

FY 2009 ANNUAL REPORT

Park and Recreation Commission

Cynthia J. Chaston, Chairman
Brian S. Nadler, Vice Chairman
William R. Dermody, Member
Christopher R. Dollase, Member
Philip V. Robey, Member

Patricia M. Carey, Director
Karen A. Peirce, Assistant Director
Nikki Witham, Administrative Specialist
Nicole DiCicco, 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 including 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'09 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. Fiscal Year 2009 was an extremely busy year at Park and Recreation!

Economic Benefits

- Commission waived Summer Program and Rosemary Pool fees of almost \$30,000 for Needham individuals and families in need of assistance, to enable all to have access to recreation and leisure activities. The value of financial assistance increased by \$10,000 from the prior summer;
- Commission generated almost \$300,000 in revenue that was deposited into the Town's General Fund;
- Commission conducted annual review of program fees, ensuring that all direct costs were covered by the fees paid by residents who participate in programs;
- Assisted with the updating of the Town's Commonwealth Capital Score, working towards increasing the point value. The score is required in applications for state and federal grants;
- Provided staff assistance to the Community Preservation Committee;
- Parent Talk donated financial support for the summer of 2009 Children's Theatre program;
- Needham Cultural Council, Needham Exchange Club, Dedham Institute for Savings Bank, Louise Condon Realty, Tom Nutile Band, Needham Business Association, and many Needham residents donated funds in support of the 2009 summer Arts in the Parks concert series;
- 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;
- Department offered programs through the use of a revolving fund fees, generating more than \$200,000 in revenue for the cost of running those programs, and fee-based services, including Field Maintenance and Athletic Field lights fees.

Community Benefits

- The Needham Sports Council worked with the Town to oversee construction of the new athletic fields at Memorial Park and DeFazio Park. The synthetic turf field at Memorial was ready for use in August 2008 and the 90' diamond in Spring 2009. At DeFazio, the synthetic turf fields, the track and McLeod diamond were ready for Spring 2009 and the other fields were completed and are waiting for the grass to grow completely in ;

- The *Wall That Heals* visited Memorial Park for 3 days in October 2008. Open 24 hours a day, the Wall received thousands of visitors, and residents of all ages participated in daily memorial ceremonies;
- Specifications were completed, with DPW, for the renovation of the Mills Field tennis courts, in preparation for a Summer 2009 bid. The PPBC completed the new tennis courts at Needham High School, ready for the spring 2009 season;
- Developed material for Town's website for Park and Recreation, Memorial Park and Community Preservation. The website now allows for e-mail notices for special projects, and the department regularly uses ones for Program Information, Field Status, and Fields of Dreams updates;
- Worked with the Newman PTC to purchase and install additional playground equipment for the Kindergarten students; worked with DPW Highway to have playground games and USA maps painted on the playground areas at Hillside and Newman; worked with Exchange Club for additional improvements to Claxton Field playground;
- Department continued to work with School Department on safe playgrounds;
- Director assisted with the study of Town Hall and its renovation, and with design for new Public Services Administration Building which will be the eventual home of the Park and Recreation Department;
- Worked with Public Facilities to hire cleaning company for park restrooms at DeFazio, Memorial, Cricket and Claxton;
- Continued renovation of Claxton Bathrooms;
- Installed new center dock in Rosemary Pool and replaced some exterior fencing;
- Assistant Director participated on Eat Well/Be Fit, Needham Committee, including offering a walk for children in the Town Forest during the week of walk events called Needham Springs Into Action Week;
- Held Field Scheduling Summits, for seventh 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;
- Assistant Director served as Chair of the Wellness Subcommittee for Needham's Tercentennial in 2011;

- Tom Jacob was elected to the Park and Recreation Commission in April 2009.

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;
- With Conservation Commission, reviewed goals in Open Space and Recreation Plan and began to implement;
- Began implementation of projects listed in completed Trails Master Plan after Plan was accepted by Park & Recreation Commission, Conservation Commission and Board of Selectmen;
- Improvements were made at Rosemary Pool. Lights were replaced in lower level, completing energy improvement project. Worked with Conservation Commission, Water Department and consultant on review of storm drainage issues at Rosemary Pool parking lot and walking trail around Rosemary Lake;
- Assistant Director worked with a variety of organizations and individuals on park clean-up projects, in particular assisting several Eagle Scout (Boys Scouts) and Gold Medal Award recipients (Girl Scouts) with completion of their projects;
- Continued to educate residents on the possible solutions to decreasing the Canada Geese population through humane methods; professional was hired to find nests, but did not locate them at Rosemary Lake, the Reservoir or Walker Pond.

Personal Benefits

- On-Line registration was successfully implemented in May for the summer registration, quickly becoming the favored registration option;
- Commission approved a pilot program for night time Geocache and a Geocache class was offered by the department;
- Fitness was a key component for many programs, and efforts were made to offer additional tennis classes due to a high number of requests. Tennis-related programs for younger children were added back into the schedule, providing activities that help teach eye-hand coordination with a racquet;
- Assistant Director served as the Town's representative on the Needham Commission on Disabilities;

- Held successful annual Spooky Walk in collaboration with Needham Business Association and annual Fishing Derby at the Reservoir with the support of local fishing organizations;
- Provided assistance to the annual New Years Needham events;
- Director served on interview panel for new High School Athletic Director;
- Assistant Director oversaw development of new program offerings, including. Legoland, and revamped summer arts and crafts program entitled KidzArt and Art Express;
- Assistant Director worked with YMCA and Youth Services on annual “Needham Unplugged”, including one family night without homework, meetings or events;
- 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 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.