

**COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE
TOWN OF NEEDHAM, MASSACHUSETTS**

**Public Hearing Minutes
March 11, 2015**

PRESENT: Lita Young - Chair, Gary Crossen – Vice Chair, Robert Boder, Mike Retzky, Mark Gluesing, Peter Oehlkers

ABSENT: Sam Bass Warner, Reg Foster

STAFF: Patricia Carey, Staff Liaison
Kristen Wright, Recording Secretary

GUESTS: See Appendix A

Ms. Young called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM in the Selectmen's Chambers at Town Hall and welcomed everyone to the Public Hearing. All members of the CPC introduced themselves.

Public Hearing – Project Presentations: Questions from the Public

FY2015-1 Rosemary Pool – Liaison – Gary Crossen

This request is for \$1,000,000 design funds for a full rehabilitation of the Rosemary Pool Complex, requested under Open Space and Recreation.

Mr. Crossen reviewed the proposal and introduced Park and Recreation Commission Member Tom Jacob. Mr. Jacob shared his presentation of the Rosemary Pool study options, the six points from the Park and Recreation Resolution to the feasibility study, and their final recommendation made in April 2014 (*See Appendix B for full presentation*). Ms. Young welcomed questions and comments from the public. Town Meeting Member Ross Donald stated that he feels there should be a greater emphasis on what the lake provides naturally. He added that he would not like to see things like a basketball court distract from the lake area as the Town cannot recreate Rosemary Lake but can put a basketball court anywhere. He also expressed concern about how the pool could encroach into the land next to the current pool which would devalue what that land currently has to offer. Resident Phyllis Mays asked if there was still an issue with the pool receiving run off water from the High School that contaminated the pool and lake. Ms. Carey stated that already completed renovations that have remedied that problem. Community Center of Needham Member Katy Dirks stated that she, and the entire Community Center of Needham, is excited for the opportunity for a pool at the very unique Rosemary site. The trails around the lake, views of the lake, and the central location make this site very desirable as a large community shared space and ideal location for the pool. Her members express frustration that they continually go outside of Needham to meet the needs of their family and would very much like a space in Needham they could use. The added element of a year-round community space would be a great benefit for the children of Needham, not only for Park and Recreation programming but outside groups as well. Community Center of Needham member Jo-Anne Ochalla stated that CPC funds were used in the Town Hall project, helped bring this property to its best possible use. She urges the CPC to use their funds to help Rosemary Pool be brought to its best use. Mr. Crossen stated that at

the Finance Committee meeting they were asked if there would be an impact on this project if there was a delay in funding or only part of the requested amount was granted. Ms. Carey stated that it would likely have an impact on how quickly the process can be completed and there is a meeting scheduled to determine exactly what that could be. Ms. Young thanked Mr. Jacob for his presentation.

FY2015-2 Newman Athletic Fields – Liaisons – Mark Gluesing and Peter Oehlkers

This request is for \$1,527,000 construction funds for a full renovation of the Newman athletic fields, requested under Open Space and Recreation.

Mr. Oehlkers introduced Superintendent of Parks and Forestry Edward Olsen and gave a brief description of the project. Mr. Olsen described the current field conditions and how they affect the current use of the facility. Mr. Olsen shared drawing and images of the space (*See Appendix C for full presentation*) and stated that the athletic fields are 5 acres of land with two 60' diamonds and a multi-purpose field. . This project could close the fields for a few months and would improve the drainage and irrigation system. The new design includes a walking trail loop which will provide a passive recreational option to parents, spectators, and visitors to the facility. He stated that Weston & Sampson is the team working on this project and they consulted with the user groups to ensure everyone would get something from this space. Mr. Olsen said that CPC funds had allowed for quality renovations at Walker-Gordon and Greene's Field. He stated that Newman is practically unusable in the current conditions. If approved, the project would go to bid after Annual Town Meeting and the permit process is about complete. Paul Stan, Town Meeting Member, asked what the proposed timing of the project would be. Mr. Olsen answered that it would start in July or August 2015. A portion of the fields would be made available in Fall 2015 for the school to use for recesses and the fields would be back online in the Spring of 2016. Greg Bayse, Assistant Principal of Newman Elementary, thanked the CPC for the design funding approved last year. He stated that the Newman fields host many user groups throughout the year and see the space as a resource for the entire community and supports this project as it will make the space more welcoming and useable. Brendan Chambers, from Needham High's Ultimate Frisbee team, stated that this project is very beneficial to their user group. He stated that in the current conditions, any precipitation would close the field making it hard for them to schedule home games for their group. Ms. Young thanked Mr. Olsen for his presentation.

