

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

**Minutes of Meeting
March 14, 2022**

PRESENT: Cynthia Chaston, Christopher Gerstel, Michelle Geddes, Dina Hannigan

STAFF: Stacey Mulroy, Fabien Desrouleaux, Kristen Wright

GUESTS: Mark Miskin

Ms. Chaston called the meeting to order at 7:00PM

1. Open Forum – Public Comment

None presented.

2. Chair's Update

Ms. Chaston notified the Commission that Commissioner Bruce Williams resigned from the Commission. Ms. Chaston noted that it was posted on social media, and once the Commission has someone to recommend, the Select Board and Park and Recreation Commission will jointly appoint them to fulfill the remainder of Mr. Williams term.

3. Memorial Day Tournament

Ms. Chaston welcomed Mr. Miskin to the meeting. Mr. Miskin discussed the long time community partnership between the Needham Soccer Club and the Town of Needham. Mr. Miskin discussed the history of the Memorial Day Tournament and the changes to the tournament over the years. Ms. Chaston asked if this tournament was only held in Needham. Mr. Miskin stated that matches will be held in several communities up and down the 128 corridor. The Commission and Mr. Miskin discussed the fees for teams to play in the tournament, the number of guaranteed games per team, and the college showcases that are a part of the tournament. Ms. Chaston asked how many Needham based teams would participate in the tournament. Mr. Miskin stated that 14 Needham D1 and D2 teams would be invited. Mr. Gerstel asked about the team that travels the furthest to participate in the tournament. Mr. Miskin stated that a team from England will be participating, teams from Colorado and Chicago will also be participating and that several other teams that have historically participated will not be travelling this year. Mr. Miskin discussed the change to the tournament during 2021 due to COVID guidelines and that he and Needham Soccer are very excited to bring back this event to the community.

The Commission thanked Mr. Miskin for meeting with them.

3. Director's Report

Ms. Mulroy reviewed the Director's Report.

The Commission discussed staffing levels for both the Pools and the summer programs and stated that they are still actively looking to fill many counselor positions.

The Commission discussed the fields and the work that the Parks and Forestry team is doing to prepare them for the upcoming season. The Commission also discussed the storage units and how they can be implemented in the DeFazio parking lot.

Ms. Hannigan made a motion to approve the purchase of storage containers to be placed at DeFazio. Mr. Gerstel seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously 4-0.

The Commission and Mr. Desrouleaux discussed the time slots at the pools and that there would be no restrictions placed on number of times that a individual or family could visit the pools but there may be times when people cannot enter if the facility is at capacity. Ms. Geddes stated that not all that entered the facility at the beginning of the timeslot would remain in the facility for the entire three hours. Mr. Desrouleaux stated that the staff would consistently monitor the levels if the facility were near or at capacity.

Ms. Mulroy stated that the summer brochure would be out next week and that registration would begin on March 30th.

5A. Fees

None presented.

5B. Capital Projects

The Commission reviewed the Capital Projects and the Asset Planning document. Ms. Mulroy highlighted several projects including the benches on the other side of the lake, Greene's Resurfacing, Claxton, adding a swing at Pollard, the DeFazio track lighting, and the lights around Horsford Pond were all in progress.

5C. CPC

Mr. Gerstel provided an updated from the CPC. Mr. Gerstel stated that they would be holding a public meeting on Wednesday and the vote on the projects is schedule for March 30th.

5D. Playground Priorities

The Commission discussed the various playground priorities that have been identified by the playground assessment conducted last year as well as the previous conversations the Commission had in 2018 and 2019 to begin updating and replacing different playgrounds. The Commissions previous conversations included site visits and input from the Community. Ms. Geddes asked for an overlay of both the Commission previously identified priorities and the assessment that was conducted.

5E. Rules for the RRC Multipurpose Room

The Commission discussed the previously approved policy for renting the Multipurpose Room and determined that all requests will be submitted to the department. The Commission stated that the Director of Park and Recreation can use their discretion to approve events within the bounds of the policy and bring any larger events before the Commission to discuss.

