

FY 2006 ANNUAL REPORT

Park and Recreation Commission

Philip V. Robey, Chairman
Richard B. Weitzen, Vice Chairman
Cynthia J. Chaston, Member
William R. Dermody, Member
Christopher R. Dollase, Member

Patricia M. Carey, Director
Karen A. Peirce, Assistant Director
Christine Morrow, Administrative Specialist
Nikki Witham, Department Assistant

PURPOSE

Empowered by Chapter 45 of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Park and Recreation Commission:

- Provides balanced, year-round recreation programming and leisure services for all ages.
- Serves as steward of over 300 acres of public parkland and the Town Forest; and schedules recreation and athletic facilities.
- Manages Rosemary Pool and Lake as the principal aquatic recreation facility.
- Provides long-range open space and recreation planning.
- Coordinates and provides support services for many community organizations.
- Provides youth leadership training and volunteer resource development.

The five members of the Park and Recreation Commission are elected to three-year terms. The Commission meets on the second and fourth Mondays of each month.

FY'06 HIGHLIGHTS

The benefits of Park and Recreation services, in communities across the country, are endless, and the Needham Park and Recreation Commission is proud of the partnerships it has developed with many in the Town to enhance the lives of all Needham residents.

Environmental Benefits

- Director served on Town's Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Committee with the Town Manager, Parks and Forestry Superintendent, Health Director, Conservation Agent, and Supervisor of Custodians, assisting with enforcement of IPM Plan and Child Safety Act;
- Actively participated in the updating of Needham's Open Space and Recreation Plan, including the hiring of a consultant to assist with completing the project;
- Worked with a variety of organizations, individuals, and 8th grade students at Pollard on park clean-up projects that included educating others about the importance of cleaning up after themselves;
- Director joined The Conservation and Recreation Campaign, a statewide coalition for the protection of parkland, representing her state association and Needham;
- Began process of updating Orders of Condition with Conservation Commission for Rosemary Lake and Walker Pond;
- Assistant Director worked with a Girl Scout on a project at the McCracken camp property, and began process on Eagle Scout projects;
- Participated in discussions on housing project adjacent to McCracken camp property;
- Through the Field Study Committee, worked with a consultant hired to provide a Master Plan on how to reconfigure the athletic field layouts at DeFazio Park and Memorial Park, how to switch to synthetic turf on some fields to allow for increased use, and how to renovate other areas to make them safer and more useable;
- Continued to educate residents on the possible solutions to decreasing the Canada Geese population through humane methods.

Economic Benefits

- Commission waived Summer Program and Rosemary Pool fees of more than \$30,000 for Needham individuals and families in need of assistance, to enable all to have access to recreation and leisure activities;
- Commission generated more than \$314,000 in revenue that was deposited into the Town's General Fund, and increase of almost \$35,000;
- Commission conducted annual review of program fees, ensuring that all direct costs were covered by the fees paid by residents who participate in programs;

- Actively participated in Town's Facilities Study, reviewing past review of facilities and updating the Town's Master Plan;
- Provided staff assistance to the Community Preservation Committee;
- Women's Club donated full financial support for the summer Children's Theatre program;
- Needham Cultural Council, Louise Condon Realty, Needham Exchange Club, Dedham Institute for Savings Bank; Middlesex Bank; Tom Nutile Band; Verizon, and many Needham residents donated funds in support of the 2006 summer Arts in the Parks concert series;
- Participated in transition of the form of government to a Town Manager;
- Assisted with field maintenance projects financed through Field Maintenance Fee, from groups using town-owned athletic fields, allowing the DPW Parks and Forestry Division to reduce the damage to fields from overuse;
- Installed chemical controller at Rosemary Pool to better regulate the amount of chlorine used to provide safe swimming facility;
- Department offered programs through the use of a revolving fund fees, generating almost \$150,000 in revenue for the cost of running those programs, and fee-based services.

Community Benefits

- Long-time Commissioner Richie Weitzen retired from the board in April, and after a spirited campaign from 4 residents, Brian Nadler was elected to the Park and Recreation Commission;
- Department continued to work with School Department on safe playgrounds;
- Worked with Needham Exchange Club on Town Forest trail clean-up project;
- Celebrated re-opening of the Cricket Playground with Parent Talk, the planners and generous sponsors of the new playground equipment;
- Collaborated with the Fire Department on the installation of orange markers on high wires adjacent to DeFazio Park, to allow for better visibility for the Med-Flight helicopters approaching the park's emergency landing location;

- Began renovation plans for bathroom facilities at Claxton Field, Cricket Field and Mills Field;
- Completed sandblasting of Rosemary Pool interior with assistance from Department of Public Works;
- Coordinated programming with recently created Needham Public School Community Education Department, to avoid duplication;
- Assisted with communication for Eat Well/Be Fit, Needham committee, including monthly newspaper articles;
- Held Field Scheduling Summits, for fourth year, with sport league officials regarding annual use of athletic fields and continued long-term project on working with leagues to revise field scheduling policies to relieve overuse of fields and to benefit participants;
- Celebrated the contributions of the DPW to Park and Recreation facilities and projects with “Touch the Trucks,” an annual community event;
- Assisted with 5th Annual David Retik Race, starting at DeFazio Park, held in memory of a Needham resident who died on September 11th;
- Provided input to School Committee during search for new Superintendent of Schools;
- Worked with Needham Revitalization Committee on the plans to donate bleachers to Claxton Field.

Personal Benefits

- Assistant Director served as the Town’s representative on the Needham Commission on Disabilities;
- Assistant Director oversaw enhanced summer staff training, with assistance of MBMB and DPW on safety issues;
- Participated in, for the third summer, national study and campaign, “Pool Cool,” designed to teach staff and children about sun safety and the prevention of skin cancer;
- Increased participation in annual Fishing Derby through collaboration with Mass Division of Fishing and Wildlife Angler Education program;

- Assistant Director continued to work with increased interest in tennis with the addition of new tennis lesson classes and the return of Tennis Tykes for younger children;
- Increased participation in annual Spooky Walk through collaboration with Needham Business Association;
- Assistant Director oversaw development of new program offerings, including a basketball clinic during February vacation and Kids Off Broadway in the summer;
- Assistant Director created a collaborative program with Olin College, moving the popular Kids Night Out program to the college, adding a second movie for each event so that older children were welcomed, increased the number of participants in the program, and providing an opportunity for Olin College students to work;
- Assistant Director worked with YMCA and Youth Commission on annual “Needham Unplugged”, including one family night without homework, meetings or events;
- Met with multiple groups of Needham High School students working on warrant articles for the mock Town Meeting held each year;
- Director and/or Assistant Director attended workshops and seminars, including landfill reuse, playground safety and ADA requirements, the concerns related to overweight children and obesity; the study of youth sports, integrated pest management, customer service, the building of natural and artificial athletic fields, safe pool operations, creative programming, funding resources and training of staff;
- Director received Peter C. O’Brien Humanitarian Award at annual Massachusetts Recreation and Park Association’s conference;
- Director presented a workshop at the Massachusetts Recreation and Park State Conference;
- Director continued to write monthly newsletter article for the Massachusetts Recreation and Park Association that provides information to elected and appointed board members on Park and Recreation boards.