

Park and Recreation Commission Meeting
May 14th, 2024 @ 7:00pm

Present: Christopher Gerstel (Chair), Cynthia Chaston (Member), James Rosenbaum (Member), Stacey Mulroy (Director)

Guests: Erick Bakstran, Hilary Bruel, Julie Stevens, Matt Ching, John Gallelo, Bill Dermody, Michael Fraini

Call to Order

Mr. Gerstel called the meeting to order at 7:00pm, May 14th, 2024.

1. Open Forum Public Comment

Erick Bakstran returned to follow up on his concerns regarding street parking on George Aggott Road. He previously addressed the Commission on April 23rd, 2024. Mr. Bakstran presented a document detailing his and his neighbors' observations regarding illicit parking around DeFazio Park between late March and mid-April. Chris stated that we have been reaching out to user groups in order to clarify parking expectations and reiterate our commitment to being good neighbors. Chris has been corresponding with the Traffic Advisory Committee in order to collaboratively address the parking issue.

Hilary Bruel from the Needham Art Association addressed the Commission seeking to hang art banners on the fences at various fields around Needham. The three locations under the jurisdiction of Park and Recreation are Mills Field, Cricket Field, and Greene's Field. Cynthia inquired about the size of the banners, and Hilary replied that each would have a height of 36" and a width of between 30" and 36". Hilary stated that the art used would be eye-catching landscapes, animal studies, etc, with no controversial subjects.

John Gallelo, Matt Ching, Bill Dermody, and Michael Fraini, of the Memorial Park Trustees, addressed the Commission to discuss extending the light hours at Memorial Park. All members of the Trustees raised concerns about scheduling issues as the light policy did not allow for late-night games. Mr. Dermody stated that the Memorial Park Trustees will be moving forward with pushing back the allowed light hours to 10:00pm at Memorial Park. Stacey will create a form to be completed by user groups, gauging interest in extended light hours.

2. Meeting Guests

Public Forum attendees.

3. Chair's Update

Chris had no additional updates.

4. Director's Report

The Pools were uncovered last Friday, May 10th. The Department is working with DPW to lay sod on top of the sand area at the pools in order to help contain sand and stop it from entering our pump system. Fields are being prepared for the Memorial Day Soccer Tournament. Playground maintenance is ongoing.

The Claxton Field Renovation project passed at Town Meeting and DPW is finalizing procurement with the winning bidder, Cataldo. A meeting took place with Fuss & O'Neal, an engineering firm, to discuss a new quote for the DeFazio playground project. The NHS tennis court project has been deferred to the Fall Town Meeting.

Our Leaders in Training program currently has 46 applicants, with 41 having confirmed assignments for the Summer. 95% of Summer camp staff have been hired and paperwork is being finalized. 45% of pool staff have been hired, with a needs of 12 additional lifeguards, 4 swim instructors, and 6 maintenance staff.

5. Discussion Items

Chris expressed reservations about extending light hours on Sundays and Cynthia agreed, adding that while it may make sense for Memorial, it may be more of an issue for neighbors abutting other fields in town.

6. Action Items & Approvals

6A. Special Event Approvals

Needham Fire Department Softball Fundraiser

Motion: Cynthia Chaston

Second: Christopher Gerstel

Vote: 3-0, contingent on location change

Pack 4 Cub Scouts End-of-Year Picnic

Motion: Cynthia Chaston

Second: Christopher Gerstel

Vote: 3-0

Rotary Club Carnival

Motion: Cynthia Chaston

Second: Christopher Gerstel

Vote: 3-0

6B. Policy Approvals

None.

6C. Fee Approvals

None.

7. Issues Not Reasonably Anticipated by Chair within 48 Hours

None.

8. Topics for Future Meetings

None.

9. Next Meetings

- Wednesday, May 29th, 2024
- Monday, June 10th, 2024

- Monday, June 24th, 2024

10. Adjournment of Business Meeting

Motion: Christopher Gerstel

Second: James Rosenbaum

Vote: 3-0

Meeting adjourned at 8:24pm, May 15th, 2024.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Dominic Stanganelli
Administrative Assistant*

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