5F. DeFazio Parking Lot

Ms. Mulroy stated that the barriers will be put in place prior to April 1st when the fields officially open. The Commission discussed how to make the flow of the parking lot better including potentially hiring a police detail. Ms. Mulroy stated she would talk to the Assistant Director of DPW to discuss options as well as think about signage, communication with the groups, and the potential addition of a police detail. Ms. Geddes asked about the Food Vendor space and if it could be reallocated. Ms. Geddes also asked if there could be a schedule to relevel the parking lot so the divots could be addressed more frequently.

5G. Scholarships

Moved to the next meeting.

5H. Resident & Non-Resident Policies & Fees

Ms. Mulroy and Mr. Desrouleaux shared their thoughts about changing the non-resident structure. Ms. Mulroy stated that several programs offered in the Winter could have potentially run if non-residents were able to register earlier than a week before the programming begins and that other local recreation departments have had an upcharge to non-residents and only a week delay in registration.

The Commission will discuss this topic more in future meeting.

5I. Commission Update

Discussed earlier in the meeting.

6A. Special Event Approvals

ICON - Color Party for Indian Holi Holiday

Mr. Gerstel made a motion to approve the Color Party event be held by ICON on Sunday, April 3, 2022 from 1:00pm -5:00pm in the Lower Parking Lot of RRC. Ms. Hannigan seconded the motion and it passed 4-0.

Sunita Williams PTC – Eliot Sports Competition

Ms. Hannigan made a motion to approve the Williams/Eliot Sports Competition be held by Sunita Williams PTC on Friday, May 6th from 4:00pm – 7:00pm at Memorial Field, subject to availability. Ms. Geddes seconded the motion and it passed 4-0.

Sunita Williams PTC – Festival of Cultures

Mr. Gerstel made a motion to approve the Festival of Cultures event be held by the Sunita Williams PTC on Thursday, May 19, from 4:30pm – 7:00pm at the Williams 1-5 Playground. Ms. Geddes seconded the motion and it passed 4-0.

Newman PTC – Springfest Carnival

The Commission requested an event layout to review prior to the event.

Ms. Hannigan made a motion to approve the Springfest Carnival be held by the Newman PTC on Saturday, June 4 from 12:00pm – 9:00pm at the Newman Playgrounds and Parking Lots. Ms. Geddes seconded the motion and it passed 4-0.

Sunita Williams PTC – Spring Carnival

The Commission requested an event layout to review prior to the event.

Ms. Geddes made a motion to approve the Spring Carnival be held by the Sunita Williams PTC on Saturday, June 4 from 1:00pm – 9:00pm at the Williams Playgrounds and Multipurpose field. Ms. Hannigan seconded the motion and it passed 4-0.

Needham Youth Lacrosse/128 Lacrosse – Youth Lacrosse Clinic

Ms. Hannigan made a motion to approve the Youth Lacrosse Clinic be held by the Needham Youth Lacrosse Club and 128 Lacrosse on Monday, June 27th – Wednesday, June 29th from 8:00am – 2:00pm at the Memorial and DeFazio Turf Fields. Mr. Gerstel seconded the motion and it passed 4-0.

St. Joes – Use of Greene’s Field for Gym and Recess

The Commission discussed this request and the impact it would have on this public field space. Ms. Chaston stated that during the pandemic considerations were made to help the private entity by allowing permitted use of public property on a limited schedule, but historically the space was available for the public to use during the day for passive recreation. The Commission discussed that the requested amount of use was a lot of time for any organization to have sole use of any property not directly connected to a Town-owned facility.

Mr. Gerstel made a motion to deny St. Joe’s request to utilize Greene’s Fields Monday – Friday 9:00am – 2:00pm from March – June for daily gym class. Ms. Geddes seconded the motion and it passed 4-0.

6B. Meeting Minutes

February 28, 2022

Ms. Hannigan made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from February 28, 2022. Mr. Gerstel seconded the motion and it passed 4-0.

7. Topics for Future Meetings

- Playground priorities
- Scholarships
- Resident/Non-Resident Fees
- Basketball Backboards

8. Issues Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair within 48 Hours

Ms. Mulroy brought forward a request received by a neighbor on Arden Way to discuss a trade of property along the Rosemary trails.

9. Next Meetings

The Commission reviewed the next meeting dates.

9. Adjournment of Business Meeting

Mr. Gerstel moved to adjourn the March 14, 2022, Park and Recreation Commission meeting at 9:53pm. Ms. Hannigan seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 9:53pm.

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Respectfully submitted,

Kristen Wright
Recording Secretary