FY2015-3 Eastman Conservation Area – Liaisons – Mark Gluesing and Peter Oehlkers

This request is for \$800,000 construction funds for a full renovation of the Eastman Conservation Area, requested under Open Space and Recreation.

Mr. Gluesing reintroduced Mr. Olsen and gave a brief project overview. Mr. Olsen presented the designs for the Eastman Conservation Area (*See Appendix D for the full presentation*) and stated that they designed the Eastman Conservation Area with the Newman athletic fields to ensure that the two spaces would compliment each other and could be used without conflict. He stated the Needham Science Center is the major user group, bringing all grades from Needham Public Schools onto the trail. The two-tier boardwalk would be removed, and the trail would be created for all abilities to reach the wetlands, swamp, meadow, volcanic rock, and pond. Mr. Bayse shared that this is a unique space in the town. Within the loop there are four natural habitats which are great for both the teaching and learning opportunities in both the educational aspect as well as for passing recreational use. Elise

Morgan, Science Center Coordinator, shared that she is very excited about this project. The Eastman Conservation Area is a wonderful place for students to gather samples and then go to the lab and examine them more closely. Many students of the school system still have wonderful memories of their time spent exploring this area. Ms. Young asked Mr. Olsen about the outside classroom space. Mr. Olsen noted there would be an accessible route that would create an amphitheater and within the trail, an outdoor classroom. Ms. Young asked about the timing of the project. Mr. Olsen stated that the exact timing hadn't been determined yet. Mr. Gluesing thanked Mr. Olsen for his presentation.

FY2015-4 Mills Field Park Improvements – Liaison – Reg Foster

This request is for \$510,000 construction funds for park improvements at Mills Field, requested under Recreation.

Ms. Young introduced the Chairman of the Park and Recreation Commission Cynthia Chaston and gave a brief project description. Ms. Chaston presented the design plans (*See Appendix E for the full presentation*) and stated that the funding will be used in the construction phase of the Mills Field Improvement project. The project consists of many improvements; the largest portion is to improve the parking around this area. Also included in this project is replacing the seasonal restroom, updating the basketball court, and replacing the sod on the 60' baseball diamond. There were no questions from the public. Ms. Young thanked Ms. Chaston for her presentation.

FY2015-5 Ridge Hill – Student Conservation Association – Liaisons – Sam Bass Warner and Robert Boder

This request is for \$10,000 to fund the Student Conservation Association (SCA) trail projects including the Ridge Hill Loop, requested under Open Space and Recreation.

Mr. Boder introduced Director of Conservation Matthew Varrell and gave a brief description of the project. Mr. Varrell presented information about the Student Conservation Association and the project details (*See Appendix F for the full presentation*) and stated that the funds would be for the cost of supplies and supervision of this group to complete trail projects at Ridge Hill. Mr. Varrell explained that SCA is a group of college students with a long term interest in conservation work and through projects like Ridge Hill, they gain skills and experience in the field. Mr. Varrell stated that he felt working with this group is beneficial to the Town and hopes to use the SCA in future projects. For this project, the SCA would focus on the Loop Trail, a trail identified on the Town's Master Trail Plan. The group will camp at Ridge Hill, complete trail improvements as well as design and construct a foot bridge over the stream that crosses this trail. Mr. Varrell stated that this project will be completed this summer over 10 days. Needham Resident Phyllis Mays asked if this project would include fixing the bridge along the Swamp Trail. Mr. Varrell stated that is a separate project that will also be completed by fall. Mr. Retzky asked who would be monitoring the project. Mr. Varrell stated that he would be monitoring the project. Ms. Young thanked Mr. Varrell for his presentation.

