

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

**Blue Sky Session: Rosemary Pool and Complex
Monday, July 22, 2013
Powers Hall – Town Hall**

The Needham Park and Recreation Commission invited interested residents to share their ideas and dreams for the future of Rosemary Pool, the complex and area land. Residents were invited to share their thoughts at the Blue Sky Session held on July 22nd, but were also given the option of putting their thoughts in writing. A synopsis is included in this report. *Not all participants registered, so the transcription may not be accurate in some instances.*

Comments at the Blue Sky Meeting

- JoAnne Ochalla (Lindbergh Avenue - Board Member of the Community Center of Needham.) The CCN has spoken to thousands of people who live, work and play in Needham. The Committee is looking to create a safe, state-of-the-art accessible place for citizens of all ages to gather. They believe Rosemary is the site for that place.
- Dave Sherman (Hillside Avenue) Would like the Town to consider removing the pool completely, dredge the lake and swim in the lake for a natural low maintenance facility.
- Ed Phillips (Henderson Street) Would like the Town to consider a competitive year-round pool similar to one in Vermont that can be rented to USA swim programs to generate revenue. More 50 meter pools are needed in the area.
- Bill Paulson (School Street) The Needham High swim teams needs a better option for an indoor pool and having it at Rosemary is convenient.
- Katy Dirks (Webster Street – Board Member of Community Center of Needham) Would like to see the lake decommissioned back to its natural space and build a community center/pool facility on the hill. Revenue is leaving Needham because we do not have appropriate pool facilities for residents. Play and Swim Needham!
- Dorothy Rifai (Concord Street) Raised her children in Newton and they went to pools at High School and outdoor pool. A year round facility is needed.
- Leslie Day Morgan (Great Plain Avenue) Learned how to swim at Rosemary and passed the deep water test. Now that she is raising children in Needham, she hopes the town will keep a facility.
- Luke DeMaria (Powers Street) A senior at Needham High, he has had to deal with late practices for the swim team out of town. A pool is needed in Needham for the High School team and others.
- Julia Shannon (Bennington Street) Has swum on the Needham Sharks at Rosemary and also is a member of Needham High swim team. She does not enjoy swimming at Rosemary and supports a new pool that would provide better hours for the High School teams.
- Catherine Parnell (Great Plain Avenue) Has served on the Town's prior Community Center Committee. Moved to Needham because of opportunities like the pool. Her two sons have worked for Park and Recreation, including at the Pool and learned important life skills. She supports access for all to an affordable and reliable pool at Rosemary.

