

**ROSEMARY POOL ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
TOWN OF NEEDHAM, MASSACHUSETTS**

**Minutes of Meeting  
Wednesday, October 14, 2015**

- PRESENT:** Chris Gerstel, Co-Chair; Matt Toolan, Co-Chair; Andy Allen; Kate Curtin; Katy Dirks; Tom Keating; Don Leathe; Carolyn Day Reulbach
- ABSENT:** Peggy McDonald
- STAFF:** Patty Carey, Robyn Fink, Hank Haff
- GUESTS:** Adam Cole, Les Kalish, Connie Kaufman, John Fountain, Jo-Anne Ochalla, Rachel Waldstein, Paula Jacobson

Mr. Gerstel called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

**MINUTES – September 3, 2015:** Mr. Gerstel made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 3, 2015 meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Keating, and the minutes were approved unanimously.

**UPDATE ON DESIGN PROCESS:** Project Manager Hank Haff reviewed the timeline, noting the presentation made by BH+A to the Park and Recreation Commission on September 28, 2015. He noted that some decisions need to be made on the scope and program, so that other parts of the project can be reviewed. The Park and Recreation Commission will meet with the PPBC on October 19<sup>th</sup> and review the water surface (1 or 2 pools), as the surface and size of pool(s) determines decisions made in the bathhouse and parking lot. Test borings have been completed, and the full site is currently being surveyed. Mr. Toolan stated that information discussed by the Advisory Committee at this meeting will be shared with the Park and Recreation Commission when they meet just prior to the PPBC meeting on October 19<sup>th</sup>.

**DISCUSSION – QUESTIONS FROM POOL ADVISORY COMMITTEE:** Mr. Toolan provided information on questions raised at the prior meeting, as well as by other residents, since the last meeting.

- *What will be the number of parking spaces, and is space expandable for additional spaces?* The size of the pool and its uses will dictate the need for spaces. Commission has asked for a minimum of 80, and would anticipate needing more, but know it will be challenging on the site. Mr. Allen asked who owned the upper lot, and Mr. Toolan confirmed it was part of the Rosemary site.
- *What outdoor activities will be provided, that are active or passive?* Mr. Toolan noted that no decisions had been made, and that input from the Advisory Committee would be needed for activities that could be available year-round.
- *Can a natural filtration system be used?* This concept has been reviewed with the architects. As there is currently only one public pool in the United States which has been permitted for this type of system, it is not an option that would be easy to permit in Massachusetts, so it will not be considered for the new pool(s).
- *What restrictions are there for the size of the building?* The architects are currently overseeing the official survey of the site, and will include zoning set-backs. Mr. Haff noted that the

wetlands were also being flagged, to be added to the design plans. The outer edge of the pool is considered the edge of the wetlands. There is then a 25 foot zone that typically is “no build” but as it is currently disturbed, there may be some flexibility. Both the Conservation Commission and DEP have informally determined the beach area is pre-disturbed. The 100 foot zone set the boundaries for Conservation Commission or DEP jurisdiction. In some cases, building is allowed within 50-100 feet. The Planning Board oversees a 25 foot set-back from the road. If any portion of the pool or building is within that set-back, waivers would need to be requested.

- *Can the recreation swimming and competition areas be combined?* Yes, they can be one pool, but would not allow for future covering for an indoor component.
- *What are the options for connecting an enclosed pool with the building?* BH+A has provided additional information in their 9/28/15 presentation for the Advisory Committee to review.

**DISCUSSION – BH+A PRESENTATION 9/28/15:** The presentation can be seen as Attachment A to these minutes. Mr. Toolan described the concept of building the pool(s) within the current coffer dam, but raising the level to reach the first tier, filling below the pool. Mr. Haff noted that BH+A had studied moving the pool(s) up to the 2<sup>nd</sup> tier, but the amount of fill needed for that was expensive. The pool(s) would be built within the current area, and not shifted to avoid increased costs and permitting issues. Ms. Dirks noted that Conservation Commission did not state a concern about using the areas that are now beaches. Mr. Haff said it was possible, but there were additional permitting limits, and moving further into the property would require more expensive foundations and bulkheads.

