

TOWN OF NEEDHAM TRUSTEES OF MEMORIAL PARK

MEETING MINUTES

Monday, November 20, 2017 – 7:00 PM – Park Fieldhouse

PRESENT: John Gallelo, Chair; Mark Forbes, Vice Chair; Jim Healy, Clerk; Chuck Mangine; Matt Borrelli – BOS Representative

ABSENT: Bill Topham

GUESTS: Jim Cruikshank, Needham Exchange Club

The meeting was called to order by Chair Gallelo at 7:04 pm. A quorum was declared.

The minutes of the meetings of October 2, 2017, and October 12, 2017, were approved 5-0.

The Needham Exchange Club (Jim Cruikshank) requested use of the fieldhouse on December 7, 8, and 9 for their annual citrus and chocolate fundraiser. The request was approved 5-0.

The Veteran's Day ceremonies went well, despite somewhat inclement weather. The PA system worked well but it may be helpful to install something that can hold the microphone.

The Trustees extended a hearty "thank-you" to the Exchange Club for their recent painting of the gazebo.

The "Neighborhood Meeting" to discuss the Fieldhouse Reconstruction project is scheduled for November 29 at the PSAB Building (new location since our last minutes). This is a Trustees meeting, and accordingly it will be chaired and managed by the Trustees.

The Trustees believe the extra trash pick-up on Saturday mornings and the addition of a dumpster at the Park has led to less trash overall. Now that the fall sports season has ended, the Trustees ask that the dumpster be removed.

The Trustees reviewed an email from Mike Retzky providing dates for the upcoming meetings about the Fieldhouse Reconstruction project – of particular importance is the submission of an application for Community Preservation Act funds, which the Town will file on or before 12/1/17, and the Planning Board will hold their formal hearing on this project on 1/9/18. Retzky's email also advised the Town is in the process of scheduling another "Working Group" meeting for some date in December.

The Trustees discussed how the Town is going to manage (i) the paved walkway from the top of the High School hill to the bottom; and (ii) the stairway from the roof deck to the ground. Gallelo is concerned that the Town may not be listening to the thoughts and suggestions offered by the Trustees on these two issues. The Trustees also again confirmed that whatever solutions are offered by the Town need to be approved by the Trustees.

The Trustees approved a proposed Parking Agreement between the Trustees and the Needham Park & Recreation Commission 5-0, and stressed the importance of Park & Rec informing the Trustees as soon as possible when they believe they may need overflow parking.

Healy presented an proposal that had been formulated by a citizen, Paul Dawson, and submitted to the Finance Committee that would change the location of the to-be-constructed new Public Safety Building (Police and Fire) from Chestnut Street (the current location and the one approved by Town Meeting) to the Highland Avenue hill at Memorial Park (along the third base and left field line of the current 90' baseball diamond).

There are a number of strong reasons to reject this last-minute, 23rd hour suggestion, including the following:

- The cost of construction at the Park will be much greater, especially as you are building into a hill and constructing an underground garage;
- The proposal includes a new site for the fieldhouse, the cost of which will also be greater than the current proposed reconstruction at the present site, and the suggestion of a modular project is not in keeping with the Park;
- Substantial sums of Town money have already been spent on both the feasibility and design of the current reconstruction project, all of which would be wasted if there is a new building on a different footprint;
- Substantial sums of Town money have also been spent trying to improve the re-direction and drainage of water down the hill to Highland Avenue – this work may be wasted, and further, digging into the hill will likely result in additional drainage and flooding concerns;
- The 90' baseball diamond will be lost, and there is no suggestion where a replacement diamond will be located, or what the cost will be to do so;
- The proposal calls for a raised and new rectangular field, without any cost estimates;
- It is not clear if there will be sufficient above-ground parking for NHS students, and if not, it is not recommended to have students parking below ground, with little to no supervision and oversight.
- Emergency vehicle access onto Highland Avenue will be very difficult, especially with the busy stores across the street and the busy traffic light intersection a very short distance away;
- This change of use of the Park may need legislative approval and is completely at odds with the reasons why the Park was first built in 1921;

- Advance Life Support response times to the Valley Road, St. Bartholomew's / St. Sebastian's, and Charles Court East areas will be adversely impacted, creating a potential public safety issue and/or the potential need to construct an ambulance sub-station; and
- The proposal assumes the BOS and Town Meeting will scrap the current design at Chestnut Street (a significant dollar loss) and that they will sell the Chestnut Street / Lincoln Street land (which not one Trustee thought was a good idea).

The Trustees voted 5-0 to completely reject this idea, based on the information and drawings currently provided.

The Trustees again stressed the importance of an "agreement" between the Town and the Trustees confirming that although Trustees may no longer control access to the newly reconstructed fieldhouse, they will continue to be the sole body to approve any use of the building.

A Motion to Adjourn was made, seconded and approved 5-0 at 8:16 pm.

END OF MINUTES.

The next Trustees meeting is tentatively set for Wednesday, December 20, 2017, at 7:00 p.m., at the fieldhouse.

Respectfully submitted,

James G. Healy, Trustee and Clerk