Blue Sky Session: Rosemary Pool and Complex

Monday, July 22, 2013

Powers Hall – Town Hall

Page 2 of 10

- Ann Keegan (Nehoiden Street) Appreciates opportunity to share ideas and willing to help with process. Would prefer a year-round pool which would benefit the Needham High programs, including the dive teams.
- Nan Johnson (Taylor Street) Has been a competitive swimmer since 1973, loves the long lap lanes at Rosemary, encourages people of all ages to swim for good health. Rosemary has something for everyone, including those who just like sitting outside in the shade, and it is an important asset for the residents.
- Justin Ochalla (Lindbergh Avenue) He is a member of the Sharks swim team. He has seen a frog in the pool and would prefer a pool where he just swims with people and can be with his friends.
- Theresa March (Booth Street) Learn to swim at Rosemary Pool. She supports a year-round pool but also hopes there is an outdoor space for summer. She has swim at other places in Needham but Rosemary has the most diversity.
- James Austin (Whittier Road) Needham High swim team member, who supports a year round competitive swimming pool that is in a convenient location.
- Pete Arseneault (Needham High Health and Wellness teacher) Uses the lake and the trails with students for geocaching but has found it overgrown. Would love to see the camp property improved and used as a nature classroom with canoeing and kayaking, with a yurt or other structure for storage so learning could take place year round.
- Jean Higgins (Webster Street) Has lived in Needham for 35 years, has been going to Rosemary for 3 or 4 years, making friends with other swimmers and children of all ages. She likes the diversity of patrons, and complimented the pool staff for their work and kindness. She likes having the outdoor pool and feels it is therapeutic in the summer.
- Erin Flack (Aletha Road) She has fantastic memories of the pool growing up at Rosemary, and took sailing lessons. Her two children swim with the Sharks swim team, thinks it is a fantastic location and is a special footprint that should be kept in the lake. She also thinks there should be consideration for having a year round facility. Loves the accessibility for her daughter and appreciates the adapted aquatics lessons available.
- Cynthia Conturie (Robinwood Avenue) Pool is wonderful, handicapped accessible. Her son was a lifeguard there, and helped many children learn to swim there. She loves the setting and doing laps there. Please don't lose it.
- Sergey Polak (Mackintosh Avenue) Loves that the pool is a great family place. The facilities are aging and need to be repaired. Likes that it is affordable likes, that swimming lessons are affordable. No objection to having an indoor pool but thinks it is important to have an outdoor pool that is affordable.
- Ryan Collin (Broadmeadow Road) Member of the Sharks swim team. He likes the natural habitat with the sandy beach and being outdoors but wants clear water. He would like the length of the lap lanes to be official for scoring.
- Susan Abbott (Otis Street) Important to maintain natural body of water for life cycle of wildlife. Keep the pond, but build a year-round pool elsewhere on the site with alternate to chlorine. Use the site for nature education. Support legislation that will protect ponds and waterways.
- Sue Young (Rosemary Way) Has lived in Needham for 40 years, all her children learned to swim at Rosemary and she would love to see a camp on the camp property. She likes the idea of a warm shallow area for children to learn to swim, would prefer and indoor/outdoor pool and a competitive pool but likes the shallow to deep and would love to have both. She asked what the

Blue Sky Session: Rosemary Pool and Complex

Monday, July 22, 2013

Powers Hall – Town Hall

Page 3 of 10

YMCA's position is on the pool.

- Abby Harmon (Greendale Avenue) Loves the aspect of an outdoor pool, and also supports the YMCA and its swim team, but thinks an indoor pool is needed with 6 lanes built with a community center.
- Stanley Normile (Larkspur Road) Former Sharks coach, would like to have a competitive pool that can be rented out to other teams to create a large source of revenue.
- Courtney Rowe (Hunnewell Street) Would like year-round, but likes unique aspects of Rosemary, including shallow water and separation of laps and learn-to-swim areas. Asked if a competitive pool would take time away from general swim. Will there be a summer without a pool, and will families choose not to return? Keep affordable for all ages, and not just for competition.
- Amy Hurley (South Street) Community Center of Needham Member. They chose Needham for opportunities, and met many people at Rosemary's friendly atmosphere, but started hearing about families choosing other swimming locations. Create something for social aspect in one central location to bring all together.
- Amy Reed (Coolidge Avenue) New to Needham with 6 children and has gone to Rosemary, but the facilities are not OK. She hopes the community pushes for a new pool, as the Town can do better.
- Adam Cole (Edwardel Road) Grew up going to Rosemary Pool and is currently the Needham High swim coach. Need a competitive pool for the swim team to practice and have meets. There are 35 boys and 50 girls on the team and they are at the mercy of Babson College as to when they can practice. He would like to see a pool that is both available for competitive and recreational needs.
- Phyllis Mays (Chestnut Street) Born on Rosemary Street and used to come to Rosemary Pool. Last year she brought a child from the Fresh Air fund to the pool and the staff were very good. Stopped going years ago because of the many days the pool was closed for water quality issues and she could not swim until noon. She now goes to Morse's Pond in Wellesley and would like to see Rosemary Lake dredged and return to swimming in the Lake. Likes the outdoor beach and the Rosemary Pool location but would support a year-round indoor pool. She swims at the YMCA but it is small.
- Bob Boder (Oakhurst Circle) He is a master swimmer, Certified Pool Operator and past coordinator of YMCA swim programs. He thinks we can either have a pond with a beach or a competitive pool, not both. It is difficult to meet standards from swimming in a pond or lake. If a new pool is built, do it correctly, and do it indoors.
- Artie Crocker (Fairlawn Street) He would like to bring the best of Needham together to define the Needham community but make certain that whatever is chosen we have the capacity to make it happen.
- Karen Shapiro (Taylor Street) Active Town member, concerned about the cost, bonds, additional taxes, user fees, thinks money is an important issue, suggested a regional swimming pool. Asked if Walker Pond is an option for swimming.
- Arlene DePhillippo (Canavan Circle) Her children learned to swim at Rosemary. She is most concerned with the dangerous intersection of Hillside Ave. and Rosemary St. She hopes when looking at the Rosemary complex that consideration is given to improve that intersection.