Option 1 would place the recreation pool on the building end of the current structure and a competitive pool closer to Rosemary Street. The competitive pool would have 8 lanes, 25 yards and in general, a depth of 4-6 feet. There would be a diving well of 12 feet within the competitive pool. The recreation pool would have zero depth entry, water walking lanes at 3.6-4’ depth, slide, play features and shaded areas.

Option 2 would move the competitive pool closer to the building and the recreation pool closer to Rosemary Street. The competitive pool would be built in a way to be able to enclose it for year-round use. With many challenges getting a connection to the current bathhouse, it was recommended that a new bathhouse be built adjacent to the competitive pool, meeting the state requirements for indoor pools. Mr. Toolan said that an estimate for that building hadn’t been provided, but based on other Town projects, he would guesstimate that it could be about \$8 million. The competitive pool would have 8 lanes, plus a diving well. The recreation pool would be much smaller than the one in Option 1. Ms. Curtin noted that many pools swim teams currently use do not have a separate diving well. Ms. Dirks suggested moving the competitive pool up the hill, closer to the current bathhouse, so that creative solutions could be found to connect them. Mr. Toolan noted that any building would need to meet codes and permit requirements, plus remain within a budget of likely \$10-12 million for the full project, so choices need to make economic sense. He also noted that different footings would be needed for an indoor pool that would add to the expense. Ms. Dirks shared information from Open Aire that estimated the additional cost to be about \$100,000. Mr. Haff noted that the estimate was a generality and not based on the site. Ms. Day-Reulbach asked if a bubble cover had been looked at. Mr. Toolan stated that it had been done during the feasibility study as well as during the current design phase and that it did not seem to be an appropriate choice for the site. An indoor pool also requires a different drainage system, and Mr. Toolan stated that the system would need to meet pool codes as well as

environmental permits. Ms. Dirks is aware of other pools with bubbles that haven't had to change the drainage system, but Mr. Haff noted that they likely weren't located within wetlands.

Option 3 would move the competitive pool up into the hillside, near the current building. It would require a large retention wall, and would be reduced to six lanes. Ms. Curtin felt that the small pool would still be beneficial since the Town did not currently have an indoor public pool. Mr. Toolan stated that the Town has renovated or built other facilities that were "enough to get by" and that the goal would be to create an indoor pool that met the needs, but also had enough amenities to bring in revenue to cover costs. A stand-alone indoor pool does not typically cover its costs without having additional programming/fitness space. Having a small pool that can't host meets would also reduce the amount of potential revenue. Mr. Allen suggested that the short season was the biggest constraint, so that Option 2 seemed the most logical. Mr. Toolan said that cost estimates were not available, yet, but that the preparation for an indoor pool added a minimum of \$1.5 million to the cost, and CPA funds would not be an available funding resource. An indoor pool would be better suited for a different site, as the Rosemary site had many challenges. Mr. Haff discussed other sites that were reviewed in the Townwide Facilities Master Plan, including Nike Site/Ridge Hill. Mr. Allen suggested scaling back the project, building just the competitive pool and eliminating the recreation pool.

Ms. Dirks stated that she understood the concerns raised by Mr. Toolan, but felt that the Rosemary site needed to be re-looked at with "fresh eyes" to find the potential. She felt that Town Meeting had been assured that all efforts to create an indoor pool would be researched, and that the discussion needed to continue in order to get Town Meeting support. Ms. Curtin felt that the Rosemary site was walkable for many youth, as opposed to other possible sites. Mr. Toolan stated the Commission's goals to have year-round use of the building at Rosemary for programs, as well as outdoor recreation facilities, including a spray park that would be available before and after the pool season. He noted the Commission had to consider all types of users, and not limit their review to competitive swimmers.

