

FY 2010 ANNUAL REPORT

Park and Recreation Commission

Brian S. Nadler, Chairman
Philip V. Robey, Vice Chairman
Cynthia J. Chaston, Member
Christopher R. Dollase, Member
Thomas M. Jacob, Member

Patricia M. Carey, Director
Karen A. Peirce, Assistant Director
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'10 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 2010 was an extremely busy year at Park and Recreation!

Economic Benefits

- Commission waived Summer Program and Rosemary Pool fees of almost \$40,000 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 2010 Children's Theatre program;
- Needham Cultural Council, Needham Exchange Club, Needham Bank, Dedham Institute for Savings Bank, Louise Condon Realty, Middlesex Savings Bank, North Hill, Tom Nutile Band, Needham Business Association, and many Needham residents donated funds in support of the 2010 summer Arts in the Parks concert series;
- Assisted with field maintenance projects financed through Field Maintenance Fee, paid by 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 Park and Recreation Department moved to new permanent offices at the Public Services Administration Building on Dedham Avenue in February 2010;
- The Needham Sports Council worked with the Town to oversee construction of the new athletic fields at Memorial Park and DeFazio Park. Final projects were completed at both parks, including installation of additional netting at Memorial Park. The Needham Sports Council officially gifted the new athletic fields to the Town;

- DeFazio Park was re-dedicated in October 2009, with the two sons of Mario “Mike” DeFazio present for the celebration;
- Under the direction of the DPW, the Mills Field tennis courts were reconstructed and available for use in May 2010;
- An Eagle Scout cleaned and painted the fenced-in asphalt area behind the Pollard School to be used for Quick-Start youth tennis classes;
- Town Meeting approved the purchase of a property adjacent to Walker-Gordon Field with Community Preservation Funds;
- Town Meeting approved the transfer of jurisdiction of Perry Park, Dwight Field, and Avery Field from the Board of Selectmen to the Park and Recreation Commission;
- 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;
- The Board of Selectmen authorized the removal of the wooden play structure at Greene’s Field, scheduled for FY’11;
- Department continued to work with School Department on safe playgrounds;
- The Exchange Club spent the National Day of Service at Claxton and DeFazio tot-lots, both of which have received prior years of new equipment from the Exchange Club;
- Due to an appeal to the DEP of the department’s permit to drain the Lake, Rosemary Pool could not be cleaned and painted in Spring 2010 as required. An alternate cleaning method was used, which allowed for the Pool to open for Summer 2010 and the appeal processed continued into FY’11;
- The circulating pump and the lift pump at Rosemary Pool were replaced in May 2010;
- Assistant Director participated on Eat Well/Be Fit, Needham Committee, including offering a walk for children during the week of walk events called Needham Springs Into Action Week;
- Held Field Scheduling Summits, with sport league officials for eighth year, 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;
- Mike Retzky was elected to the Park and Recreation Commission in April 2010. Chris Dollase left the board after serving two successful terms.

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;
- Continued implementation of projects listed in completed Trails Master Plan;
- With the approval of Town Meeting, the jurisdiction of a 6 acre parcel of land adjacent to Rosemary Brook was transferred from Park and Recreation to the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission. This transfer also met a requirement of the State to replace the 3 acres at Ridge Hill recently transferred to the Board of Selectmen to the Conservation's open space inventory;
- New bubblers were installed at several parks, funded through Community Preservation, to replace leaking bubblers;
- 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.

Personal Benefits

- The Commission offered thanks to retiring DPW Parks and Forestry Superintendent Lance Remsen;
- 30-year pool patron Ray Brady reached his 3,000 mile of lap swimming at Rosemary Pool in August 2009;
- The Zoning Board of Appeals finalized the special permits for Athletic Field lights at Memorial Park in December 2009 and DeFazio Park in May 2010;
- 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;

- The Commission participated in discussions with the Board of Selectmen, Trustees of Memorial Park and School Committee regarding dogs in parks;
- Seventeen bike racks were purchased through a State grant;
- 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. The Recreation Supervisor now serves as the administrator for the activities;
- Director served on interview panel for new Parks and Forestry Superintendent;
- Director and Assistant Director served on subcommittees for the Re-Accreditation of the Senior Center;
- Former Park and Recreation Commissioner Bill Dermody received the Patrick C. Forde Good Person Award based on a nomination from Park and Recreation;
- 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, maintenance of natural and artificial athletic fields, safe pool operations, creative programming, funding resources and training of staff;
- Director continued to write quarterly newsletter article for the Massachusetts Recreation and Park Association that provides information to elected and appointed board members on Park and Recreation boards.