the Needham community.*