Blue Sky Session: Rosemary Pool and Complex

Monday, July 22, 2013

Powers Hall – Town Hall

Page 4 of 10

- Phyllis Kasdon (Eliot Street) Wants the Town to continue to have an outdoor pool. Asked why a pool was not added to the HS renovation. She asked what would happen to the land if there was no pool? She also asked why the current feasibility study could not review all options?
- Kate Curtin (Lakin Street) Current head coach of the Needham Sharks who wants to make sure they have a pool. She is a loyal Needham swimmer, understands the natural resource that serves all ages. Would like to have the current space renovated, continuing as a community place, so that it remains a place to participate in lifelong sport.
- Erin Flack (Aletha Road) Likes Rosemary Pool, fun place, swims on the Sharks team.
- Clara Holland Swims in Dedham in the winter, thinks it would be better to have an indoor pool.
- Julia Ochalla (Lindbergh Street) and Claire Dirks (Webster Street) Rosemary Pool needs more modern features so they have a place to hang out with friends. It is out of date and does not fit the needs of the community.
- Sara Romer (Lindbergh Avenue) Moving to Needham Rosemary Pool was a draw, all her children grew up swimming at the pool and were on the Sharks and Needham High swim team. There is a need for a competitive place to swim. She is amazed at the disrepair, and feels the pool and site are grungy, which causes people to swim elsewhere. Should be an affordable option.
- Nancy Sexton (Arden Street) Parent Coordinator of the Sharks, noted the Gath Pool in Newton that has competitive swimming lanes. Rosemary is affordable for all to enjoy and children need activities. The Sharks benefit 7-18 year olds, it is a low cost sport and she would like to see it continued. The current pool has options for swim lessons, lap swimming and water walking. Would like to have a place for the Needham High team and recreational teams to swim year round.
- Tom Gaitley (Great Plain Avenue) He hopes that the Town continues to have a pool in some format. He is a scuba instructor and thinks an indoor year-round pool could bring in revenue generating opportunities. A new pool would bring the community together, swimming is an important safety skill for everyone to learn. He is proud of the Town and thinks the Park and Recreation Commission has done a wonderful job maintaining the facility with limited resources. Glad the Needham Community Center Committee is willing to fundraise because whatever is chosen it will cost a lot of money.
- Pat Day (Great Plain Avenue) She and her husband grew up in Needham, raised their children here, and now her grandchildren are living in Needham. She is owner of Needham Children's Center and they use the pool. Many children have learned to swim at Rosemary and "pass the deep water test" which signals to parents that the children can swim. Park and Recreation has done a good job with limited resources, but she and others are ready to help raise funds for something new.
- Polly Danielewski (Manning Street – member of Community Center of Needham Board) They moved from out of state and chose Needham to live for its great sense of community and loves it here. The goal of the Needham Community Center Committee is not only to fundraise but to embrace the community with affordable opportunities. NCC will mobilize the community.
- Ted Cormier (Executive Director of Charles River YMCA) The YMCA stands ready to collaborate, as a friend of the community, and would love to discuss possibilities of partnership. The YMCA board has been trying to figure out what the community needs, as they have outgrown their facilities, and they are looking towards what is next.
- Nancy Sterling (Webster Street) First president of the Community Center of Needham Board. Her child swims at Rosemary Pool and the YMCA, and she would like to have her continue to be in

Blue Sky Session: Rosemary Pool and Complex

Monday, July 22, 2013

Powers Hall – Town Hall

Page 5 of 10

Needham. She is excited that so many are talking about possibilities, and she wondered what the time line would be for public participation.

