

FY 2007 ANNUAL REPORT

Park and Recreation Commission

William R. Dermody, Chairman
Christopher R. Dollase, Vice Chairman
Cynthia J. Chaston, Member
Brian S. Nadler, Member
Philip V. Robey, Member

Patricia M. Carey, Director
Karen A. Peirce, Assistant Director
Nikki Witham, Administrative Specialist
Nicole DiCicco, Department Assistant

PURPOSE

Empowered by Chapter 45 of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Park and Recreation Commission:

- Provides balanced, year-round recreation programming and leisure services for all ages.
- Serves as steward of over 300 acres of public parkland including the Town Forest; and schedules recreation and athletic facilities.
- Manages Rosemary Pool and Lake as the principal aquatic recreation facility.
- Provides long-range open space and recreation planning.
- Coordinates and provides support services for many community organizations.
- Provides youth leadership training and volunteer resource development.

The five members of the Park and Recreation Commission are elected to three-year terms. The Commission meets on the second and fourth Mondays of each month.

FY'07 HIGHLIGHTS

The benefits of Park and Recreation services, in communities across the country, are endless, and the Needham Park and Recreation Commission is proud of the partnerships it has developed with many in the Town to enhance the lives of all Needham residents.

Environmental Benefits

- Director served on Town's Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Committee with the Town Manager, Parks and Forestry Superintendent, Health Director, Conservation Agent, and Supervisor of Custodians, assisting with enforcement of IPM Plan and Child Safety Act;
- Actively participated in the updating of Needham's Open Space and Recreation Plan, including the hiring of a consultant to assist with completing the project, and filing of a draft with the state;
- Commissioner and Director actively participated on Trails Master Plan Committee. The project is updating the maps of all trails, and will recommend improvement projects and long-term maintenance;
- Assistant Director worked with a variety of organizations and individuals on park clean-up projects, and established a long-term relationship with Olin College students who do periodic projects;
- Director participated in The Conservation and Recreation Campaign, a statewide coalition for the protection of parkland, representing her state association and Needham, and attended the state-wide gathering of park advocates in June;
- Assistant Director worked with two Eagle Scouts on Town Forest Projects. One scout rebuilt a wooden walkway over the wet area on a trail, and the second scout rebuilt all the park benches around the Horsford Ponds;
- Through the Field Study Committee, completed the Master Plan on the reconfiguration of the athletic field layouts at DeFazio Park and Memorial Park, the addition of synthetic turf on some fields to allow for increased use, and the addition of athletic field lights to assist with increased use;
- Continued to educate residents on the possible solutions to decreasing the Canada Geese population through humane methods.

Economic Benefits

- Commission waived Summer Program and Rosemary Pool fees of more than \$20,000 for Needham individuals and families in need of assistance, to enable all to have access to recreation and leisure activities;
- Commission generated more than \$305,000 in revenue that was deposited into the Town's General Fund. It was the second year in a row that more than \$300,000 was collected;

- Commission conducted annual review of program fees, ensuring that all direct costs were covered by the fees paid by residents who participate in programs;
- Actively participated in Town's Facilities Study, reviewing past review of facilities and updating the Town's Master Plan, and assisted with long-term plans for new Senior Center and renovated Town Hall;
- Provided staff assistance to the Community Preservation Committee;
- Parent Talk donated financial support for the summer Children's Theatre program;
- Needham Cultural Council, Louise Condon Realty, Needham Exchange Club, Dedham Institute for Savings Bank, Middlesex Savings Bank, Tom Nutile Band, Needham Business Association, and RCN and many Needham residents donated funds in support of the 2007 summer Arts in the Parks concert series;
- Assisted with field maintenance projects financed through Field Maintenance Fee, from groups using town-owned athletic fields, allowing the DPW Parks and Forestry Division to reduce the damage to fields from overuse;
- Department offered programs through the use of a revolving fund fees, generating more than \$165,000 in revenue for the cost of running those programs, and fee-based services;
- Needham residents Sue and Ed Gagnon raised funds at their annual 4th of July breakfast for the Carleton Pavilion and later had that matched through a program at Polaroid;
- Received a grant from "Take Me Fishing" to enhance fishing and boating in Needham;
- Received a Skin Cancer Prevention grant through the Health Department to purchase additional umbrellas to provide shade for patrons at Rosemary Pool.

