

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

**Minutes of Meeting  
September 22, 2014**

- PRESENT:** Cynthia J. Chaston, Chairman  
David C. DiCicco, Vice Chairman  
Thomas M. Jacob, Member  
Michael J. Retzky, Member  
Matthew M. Toolan, Member  
Patricia M. Carey, Director
- GUESTS:** Dan Matthews, Board of Selectmen  
Penny Grossman, Council on Aging  
Tommy Smith, Chambers Cove  
Tom Parlato, Chambers Cove  
William Middleton, Chambers Cove  
Arnold Almquist, Chambers Cove  
Janet Jankowiak, YMCA Board Member  
Connie Kaufman, YMCA Board Member  
Yasue' Keyes, Community Center of Needham  
Kristen Wright, Park and Recreation Administrative Specialist

Mrs. Chaston called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM in the Charles River Room at the Public Services Administration Building.

- 1. Minutes of Meeting – September 8, 2014:** Mr. Toolan made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 8, 2014 meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Retzky and was approved unanimously.
- 2. Director's Report:** The Commission reviewed the written report. Ms. Carey reminded the Commission that she would be attending the Selectmen's meeting to re-present the MRPA Legislator of the Year Award to Rep. Denise Garlick. She also noted that the two dugouts have been painted at Mills Field, and the concession building will also be painted in the near future. Mr. Toolan asked about the progress on hiring the Recreation Supervisor. Ms. Carey and DPW Parks and Forestry Superintendent Ed Olsen interviewed nine candidates last week, and will conduct second interviews this week for three candidates, with the assistance of the Director of Shrewsbury Parks, Recreation and Cemetery.
- 3. Discussion Items**
  - a. Draft Housing Plan:** Mrs. Chaston welcomed Selectman Dan Matthews. Mr. Matthews explained the state legislation related to affordable housing, and the goals that

it sets for each community, with a minimum of 10% of a community's stock meeting the requirements. Needham is currently at about 7.5%. The state will accept a comprehensive five year housing plan, with specific requirements. Mr. Matthews noted that it is the belief that the final 300+ units can be achieved in Needham within the next five years, with particular emphasis on creating rental units. In order to have the plan accepted, Town-owned parcels need to be listed in the report as possible sites. Having reviewed prior studies of Town land, most of the parcels available in the past are no longer available, with the exception of a 2 acre parcel on Gould Street under the Commission's jurisdiction. Mr. Toolan noted that other possible parcels might be available, but Mr. Matthews did not feel they would be within the five year time frame. Mrs. Chaston asked if the parcel was too small to meet the need for units. Mr. Matthews felt that it possibly could hold 8 units per acre, and Mr. DiCicco agreed that with relief on zoning set-backs 16-20 units was possible on the 2 acres. Mr. Retzky asked about deed restrictions on the units, and Mr. Matthews noted they would remain affordable unless the development was reduced in size to meet zoning requirements. Mr. Jacob asked what the process would be for changing the use of the land. Mr. Matthews explained that Park and Recreation would declare it surplus, and the Selectmen would then determine whether the property would be leased or sold, but the Town itself would not build the units. The Plan needs to be accepted by the Selectmen, so a public hearing would be held for discussion on all aspects of the plan, and abutters would have the opportunity to speak, as well as during any study of the property. The consensus of the Commission was to support the Gould Street parcel being part of a long-term discussion for possible housing, noting that further discussion on its value as open space would continue. Mrs. Chaston thanked Mr. Matthews for including the Commission in the dialogue.

- b. Naming Request – Chamber's Cove at Rosemary Lake:** Mrs. Chaston noted that the public had been invited to share comments on the request to name the cove area at Rosemary Lake in memory of John Chambers. She read two e-mail notes of support provided by members of the Chambers family. Mr. DiCicco shared a written tribute, including comments from NHS Hockey coach Jamie O'Leary, Mr. Chamber's grandson. Tom Smith has reached out to others and asked them to share their comments. Arnold Almquist taught Math with Mr. Chambers at Needham High School. He told the Commission that Mr. Chambers always spoke up for the students and insured that decisions were made that were best for the students, especially those who had struggles. Mrs. Chaston noted that the policy to name a facility required a written request and discussion at two Commission meetings with public input invited, and those requirements have been met. Ms. Carey has been reviewing the site with DPW and Conservation, but a final recommendation for placement of a stone and benches has not been determined, yet. Mr. DiCicco made a motion to approve the request to name a portion of Rosemary Lake as Chamber's Cove at Rosemary Lake, in honor and memory of coach and educator John Chambers, with approval of a location of a marker still to be determined. Mr. Jacob seconded the motion. Mr. Toolan asked that the donation of funds be clarified. Ms. Carey stated that could be done at a later

date when the Commission voted on what would be placed to commemorate the naming and its location. Mr. DiCicco thanked Mr. Smith and others who had put so much effort into this request, and stated that it was great to vote on something that set a positive example for youth and that wasn't done for financial reasons. Mr. Retzky has been impressed with the stories he has heard about Mr. Chambers from long-time Needham residents, and Mrs. Chaston noted that the Commission wished they had each had the chance to know him. Mrs. Chaston called for the vote and the motion was approved unanimously.