FY2015-6 Canoe Launch Improvements – Liaisons – Sam Bass Warner and Robert Boder

This request is for \$30,000 design funds for improvements to the existing canoe launch on South Street, requested under Open Space and Recreation.

Mr. Boder reintroduced Chairman of the Park and Recreation Commission Cynthia Chaston and gave a brief description of the project. Ms. Chaston presented several images of the current canoe launch (*See Appendix G for the full presentation*) and stated that the Park and Recreation Commission is looking to improve the access to the Charles River and make it more accessible to small boats and kayaks. Ms. Chaston stated that in the design they would include signage and benches for this area. Town Meeting Member Paul Durda asked if there was currently a canoe launch and parking. Ms. Chaston stated that there is currently a launch space with parking on South Street, right past the junction of Dedham Avenue. Ms. Young thanks Ms. Chaston for her presentation.

FY2015-7 Rail Trail Improvements – Liaisons – Sam Bass Warner and Robert Boder

This request is for \$100,000 construction funds for the creation of the rail trail, requested under Recreation.

Mr. Boder introduced Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick and gave a brief description of the project. Ms. Fitzpatrick presented information about the project as well as the trail design plans (*See Appendix H for the full presentation*) and stated the history of the project and the Town's involvement to this point. Ms. Fitzpatrick stated that this trail would be a 10' shared trail for non-motorized recreational purposes for walking, running, or biking. Ms. Fitzpatrick stated that the Bay Colony Rail Trail Association (BCRTA) has recently donated \$115,000 in raised funds for this project. This project would affect approximately 20 abutters that the BCRTA has been working with to provide mitigation between their properties and the trail. Ms. Fitzpatrick stated that the funds being requested will only be for the construction of the trail. The project includes removing the rails and ties, which will be put out to bid, adding a top layer of stone dust, and creating cross walks and signage along the trail where it crosses streets. Needham Resident Phyllis Mays added why the trail would begin a High Rock Street and not at the Junction station. Ms. Fitzpatrick stated that the MBTA kept 1,000 feet of track in order to maintain Junction station so the leased area begins just beyond High Rock Street. Needham Resident Gershon Gacs stated that he feels this is a unique opportunity for the community providing a safe place for small children to learn how to ride a bike and that he currently goes outside of Needham for amenities like this. Mr. Gluesing asked about the timing of this project. Ms. Fitzpatrick stated they hope to have phase 1 complete by the Fall of 2015 and start phase 2 in the Spring of 2016 depending on the 2015/2016 Winter. Ms. Young thanked Ms. Fitzpatrick for her presentation.

Mr. Gluesing made a motion to close the public meeting, and the motion was seconded by Mr. Crossen.

Chairman's Updates:

Ms. Young shared that they met with the Finance Committee last Wednesday. The Finance Committee expressed an opinion that the Rosemary Pool project requested too much for the design funds. Mr. Retzky stated that the Commission is consulting with Town boards and staff on this question. Ms. Young stated that they felt that the breakdown for the Mills project was high for the parking portion and they had questions about the timing of the Ridge Hill Project. Ms. Young stated that they were opposed to providing further funds to the Rail Trail Project.

Ms. Young noted that the CPC will vote on whether to recommend funding to Town Meeting at their next meeting. Mr. Gluesing stated that the project liaisons should have summaries of the projects to be shared before they vote on each project.

Minutes: February 25, 2015: Mr. Crossen made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 25, 2015 meeting, and the motion was seconded by Mr. Gluesing. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Adjournment: Mr. Gluesing made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Retzky seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 8:51 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen Wright
Recording Secretary