- Sylvia Howe Used Rosemary Lake and Pool for 60 years, prefers the sunshine and outdoors, wants it to stay an outdoor location. She feels Rosemary has charm. She also enjoys the YMCA.
- Janet Jankowiak (Larkspur Road) Pediatric Oncologist and a swimmer. Delighted to hear community support for swimming, as it has benefits that last a lifetime. Needham is in desperate need of adequate swimming facilities. She would support 2 facilities, with one for competitive swimming at a cooler temperature and a warmer pool for less active use. Suggests trying to make do with what is available for an outdoor pool and a different location for an indoor pool. She feels that all groups need to sit down at the table together to come up with solutions.
- Carolyn Kasdon (Eliot Street) Took swimming lessons at Rosemary and still goes there. An indoor pool is not comfortable during the summer, and the open space should be protected. Needham used to be a place with a mixture of people of different financial means. Rosemary is safe, tested at least 4 times a day, magnificent and intergenerational. The pool is the only equalizer in Town, a great community resource, and she wonders what would happen to the children without a pool. It is about the community that Needham wants to be.
- Carolyn Day (Maple Street) Swam for Needham High and US Team Competition. Rosemary Pool is more than just a place to swim. It is a place for the community to relax and hang out. She would like a competitive and a recreational pool. She asked if a bubble could be put on an outdoor pool for year-round use.
- Liz O'Connell Thanked the Commissioners for listening to the community throughout the evening. Her children attend private school, but still feel very much part of the community. Too many children swim elsewhere and she would like them all to return to the Needham community.

Written Comments Submitted

7/10/13 Jean Higgins

I have been a resident of Needham for 34 years; wasn't raised here and didn't have children, so my perception of Rosemary Pool is based on the experience of an adult who has only had the pleasure of being at Rosemary Pool for the last 4 or 5 years.

My first thought is that it's Needham's best kept secret. The lifeguards are so friendly and helpful and attentive to the safety of the children.

I've watched lifeguards teach special needs children and young adults with nothing but kindness and patience. I am greeted every day by friendly staff at the office and they always say goodnight and wish me well.

I watch the staff testing the water frequently so I feel like someone is worry about my health. There are a few chairs in the sand or up on the lawn which gives it a homey feeling. Many times there are people that I see year after year and we get into conversation while in the pool. One of my favorite times of each hour is the 15 minutes before the hour when the adults can do laps or walk in the "turtle lane" without the kids being in the pool. It is also fun to see the kids splash back into the pool when those 15 minutes are over.

Blue Sky Session: Rosemary Pool and Complex
Monday, July 22, 2013
Powers Hall – Town Hall
Page 6 of 10

I would be very sad if they ever closed Rosemary Pool - I hope it gets refurbished or rebuilt when it has exhausted its life expectancy. It's one of the Needham-run facilities that I truly enjoy.

7/10/13 Robin Schwartz

I am unable to attend the blue sky session but do want to share that the Rosemary pool is a lovely, well kept space, with an amazing space. My family truly enjoys the swimming lessons and the swimming. Any solution should include this wonderful resource.

7/12/13 Sam Warner

Sorry I can't come to your Session on the 22nd. It seems like a good beginning. I send this as a summary of my ideas.

As you know I have long thought Rosemary Lake had a great potential as a park in the middle of our town:

Clear out the pool and its buildings.
Make a level walkway around the lake and see what use it gets.
Attend to the vegetation and Girl Scout Camp buildings.
You will now have a beautiful lake and park.

The pool:

Move to DeFazio Field. There is now more room with the salt shed being removed.
Widen on sidewalk on Dedham Ave. so that kids can ride their bikes safely to it.

If there is a lot of sentiment in favor a sports center for the community it can be added to the project at some later date if the plans are drawn when you build the outdoor pool.

Hope this helps.

