

Park and Recreation Commission Meeting
April 23rd, 2024 @ 7:00pm

Present: Christopher Gerstel (Chair), Michelle Geddes (Vice-Chair), Cynthia Chaston (Member), Dina Hannigan (Member), Stacey Mulroy (Director), Hannah Corrigan (Assistant Director), Dominic Stanganelli (Administrative Assistant)

Guests: Lt. John McGrath (via Zoom), Adrian Rrapi (via Zoom), Eileen Keane (via Zoom), Justin Savignano (via Zoom), Michael Moonan (via Zoom), Tovah Bakstran (via Zoom), Eric Bakstran, Kevin Keane, AnnMarie Muluihill, Margaret Muluihill, Julie Stevens, Scott Stevens, Mark Francesconi, Irene Francesconi, Lynn Miller, Sandra Walters, Lisa Rhoades, Chrissy Silverman, Rob Silverman, Tyler Gabrielski, Bob Curtin, Susan Curtin, Howard Samuels, Kevin Sheehan, Bob Baker

Call to Order

Mr. Gerstel called the meeting to order at 7:02pm, April 23rd, 2024.

1. **Open Forum Public Comment**

Eric Bakstran would like to address parking concerns on George Aggott Road. There are frequently numerous vehicles parked along George and Sutton both sides, which creates blindspots and driveway, hydrant, and corner obstruction. Residents would like a solution that does not involve a total parking ban. Concerns have already been brought to the police, but it is largely an unenforceable situation. The Traffic Safety Committee agreed there is a problem and pointed the concerned parties to Park and Recreation. Cyndi stated that we understand frustrations and asked when the situation is at its worst. Eric replied that parking conditions are worst when the DeFazio baseball diamonds are being used. Cynthia let them know that the only tools Park and Recreation have from an enforcement standpoint is through permitting and the withholding thereof to parties involved in parking issues. Dina stated that the department has a park ranger (Wu Ping Liao) and floated whether his presence would be a deterrent. Chris stated that perhaps permits can include parking provision which could help with enforcement. Chris would like to pull in all relevant parties – traffic safety, police, school athletics. Scott Stevens stood from the guest pool to say that the issue is all days of the week and has picked up greatly in recent years. Lt. John McGrath, present via Zoom, has been on the Traffic Safety Committee for several years and stated that it is a public way which makes it difficult to do anything from a police standpoint. Stacey then chimed in to make it clear that we ask folks who utilize the fields at DeFazio to not park on the street, consistent with our policy of respecting neighbors. Dina asked what season brings in the most traffic and Eric responded that it is all seasons but Winter.

Tom Baker of Needham Disc Golf would like to have a feasibility study to inspect town sites for disc golf courses. Baker went to Dept of Conservation whom was receptive to the idea and would now like to ask the commission if they would support the feasibility study. Chris was concerned that the Town must accept the feasibility studies as valid. Stacey believed that there are no liability concerns, and that the feasibility study can be accepted as a donation, thus usable. See vote below.

Lisa Rhoades and Chrissy Silverman approached the Commission regarding the painting of an additional court at Mills for pickleball. Both parties noted that

communication with the department has been very open and agreeable. Lisa gave figures that there are about twice as many pickleball players as tennis players at any given time at the Mills courts and reiterated the desire for court 1 to be painted for pickleball at Mills. Stacey stated that she would be in favor of painting Mills court 1 and having high school courts be exclusive for tennis and Mills exclusive for pickleball. Rob Kerton reiterated from guest pool that pickleball players in the community wholeheartedly support this. See vote below.

Michael Moonan, landscape architect from CHA, joined via Zoom. They're looking at Claxton, Hillside, Cricket, and Mills as good spots for a joint action sport (skateboarding, BMX, etc.) and pickleball court location. Many considerations such as abutting properties, noise concerns, surface conditions, accessibility, and additional infrastructural needs have been considered. Michelle liked Claxton as a potential location but floated the idea of splitting the sports park and pickleball courts between two sites. Dina agreed with Michelle. Cynthia expressed that Cricket is already too busy and all Commission members agreed. Chris liked Claxton, and Mills as number 2, with the idea of splitting the project across two parks in mind. Stacey stated that Claxton actually has space for a pump track (mountain biking track) in addition to the park/courts.