**DISCUSSION – INDOOR POOL POTENTIAL:** Mr. Toolan asked for a discussion on the options. Ms. Dirks felt that Option 1 seemed to work, but she suggested that the competitive pool be moved up near the building rather than keeping it down with the recreation pool. She also suggested reducing the size of the recreation pool so that more funds could go towards the competitive indoor pool. The second floor of the bathhouse could be used for a teen center. She suggested hiring a pool company to operate the pools, and noted that some indoor pools were able to raise money, but agreed with Mr. Toolan that being able to host competitive meets was important. Ms. Curtin felt that the option chosen had to include an indoor pool, even if reduced in size, as there might not be community support for just an outdoor pool. Ms. Fink noted that there are more recreation swimmers than competitive, and that their needs have to be met. She felt placing a large building up in the hillside would take away much of the space used by visitors, today. She felt that Option 1 would provide the needed space, and that a different site would likely be more appropriate for a year-round pool. Ms. Day-Reulbach felt that the option needed to keep Needham people using Needham pools, rather than going out of town. She felt that Option 3 would work, reducing the recreation pool built lower on the site. Mr. Allen felt that there were downsides to all of the options, but that Option 2 seemed to have less issues and meet more needs. Ms. Carey stated that Option 1 was most appropriate for the site, and for the greater number of recreation swimmers. Building a small indoor pool would not meet the indoor pool needs, including competitive swimmers, as there would not be an ability to host meets. Other area pools that are small

are struggling to survive, and they are looking for more amenities to be cost effective. Mr. Leathe felt that Option 1 would meet needs of many, including children. He did not feel the site worked for indoor, though it would be great to have an indoor pool in Needham. Mr. Keating felt that Option 1 would provide value to Needham families, but that the site didn't work for an appropriate sized indoor pool. Mr. Gerstel stated that there was a budget and that all couldn't be done. Building a pool so it could possibly be enclosed in the future didn't make financial sense, but finding the correct site for an indoor pool seemed to be a better solution so that the correct indoor pool could be built. He supported Option 1.

Mr. Toolan opened the discussion to others attending the meeting. John Fountain asked that outdoor options be added to the Rosemary site for seniors, including bocce, shuffleboard, and badminton. Rachel Waldstein noted her passion for competitive swimming, and supported having year-round swimming, but was concerned about the site being the appropriate size. Les Kalish supported Option 1, and stated his favorite part of the pool is its long lane lines, so he would want to see longer ones for swimming. Jo-Anne Ochalla felt that Town Meeting would not support just an outdoor pool, so if an indoor pool can't be at the Rosemary site, a plan needs to be in place for where it could be located. Adam Cole noted the increased popularity of indoor swimming for youth and masters swim teams. He suggested putting the competitive pool up near the bathhouse and then have private funds raised for the indoor portion. YMCA Executive Director Paula Jacobson stated that a new indoor pool is needed, and the YMCA continues to be supportive of a partnership to help it get done in Needham.

**DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS TO PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION:** Mr. Toolan called for a non-binding vote on the options. Four members voted in favor of Option 1 which shows two outdoor pools. Four members voted for Option 3 which shows a recreation pool in the current pool location, and a competitive pool up higher on the site with the potential of having an enclosure in the future for year-round swimming. Mr. Gerstel and Mr. Toolan will share the vote with the Park and Recreation Commission, along with the comments that led to the individual votes.

**NEXT STEPS:** Mr. Haff stated that the Park and Recreation Commission would make a recommendation to the PPBC on October 19<sup>th</sup> and the PPBC would vote on the direction for moving forward.

**MEETING SCHEDULE:** Mr. Toolan stated the meeting would be planned once more input was available from BH+A.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Mr. Gerstel made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 PM. The motion was seconded by Mr. Keating. The meeting adjourned at 9:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia M. Carey, CPRP  
Director