- c. Council on Aging Representative:** Mrs. Chaston welcomed the newly appointed representative to the Council on Aging Penny Grossman. Mr. Jacob asked Mrs. Grossman why she was interested in being on the Council on Aging. Mrs. Grossman explained that her career had revolved around working with elderly and now that she was retired, she wanted to continue that work that she enjoyed, supporting the community where she has lived for 35 years. Mr. Jacob explained that the Commission had not actively remained in touch with appointees in the past, but that they hoped to stay connected and build a bridge between the two volunteer boards so that efforts can be worked on together without duplication. He asked her to remember the Commission and to reach out if there was something the Commission could do to help. Mr. Toolan welcomed her input on what needs might not be met that could be provided by the department. Mrs. Grossman asked if there was outreach to seniors, and Ms. Carey explained that the staff continually received input from residents of all ages. Mrs. Chaston has reached out to the co-chairs of the Council on Aging Carol deLemos and Colleen Schaller, and Mrs. deLemos has suggested that representatives of each board and staff meet to discuss collaborations. Mr. Toolan suggested that Mrs. Grossman be sent a list of the Commission's current projects.
- d. Town-Wide Facilities Study:** Mr. Toolan provided an update on the progress of the study. He reminded the Commission of the meeting with boards on October 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7 PM at Powers Hall. Mr. Toolan stated that many of the scenarios require moving the DPW to a new site, and that several locations were studied but that Parcel 74 on Greendale Avenue, under the Commission's jurisdiction, appeared to be the preferred location. The School Committee needs to work through the process with MSBA in order to make a final determination on Hillside, which would then trigger other decisions, including whether a permanent or temporary school would be built at the preferred location of the DeFazio parking lot. The Commission will have two additional meetings prior the meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup> to discuss other issues in preparation for the meeting.
- e. Park and Recreation Commission Goals:** Mrs. Chaston drafted some possible goals, and input was also shared with her, prior to the meeting, by Mr. Retzky and Mr. Toolan. Each board member took on responsibility for being liaison to other boards or projects. She will work on an updated draft of goals that will include some of the following: Seek design/construction funds for Rosemary Pool; seek construction funds for

Newman fields and Eastman Conservation area; seek construction funds for Mills parking improvements, new bathroom unit, and renovation of basketball court; seek construction funds for Reservoir ADA trail and fishing pier; protect interest of Park and Recreation property with regards to open space and maximize its value; seek design and construction funds for Cricket building; address issues with trash; review outdoor basketball court resources; support creation of new trails – Rail Trail and Aqueduct Trail; review option for safety fencing between McLeod diamond and synthetic turf fields; follow other boards and studies related to parcels of land; continue to support funding for Park and Recreation/Parks and Forestry staff for equipment and maintenance on athletic fields to keep up with demand; review Field Scheduling policy and update as needed; review overall Park and Recreation programming, support collection of information on needs and build a process for improving alignment with other town groups to reduce overlaps. Mr. DiCicco would like residents to be surveyed for what they want, and for the department to take on programs that others are currently doing. Mr. Toolan noted that a survey has to be worded in a way that shows not just what people want, but what can actually work, what can be added to expand what is already offered, and where it can be offered.

- f. Board of Health Concussion Study:** Ms. Carey explained that despite the educational efforts of the youth organizations, the members of the Board of Health have decided to draft a policy that would require training and specific steps for an athlete with a concussion to be kept from returning to play without a medical approval. The Board of Health would create a fine for enforcement, but they haven't determined how this would be done. The consensus of the Commission was that training, education and awareness were important on this topic, but that creating fines or removing permits was not the avenue to provide the education. Ms. Carey noted that many concussions are self-reported without verification of how the concussion actually occurred. Mrs. Chaston wondered if a member of the Board of Health would meet with the Commission. Mr. DiCicco has spoken to several specialists who are willing to attend a summit or help provide additional education.
- g. School Feasibility Study:** Ms. Carey was at the recent School Committee meeting where it was reported that the MSBA and Needham are in the designer selection phase for the Hillside feasibility study.
- h. Harold J.A. Street, III Trust:** There was no update on the topic.
- i. Rosemary Pool Project:** Mrs. Chaston noted that the pool project was included in the financing plan being developed for the Facilities Study, and that Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick would be at an upcoming Commission meeting and would be able to discuss the project with them.
- j. Newman/Eastman Conservation Project:** Ms. Carey attended the recent School Committee meeting as part of the team to update them on the design concepts for the

athletic fields and the trails. The School Committee was supportive of the projects and the concepts. Mr. DiCicco was not able to attend, but watched on television and was impressed with the presentation by Parks and Forestry Superintendent Ed Olsen. Ms. Carey and the Newman trail steward led a walk this past weekend of the Eastman area as part of the department's Take a Hike program, with some Town officials joining the residents. She will have more walks in the upcoming future.

**4. Program Report:** Ms. Carey provided a written report with updated registration information.

**5. Action Items**

**a. Naming Request - Chamber's Cove at Rosemary Lake:** Approved earlier in the meeting.

**6. Topics for Future Agendas:** Mr. Toolan offered to assist Mrs. Chaston with an upcoming meeting with representatives of the Council on Aging. Mrs. Chaston drove by Cusick Field on a recent week night and noted that there were at least 10 vehicles parked on Central Avenue.

**7. Adjournment of Meeting:** Mr. Jacob made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 PM and the motion was seconded by Mr. Retzky. The meeting adjourned at 9:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia M. Carey, CPRP  
Director