2. Meeting Guests

Public Forum attendees.

3. Chair's Update

Chris had no additional updates.

4. Director's Report

Field permits have been awarded and emailed out. Most special events were included. All fields are open and field status updates are being completed daily. The Pool Opening and Closing bid has been awarded to Weston & Sampson.

Field visits for the Active Recreation Feasibility Study were held on Wednesday, 3/13. The Claxton Field Renovation Project has gone out to bid with promising numbers and the project will be presented for funding at the Annual Town Meeting in May 2024. Mcleod Field has been undergoing final touches for its grand re-opening. The Mcleod ribbon cutting ceremony was held on Tuesday, 4/9, at 3:15pm on softball opening day. At the Planning Board meeting earlier in the week, we have received pushback from neighbors regarding the number and placement of tennis courts at the High School. The Planning Board has continued our hearing to Wednesday, 4/24 at 7:30pm, and we are in the process of gathering more information, speaking with neighbors, and collaborating with the schools and DPW.

On Tuesday, 4/16, Nikki Witham will be joining us as our new Administrative Analyst. She has been with the Town for 19 years in various departments, including Accounting, Town Management, and a previous stint with Park and Recreation.

5. Discussion Items

Stacey stated that tennis/pickleball court badge policies must be updated as the last look was in 2022. Dina wanted to ensure folks are aware that new courts at high school will be exclusively for tennis and Stacey agreed. Stacey informed the Commission that we are working on updates to and maintenance on school playgrounds across town.

6. Action Items & Approvals

6A. Special Event Approvals

Approval of Independent Feasibility Study for Disc Golf with No Financial Ramifications for Town

Motion: Dina

Second: Michelle Geddes

Vote: 4-0

Ask Town to Remove Pickleball Lines from High School and Paint Mills Court 1

Motion: Cynthia

Second: Dina

Vote: 4-0

Noah's Ark Preschool

Motion:

Second:

Vote: Alternate locations – Hillside?

Needham Girl Scout Troop 82926

Motion: Dina Hannigan

Second: Michelle

Vote: 4-0, depending on location

Jog Your Memory 5k

Motion: Michelle

Second: Dina

Vote: 4-0

Needham High Varsity Girls Soccer

Motion:

Second:

Vote: More info needed

American Cancer Society Relay for Life

Motion: Dina

Second: Michelle

Vote: 4-0

Needham Rotary Summer Picnic

Motion: Michelle

Second: Cynthia

Vote: 4-0

NSC HS Age Summer Girls League

Motion:

Second:

Vote: More info needed

NSC Morning Conditioning

Motion:

Second:

Vote: More info needed

St Joe's Field Day

Motion: Cynthia

Second: Michelle

Vote: 4-0

Wellesley Amateur Radio

Motion: Dina

Second: Cynthia

Vote: 4-0

No to West End House Camp on the Grounds that It Is a Marketing Event

Motion: Chris

Second: Dina

Vote: 4-0

YMCA Family Field Day/5k

Motion: Cyndi

Second: Dina

Vote: 4-0

Needham Art Association Utilizing Fences for Hanging Art

Motion:

Second:

Vote: More info needed

SPAN Signs on Fences

Motion:

Second:

Vote: More info from Board of Health needed

6B. Policy Approvals

None.

6C. Fee Approvals

None.

6D. Meeting Minutes of February 12th and March 11th, 2024.

Motion: Cyndi

Second: Dina

Vote: 4-0

7. **Issues Not Reasonably Anticipated by Chair within 48 Hours**

None.

8. **Topics for Future Meetings**

Trails Update from Hannah and off-leash dog park

9. **Next Meetings**

- Tuesday, May 14th, 2024
- Monday, May 28th, 2024 (Alt needed)
- Tuesday, June 10th, 2024
- Monday, June 24th, 2024

10. **Adjournment of Business Meeting**

Motion: Chris

Second: Cynthia

Vote: 4-0

Meeting adjourned at 9:29pm, April 23rd, 2024.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dominic Stanganelli

Administrative Assistant