

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

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

April 25, 2008

*Background notes for Monday, April 28th
Park and Recreation Commission Agenda*

MEETING REMINDER

Because all of the Commission members will be attending the League of Women Voters Warrant Meeting on Monday, April 28 at 7:30 PM, the Park and Recreation Commission meeting will be held at 6:30 PM in the "inner space" meeting room located in the Pollard School Media Center.

The Commission's first meeting in May would be Monday, May 12th, a conflict with Town Meeting. A new meeting date will need to be determined.

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION

Two projects will be withdrawn by the Community Preservation Committee from the Town Meeting warrant at the requests of the proponents: High Rock Trails and the purchase of a portion of Hearthstone Farm. Both will likely be requested in the future. The Community Preservation Committee voted to recommend the other three projects to Town Meeting for funding: an appropriation to the Town's Conservation Fund, funding for initial projects related to the Trails Master Plan, and design for the renovation of Town Hall.

SAVE THE DATES

Stocking the Reservoir	Tuesday, April 29	10:45 AM	Reservoir
Fishing Derby	Saturday, May 3	9 AM – Noon	Reservoir
Touch the Trucks	Saturday, May 17	10 AM – Noon	DeFazio Parking Lot

PLAYGROUNDS

Pre-season maintenance work is being done at the playground sites. The private contractor moves to each site as quickly as he can, but it typically takes a few weeks for them to be reviewed for problems and renew the surfacing. The DPW is helping, today, with the covering up of some offensive words written onto the Greene's Field structure.

The Exchange Club has decided to do a second phase of work at the Claxton tot lot as their October project. We'll start the planning process in the next few weeks. The work won't be as extensive as the first phase last fall.

SUMMER PROJECTS

The draining of the lake and pool began on Tuesday, April 22nd. The Conservation Commission has approved the pipe replacement project being done during the drain-

down period at their April 24th meeting, so all of those details are being finalized. The draining allows other projects to begin at the pool.

The contractor for the Claxton bathrooms has not turned the site back to the Town, yet, but I hope that the bathrooms will be open for use within the week.

The bid for the new water bubblers has been awarded, so I will be placing the order within the next few weeks. I will then contract with a plumber for installation over the summer.

The brochure is at the new printers, and we are hoping the quality will match our previous printers. Registration preparation is underway, as are all the tasks related to preparing for summer staff training.

TENNIS COURTS

The state contact still hasn't responded to my request for an update on the status of awarding grants under the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The application period for 2008 has just been announced. The Town's Conservation Agent Kristen Phelps is also waiting for a response to a question she has submitted to the same contact, so if she hears back first, she will also ask the grant question for our department. The tennis courts project is on the Special Town Meeting warrant on May 12th and has been recommended for funding by the Finance Committee.

SYNTHETIC TURF

The New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services recently tested 12 random synthetic turf fields for lead. Late in 2007, they had tested one field adjacent to a site contaminated with heavy metals, and wanted to discover if synthetic turf, itself, was a concern. Twelve fields were tested, and the two with synthetic carpet made of nylon tested high for lead on a scale used for soil testing. The other ten fields had turf carpet made of polyethylene. Depending on the field, the test scores showed no trace of lead to something barely legible. Needham is installing FieldTurf polyethylene, as has St. Sebastian's. The Selectmen will have a discussion on the issue at their Tuesday, April 29th meeting.

This is a joint statement that has been released by Dr. David Black and Dr. Davis Lee. Dr. Black has a Ph.D. in Forensic Toxicology and Dr. Lee has a Ph.D. in Synthetic Organic Chemistry. This is their joint statement: *"There is no scientific evidence of a health risk for children or adults based on recent test results and current knowledge of the chemical structure of aged synthetic turf products. Concerns over potential harm related to the three older fields in use in New Jersey have not addressed fundamental questions regarding potential toxicity including route of exposure, dose of any potential chemicals, and how such chemicals may be introduced into the body by being in contact with synthetic turf products (referred to as bioavailability). Reports of health concerns have not been supported by any laboratory analysis on the products or humans that indicate any risk of harm due to potential exposure to chemicals. Studies that have been*

conducted and made available for our review have not documented that aged synthetic turf products may be a source of lead exposure to anyone in contact with the product."

The Town and Gale Associates have both asked Field Turf to provide a written statement to Needham about their product and the lead issue. The Town Manager, Health Director and I will put information out to the public, including the written statement from Field Turf.

FIELDS OF DREAMS

The License between the Town Manager and Sports Council becomes effective on Monday. I am getting written confirmation on the use of the parks pre-construction and post-construction. This has all been agreed to during discussions.

The Sports Council has hired their contractor, and initial work is expected to begin on Tuesday, April 29th. One of the first tasks is placing the fencing around the work site.

The Zoning Board of Appeals approved the special permits for placement of athletic field lights at both parks. The lights for Memorial Park will be ordered now, and most likely on Thursday, May 22nd, the Conservation Commission will be requested to accept the location of a few poles that are located within the buffer zone of the wetlands. The actual meeting date still has to be finalized.

All of the details for the High School track teams use of the track at the Northeastern Dedham's campus have been finalized. Their use will begin within the next week.

As construction progresses, the NHS Athletic Director and I will start working on how to schedule the High School teams for pre-season practice and the fall season. It is also my recommendation that a meeting be scheduled with all the other field users to not only discuss the fall, but start thinking ahead to spring, as some natural turf fields will not be available for use.