

Park and Recreation Commission Meeting
June 26th, 2024 @ 7:00pm

Present: Christopher Gerstel (Chair), Dina Hannigan (Member), James Rosenbaum (Member), Stacey Mulroy (Director), Dominic Stanganelli (Administrative Assistant)

Absent: Cynthia Chaston (Member), Michelle Geddes (Member)

Guests: None.

Call to Order

Mr. Gerstel called the meeting to order at 7:00pm, June 26th, 2024.

1. **Open Forum Public Comment**

None.

2. **Meeting Guests**

None.

3. **Chair's Update**

Chris had no additional updates.

4. **Director's Report**

The Rosemary Pools are up and running. We had to run out and pick up some crucial components after the soft opening, but the pools are now operating smoothly.

The first Public Meeting regarding the Active Recreation Feasibility Study has been scheduled for Monday, September 9th, 2024, at 6:00pm. The Department is waiting for feedback from the Planning Board before proceeding with the Needham High School tennis court project.

The Department has reached 100% staffing for both the Pools and Summer camps.

The first Arts in the Park concert will be held on Thursday, June 27th, at 7:00pm at the Memorial Gazebo. The next concert is scheduled to occur on Thursday, July 18th, 2024.

Chris asked if Stacey had any concerns over lower pool membership sales. Stacey replied that many folks feel the operating season is too short and that prices are too high. Chris stated that he understands people's frustrations and stated that the season length is due to staffing, which is a safety issue over anything else. Chris emphasized that the Commission commends the efforts of all staff involved in opening and operating the Rosemary Pools.

5. **Discussion Items**

The Commission agreed that when a nighttime Legion baseball game is played, it will be submitted as a special request in order to extend light usage to 10:00pm. Stacey pointed out that our joint policy with the Memorial Trustees contains a provision that either the Park and Recreation Commission or Memorial Trustees can vote to extend light hour at Memorial Park.

James asked about court badge sales and Dominic noted that sales had slowed down. James pondered if lack of enforcement has led to hesitation among residents to purchase court badges. Chris asked James if he has noticed any trends with pickleball play, to which James replied that he has noticed a lot of out-of-towners, unaccompanied by resident court badge holders.

Chris and Stacey agreed that they would like no dogs on any playgrounds. The current signage is confusing and no current by-laws exist to clarify the Town's official dog policies. Chris asked if we could clarify our dog policy and standardize all signs. Stacey replied that the Department can write up a policy for the Commission to vote on.

Stacey brought attention to a letter received from a resident asking the Department to reconsider our no-flotation-devices policy at the Rosemary Pools. Stacey noted that many towns are moving towards allowing life-saving devices (life jackets), and that the NRPA, Red Cross, AAP, and CDC all endorse this policy. Stacey clarified that she does not want staff fitting life-saving devices due to liability concerns, but noted they can inspect attendees' devices. James asked if live-saving devices should be approved before they enter the facility and Stacey replied that pool supervisors can conduct inspections. Stacey pointed out that she would only like to allow Coast Guard-approved level 1, 2, or 3 life-saving devices.

Regarding construction at DeFazio, Stacey pointed to Summer as an ideal time as the area sees increased traffic in the Fall. She noted that poured-in-place rubber surfacing has a temperature-dependent curing time, so the project may still likely occur closer to Fall. Chris raised concern over the surplus of construction vehicles in the DeFazio lot when multiple sporting events are happening and Stacey agreed.

Stacey stated that she has been working with schools on playground inspections and did a tour today, including a full inspection at the Mitchell School. Chris asked if the disc golf folks have conducted their feasibility study yet, to which Stacey replied that it will take place Monday, July 1st, 2024.

6. Action Items & Approvals

6A. Special Event Approvals

Ellie Bloom Special Olympics

Motion: Dina

Second: James

Vote: 3-0

Needham Harvest Fair

Motion: Dina

Second: James

Vote: 3-0

International Overdose Awareness Day Vigil

Motion: Dina

Second: James
Vote: 3-0

6B. Policy Approvals
None.

6C. Fee Approvals
None.

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

8. Topics for Future Meetings
None.

9. Next Meetings

- Monday, July 8th, 2024
- Monday, July 22nd, 2024
- Monday, August 5th, 2024

10. Adjournment of Business Meeting
Motion: Chris
Second: Jim
Vote: 2-0

Meeting adjourned at 7:37pm, June 26th, 2024.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dominic Stanganelli
Administrative Assistant