Community Benefits

- Accepted donation of new bleachers from Needham Revitalization Committee at Claxton Field;
- Began planning playground renovations at three parks, with an estimated value of over \$200,000 for equipment and labor. Parent Talk helped design and raise funds for the renovation of Mills Playground; the Exchange Club helped design and raise funds for the renovation of Claxton Playground; and Hanover Company and Cabot, Cabot and Forbes helped design renovations to the Riverside Playground and park. All three projects will be completed in Fall 2007;

- Department continued to work with School Department on safe playgrounds;
- Began planning process for renovations to Mills Playground with Parent Talk, Claxton Playground with Exchange Club, and Riverside Park with Cabot, Cabot and Forbes;
- Began renovation plans for bathroom facilities at Claxton Field, Cricket Field and Mills Field. An architect completed the design plans for Claxton's facilities;
- Assisted with communication for Eat Well/Be Fit, Needham Committee, including monthly newspaper articles;
- Held Field Scheduling Summits, for fifth year, with sport league officials regarding annual use of athletic fields and continued long-term project on working with leagues to revise field scheduling policies to relieve overuse of fields and to benefit participants;
- Celebrated the contributions of the DPW to Park and Recreation facilities and projects with "Touch the Trucks," an annual community event;
- Director participated in early planning stages for Needham's Tercentennial in 2011;
- Assistant Director organized special *Concert on the Common* to help celebrate the Needham downtown area. The concert was financially supported by Citizen's Bank;
- The Newman Tennis Courts were repainted and a new windscreen was installed; the Mills Tennis Courts were patched and will have a renovation project submitted for a federal grant;
- Assisted with study of new web site, and began collection of material to include on new website. Continued study of on-line registration programs.

Personal Benefits

- Three retired members of the Park and Recreation Commission died in early 2007: Bob Hawes, Red Rizzo and Pete Nutter had all provided invaluable service to the Town of Needham, and were integral in the creation of facilities that are important to Needham, including DeFazio Park and Rosemary Pool;
- Fitness was a key component for many programs. Additional tennis lesson classes were offered, a women's running club and strength building clinic was created, some Senior Exercise classes were moved to the Community Room at the Library to accommodate more participants, a volleyball program for high school students was added, and a Crackerball program for older youth was added;

- An intern from University of Georgia joined the department in early May for twelve weeks of service offered at no cost to the Town;
- Assistant Director served as the Town's representative on the Needham Commission on Disabilities;
- Assistant Director oversaw enhanced summer staff training, with assistance of MBMB and DPW on safety issues. All summer staff were trained on ways to enhance fitness of participants;
- Increased participation in annual Fishing Derby through collaboration with Mass Division of Fishing and Wildlife Angler Education program;
- Held successful annual Spooky Walk in collaboration with Needham Business Association;
- Assistant Director oversaw development of new program offerings, including Table Tennis for youth and adults and two new science based fun programs for summer;
- Assistant Director continued collaborative program with Olin College, moving the popular Kids Night Out program to the college, adding a second movie for each event so that older children were welcomed, increased the number of participants in the program, and providing an opportunity for Olin College students to work;
- Assistant Director worked with YMCA and Youth Commission on annual "Needham Unplugged", including one family night without homework, meetings or events;
- Met with multiple groups of Needham High School students working on warrant articles for the mock Town Meeting held each year;
- Director and/or Assistant Director attended workshops and seminars, including landfill reuse, playground safety and ADA requirements, the concerns related to overweight children and obesity; the study of youth sports, integrated pest management, customer service, the building of natural and artificial athletic fields, safe pool operations, creative programming, funding resources and training of staff;
- Director continued to write monthly newsletter article for the Massachusetts Recreation and Park Association that provides information to elected and appointed board members on Park and Recreation boards;
- Director assisted Town of Southborough Recreation Commission with hiring process for new director.