

Park and Recreation Commission Meeting
March 11th, 2024 @ 7:00pm

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

Present via Zoom: Christopher Gerstel (Chair), James Rosenbaum (Member)

Guests: Paul Pasquarosa, Mark Miskin

Call to Order

Mr. Gerstel called the meeting to order at 7:03pm, March 11th, 2024.

1. Open Forum Public Comment

Mr. Paul Pasquarosa addressed the Commission over concerns that court 1 at Mills Field is underutilized by tennis players and could be opened up for pickleball play. Mr. Pasquarosa has proposed that court 1 be painted to allow for pickleball play while the court is vacant. He went on to say that court 1 would be vacated by pickleball players whenever tennis players arrived to use the court. Chris asked when Pasquarosa would like to hear a decision from the Commission regarding the proposal and Pasquarosa replied April 1st, the first official day of court use for the season. Chris will confer with the Department of Parks and Forestry in the coming week before further considerations are made.

Mr. Mark Miskin attended the Public Forum at the request of the Commission. Mr. Miskin serves as an organizer for the Memorial Day Weekend Soccer Tournament. Chris emphasized the importance of the tournament to the community and wanted to make Mr. Miskin aware that the organization's yearly donation may not match the Department's needs for 2025 due to how involved the process is. Mr. Miskin was receptive and continued on to discuss the positive economic impact of hosting the tournament in Needham, as well as other charitable contributions from the organization, such as scholarship programs and donations to the police and fire departments. Cynthia informed Mr. Miskin that those contributions are important and appreciated, but that the Commission wants him to be aware of the increased asking price. Mr. Miskin stated that he is aware of the new rates and would like the Commission to consider aforementioned positive impacts as the rates are applied. Chris stated that the organization are exemplary field users and thanked Mr. Miskin. Mr. Miskin would like all donations to be utilized for field maintenance, as in the past.

2. Meeting Guests

Public Forum attendees – Paul (name) and Mark Miskin.

3. Chair's Update

Chris has no additional updates.

4. Director's Report

Stacey stated that Winter programs were largely successful and are starting to wind down and give way to Spring programs, which are seeing a smooth start. April school vacation programs, Touch the Trucks, and the Fishing Festival are attracting plenty of

early interest. The Department's Summer and Pool brochures were both released the previous Friday, March 8th. Two new initiatives from the Department are staff corn hole tournaments and an open-to-the-community giant puzzle. The cornhole tournament will be open to all Town employees and occur twice over the course of the Summer, and the puzzle is a 60,000 piece work split up into various smaller puzzles that Needham residents will be able to participate in as they please during the Rosemary Recreation Complex's normal operating hours.

Field preparation and maintenance for the Spring is ongoing, and Park Ranger, Wu Liao, has been pro-active in ensuring that residents have not been accessing the fields illicitly. The Department also took opening and closing bids for the Rosemary Pools the previous week. The Claxton Field Renovation Project bid document is being finalized and will hopefully be ready to present at upcoming Town Meeting. The new bleachers for McLeod should be arriving, fully manufactured, the week of March 18th, 2024. The current goal is to have the diamond fully prepared for use by the week of March 25th, 2024. The planning board will be meeting to discuss the addition of new tennis courts, but Stacey will not attend due to prior commitments.

The interview process for the Administrative Analyst position is wrapping up, with final in-person interviews remaining candidates taking place the week of March 11th.

5. Discussion Items

Michelle inquired about school playground checks, as the Spring is approaching. Stacey replied that the Department is going through and doing quality checks, with Wu conducting maintenance of hardware. The respective schools have been assisting financially with playground maintenance.

Dina raised the concern that many field users have been asked to reschedule events as high school athletics, which have priority field-use, had been scheduled erratically last Fall. Stacey acknowledged that this had been an issue, and that the limited availability of umpires and referees plays a large role in high school scheduling. Going forward, the Commission and Department would like to find ways to more evenly distribute the burden of rescheduling across field user groups.

6. Action Items & Approvals

6A. Special Event Approvals

Needham Soccer Club Pre-Season Training

Motion: Cynthia Chaston

Second: Michelle Geddes

Vote: 5-0

John Eliot PTC Student Picnic

Motion: Dina Hannigan

Second: Cynthia Chaston

Vote: 5-0

Needham Lacrosse Clinic

Motion: Michelle Geddes
Second: Cynthia Chaston
Vote: 5-0

Needham High Class of '24 Senior Picnic
Motion: Dina Hannigan
Second: Michelle Geddes
Vote: 5-0

6B. Policy Approvals
None.

6C. Fee Approvals
None.

6D. Meeting Minutes of February 26th, 2024.
Minutes from this meeting will be reviewed at March 25th, 2024 meeting.

7. Issues Not Reasonably Anticipated by Chair within 48 Hours
None.

8. Topics for Future Meetings
McLeod Ribbon Cutting and the issue of tennis nets staying up over the Winter will be discussed at the next meeting, March 25th, 2024.

9. Next Meetings

- Monday, March 25th, 2024
- Monday, April 8th, 2024
- Monday, April 22nd, 2024
- Monday, May 13th, 2024

10. Adjournment of Business Meeting
Motion: Cynthia Chaston
Second: Dina Hannigan
Vote: 5-0

Meeting adjourned at 8:08pm, March 11th, 2024.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dominic Stanganelli
Administrative Assistant