7/15/13 Cynthia Shapiro

Not able to attend the meeting. Just two ideas:

- 1) I think you should close the pool at 6:30 pm. Most of the time very few people are there.
- 2) Also that huge tree in the corner keeps sending white particles into the pool. Why not cut down most of it?

I've been coming to the pool for most of the years it has been opened.

7/16/13 Judy Silverstein

I can't attend the meeting Monday but I hope that Rosemary Pool stays open (or a replacement). I go swimming there whenever possible, I live and work in Needham and totally enjoy a swim on a long lunch

Blue Sky Session: Rosemary Pool and Complex

Monday, July 22, 2013

Powers Hall – Town Hall

Page 7 of 10

break or after work. There are no beaches so close to home. Please keep the pool maintained and available. Thanks.

7/18/13 Jim Bonasia

I just wanted to send my comments about the Rosemary pool/lake area. Along with a pool I would love to see an ice rink be considered in that space. Since I have last met with you I have got great feedback from people and hopefully by Sept will have more accurate numbers to share and try to gather support for a rink.

7/22/13 Jennie Shaw

I have been a Needham resident for 14 years. We were a member of Rosemary pool for 10 years, a member at Hale for 1 year and have now been a member of the Boston Sports Club for 3 years. Although each are a place to swim, there are issues which range from minimal hours, health concerns, a long distance, and an enormous cost.

My husband and I also grew up in a town where a pool was built while we lived there. Based on our many experiences with membership at various pools, there is no doubt in my mind that a new town pool in Needham would be an outstanding addition our town. A pool not only creates a community feel for residents of all ages, but it also provides constant opportunities for exercise and improving the health of our residents from young to old. I have great memories of learning how to swim at our town pool, and later teaching others how to swim as a lifeguard. It was a place to meet my friends, and have fun and exercise at the same time, and a place to help out with younger kids, and older adults.

A new town pool will help our town 100%. Thank you for your time,

7/22/13 Elise Miller

I am so sorry I can not make the meeting this evening but if there is anything I can do to help let me know. I am a big supporter the center.

7/22/13 Yanhong Xiong

I am sitting at the meeting supporting for Rosemary pool now, but I am not confident about speaking in English in public now, what I want to say is that my family has been living in Needham over ten years, my family loves swimming, but the current rosemary pool doesn't meet our expectation, my kids love JCC outdoor pool, but they know few people there, we will be much happier if my kids can have fun with our neighbour kids and their classmates in pool and pay to our own town.

Our friend from Wayland are trying to convincing us to move to Wayland because they have a cool indoor/outdoor pool with glass ceiling and better schools. We love Needham and sincerely hope we can stay forever with our neighbors in Needham. Please support a NEW Rosemary Pool!

7/22/13 Annie Kip

I was unable to come to the gathering tonight outside of Powers Hall, but I wanted to register my enthusiasm for the effort to build a new pool for Needham. We really need one! I hope there is way that the town can make this a priority and build the Needham community in this way. Thank you!

Blue Sky Session: Rosemary Pool and Complex
Monday, July 22, 2013
Powers Hall – Town Hall
Page 8 of 10

7/22/13 Don Leathe

I have lived in Needham for over 35 years and raised out two daughters here.

Both of them learned to swim at Rosemary and we spent many enjoyable hours swimming together at the pool over the years.

I have recently rediscovered the pool and been doing laps one to two afternoons a week and really enjoying it.

I love the fact that Needham has Rosemary Pool. I love the fact that it is outdoors, next to the lake (pond) and on the banked hill and think it provides a unique recreational facility, swimming predominately, to those so inclined.

I would hate to see it go away and be replaced with an indoors pool, as some would like, perhaps as part of a "Community Center" similar to what "all the other towns have."

Yes it is not the Pool and Racquet club, and never should be, and not the Country Club, the Tennis Club, etc.

I think the location, scenery, the easy availability, the public nature, the low cost and the low key approach to it all is a wonderful service that the town provides and should not be replaced with a pool in another location and possible indoors.

