

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

**MINUTES OF MEETING
January 14, 2008**

- PRESENT:** Christopher R. Dollase, Chairman
Cynthia J. Chaston, Vice-Chairman
William R. Dermody, Member
Philip V. Robey, Member
Patricia M. Carey, Director
- ABSENT:** Brian S. Nadler, Member
Karen A. Peirce, Assistant Director
- GUESTS:** Cheryl Gosmon and Terence Noonan – Needham Housing Authority

The meeting convened at 7:00 PM in the Selectmen's Meeting Room at Town Hall.

1. **Minutes of Meeting of December 10, 2007; Minutes of Field Scheduling Meeting of December 5, 2007:** Mr. Robey made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 10, 2007 meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Dermody and the motion was unanimously approved. Mr. Dermody made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 5, 2007 Field Scheduling meeting. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Chaston and it was approved unanimously.
2. **Financial Report:** The Commission reviewed the November 2007 financial report. Ms. Carey will be reviewing the supply costs at the pool to insure the supplies needed for the first few weeks of the pool operation can be funded.
3. **Correspondence:**
 - A. **Annual Report:** The Commission reviewed a copy of the FY 2007 Annual Report submittal.
4. **Assistant Director's Report:** Ms. Peirce will provide an update at the next Commission meeting.
5. **Discussion Items:**
 - A. **Needham Housing Authority – High Rock Trails Project:** Needham Housing Authority members Cheryl Gosmon and Terence Noonan presented their proposal to create a formal trail through High Rock Homes that leads to a connection to the Town Forest. Their project has been submitted to the Community Preservation Committee for funding. It is

hoped that the trails will connect the open space areas at the High Rock School to the Town Forest, and encourage families and senior citizens living in the area to utilize it for a safe fitness activity. Efforts will be made to screen the trail from homes located close to the trail. The screens would also help keep people on the trails and out of private backyards. Mr. Robey noted that it could be well used by students from the High Rock School. Mr. Noonan hoped that trail users would help keep the trail clean and prevent any possible problems. Ms. Gosmon stated that the Housing Authority would be responsible for the trail maintenance. Ms. Gosmon and Mr. Noonan will be presenting the project to the Trails Committee and the Community Preservation Committee later this week. They will ask their consultant to send the mapping information to Ms. Carey so that it can be forwarded to the Trails Committee's consultant and incorporated into the Town's trail maps. Mr. Dermody made a motion to support the Needham Housing Authority's trail project at High Rock Homes. Mrs. Chaston seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

- B. Director's Report:** The Commission reviewed the report.
- C. Field Study Update:** Ms. Carey noted that detailed questions are being worked on at this point, so that the RFP will include important statements. As an example, the Memorial Park parking lot will primarily remain available for use during construction by students at Needham High School and for other activities. Special fencing and access for construction vehicles will be required. Fund raising efforts are about to go public for a major push for the final private funds. Mr. Dermody noted the importance of having the Commission state their support for the project to the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee prior to the expected March Special Town Meeting. Mr. Robey stated it is important to show the private/public partnership for funding the overall project. Mr. Dollase noted that the Field Study Committee had consistently stated that it hoped to fund as much of the project privately as possible, but that a request for public funds was always a possibility.
- D. High Rock Renovation and Parking:** Ms. Carey will be attending the February 12th Planning Board meeting to support the PPBC's request to eliminate ten of the required parking spaces. The Planning Board had set the required number based on information that the spaces were needed for use of the athletic fields, but Ms. Carey will provide information that disputes that statement and supports the decrease in parking spaces.
- E. Field Naming: John McLeod:** Mr. Dollase will speak to representatives of the Sports Council, as one member has suggested that the first new diamond at DeFazio have its name reserved for a possible donor.

- F. Operating and Capital Budget Update:** Mr. Dollase and Ms. Carey will attend the Finance Committee meeting on February 16th to discuss the operating budget request. They met with Finance Committee liaison Scott Brightman a few weeks ago, and there were no major concerns noted. Ms. Carey will provide copies of a report from boston.com that lists the percent of overall municipal budgets spent on culture and recreation budgets. The Commission reviewed the Town Manager's Executive Summary of the Capital Improvement Plan.
 - G. Open Space and Recreation Plan Update:** Staff members are currently reviewing the documents that were submitted to the state in July, and working on pulling together the information that the state has requested. The plan will then be reviewed by each relevant board, and will be finalized.
 - H. Community Preservation Projects:** The Community Preservation Committee will review five funding proposals for inclusion in the May Town Meeting warrant. The Commission partnered with the Conservation Commission on the request for funds to purchase part of Hearthstone Farm. The Conservation Commission also submitted a first funding proposal for work that will come from the Trails Master Plan, and the Housing Authority submitted a request to build trails at High Rock Homes. The Conservation Commission has also requested funds to be placed in the Conservation Fund, used to purchase land or conservation restrictions. The largest project will be to fund renovation of Town Hall.
 - I. Other Business:** Mr. Dollase has not had an opportunity to check-out the Geocache trail at the Town Forest at night. Mr. Dermody noted that some people are participating in the activity, despite the Town Forest being closed at dusk. Ms. Carey will provide some additional information to the Police Chief.
- 6. Action Items: None Presented**
- 7. Adjournment:** Mr. Dermody made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 PM. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Chaston, and the meeting adjourned at 8:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia M. Carey, CPRP
Director