I would vote for refurbishing and upgrading the facility in place so that the sitting areas were more accommodating to older people and young families with more places to sit and perhaps more paving and less dirt (the sand, most of it should stay.) A fancier volleyball or similar court (perhaps a basketball net somewhere) and a pool that replaces the corrugated steel walls with more substantial walls, better walkways (less wooden ones) new diving boards (multiple levels) perhaps a water slide, a wading pool for the littlest ones, perhaps some fountains that were on the ground level and allowed youngsters to walk under, maybe even a misting area.

And keep a lap area.

Improve the vending area from a couple of machines to a snack bar, perhaps.

In short upgrade the entire facility, in place and make it much more updated and user oriented but keep the lovely setting, the outdoor nature and the relatively low cost.

And above all keep the open for all, public nature.

We have fancy, upscale, expensive pools surrounding and in out town for the well-heeled set and those requiring a more homogenized approach.

This is Everyman's pool, but its updating is long overdue.

Blue Sky Session: Rosemary Pool and Complex
Monday, July 22, 2013
Powers Hall – Town Hall
Page 9 of 10

Please accept these recommendations in the spirit with which they are being given, by a long time lover of Needham and its public services who feels that Rosemary Pool serves a specific niche that is well worth preserving.

Let me know of any questions or of any other opportunities to monitor the discussion as it progresses.

7/23/13 Jennifer Lenoci-Edwards

Hi there—

I wanted to provide some input on the session yesterday about the Rosemary pool. I attended the session yesterday and listened carefully to folks requests. Here are the items I would like to see considered in this evaluation.

1. An Outdoor Pool—An indoor pool is nice but I agree nothing beats an outdoor space in summer and that is why we enjoy Rosemary pool. We have a YMCA membership but would not consider going to free swim in the summer months
2. Affordability – I think that what makes the pool so great is that it is affordable. I think if we plunk a bunch of money into this multi-million dollar structure, what will be the cost to join? Will it be as outlandish at BSC? JCC at \$1500 bucks? I don't want to pay to use a pool what I could pay for a vacation – I worry about this.
3. I don't have an interest in bringing a million swim teams to Needham. I know it would boost revenue, but also the traffic, the noise and I like our sleepy family centered town
4. I would like to see the rosemary pool souped up a bit – Maybe some sails for shade on the hill, so folks who are not in the water an escape the sun.
5. A real concession stand would be nice for the kids and maybe a few more tables for having a quick dinner at the pool.

Thanks for allowing us to provide input.

7/23/13 ParentTalk

We write to you on behalf of the Parent Talk board members. We are a Needham-based non-profit organization helping families with young children connect, learn, play and grow together. Our membership is comprised of approximately 500 families, nearly 400 of which live in Needham. As a local community-based group, Parent Talk is writing to express our support of the vision for the Complex submitted under separate copy by the Community Center of Needham, Inc.

7/24/13 Brian Shoemaker

We were unable to attend the meeting on Monday night but I wanted to let you know that I feel strongly about preserving Rosemary Pool.

I'm a teacher so I'm home with my kids in the summer. I take the boys there several times a week, today I swam laps for 40 min and then brought my 4 year old back to play. He's getting very comfortable in the water since we go so frequently.

Blue Sky Session: Rosemary Pool and Complex
Monday, July 22, 2013
Powers Hall – Town Hall
Page 10 of 10

We bring our guests when they come to visit, everyone is always so impressed.

Rosemary is a fantastic pool, far better than people give it credit for.

I'd like to see it stay exactly as is. It is one of the best things about living in Needham.

(follow-up comment) one more thing if it wasn't clear- needs to be outside! that's where community builds.

8/1/13 Jean Higgins *(follow-up comment)*

Since the recent meeting I have received so much positive feedback for my comments regarding having an outdoor pool. It seems like we're going to need an indoor lap pool for the competitive swimmers and an outdoor pool for the people who just want to relax, breathe fresh air, enjoy the sun and float around in the pool on a hot day.

NOTE: The Park and Recreation Commission has also received past written comments from the following:

David Vergara with a concept for filling the majority of the lake to create buildable space for a “teen center, senior center, new pool, fields, etc.”

Numerous written documents and research from The Community Center of Needham.