

## **Gym/Physical Activities Sub-Committee**

### **Interim Report to the Dover Community Center Building Committee**

**March 25, 2008**

#### **Introduction**

The Gym/Physical Activities Sub-Committee has developed its recommendations and alternative recommendations following a series of meetings designed to address the scope of its original charge. The sub-committee has used data from multiple sources including the Park & Recreation Commission, data compiled as part of this phase of the building project, the data gathered by previous groups who have considered the future use of the Caryl site and the reports from visits to Chatham and Harwich. The sub-committee would like to express its thanks to all commissions, boards and individuals who have assisted with this considerable task of gathering information.

It is clear from both the data collected and from committee discussions that the need for an athletic center in the Town of Dover is compelling. The sub-committee has provided with this interim report both a PowerPoint presentation prepared by Park & Recreation and a spreadsheet describing the use of the Caryl, Chickering and Middle School gymnasiums. These materials support the conclusion that the presence of these facilities allows a myriad of athletic programs (both town-run and private) to exist and to thrive. The Park and Recreation Commission has expressed an interest in expanding its programs if more space were available in town.

The sub-committee also considered the information gathered from the site visits to Chatham and Harwich during its deliberations. While it would be imprudent to draw any conclusions from the experience of each town, there were a number of facts which should be instructive as the discussions by the town about a community center and/or an athletic center are held. First, in Chatham, the users of the facility complain that even with a 27,000 sq. ft. community center, there is nowhere near enough storage. Secondly, the first attempts at town meeting to build a facility included a proposal for a pool, track and fitness area. When a proposal ultimately succeeded, it did not include these items although a gym was included (a photo is provided as part of this e-mail package). Most recently however, the town has decided to convert one of the multi-purpose rooms in the community center into a self-supervised fitness center and to use \$55,000 for the purchase of exercise equipment.

In Harwich, the town has built a full gym with a rubberized floor, a game room and a fitness center with lockers and showers (A photo of the Harwich gym is also provided). The

most salient fact from the Harwich experience is that in 2007, the gym had 1,876 bookings for its use, in excess of five (5) per day.

In addition, the sub-committee also considered a recent proposal in Medfield to build a new recreation center. There is an attachment to this e-mail which outlines the proposal. In summary, the recreation center is designed at 34,500 sq.ft. and carries a cost of \$4.75M. The recreation center would hold classrooms, a teen center, batting cages, storage, two basketball courts and an indoor track. It is the understanding of the sub-committee that the project is presently on hold.

Finally, the sub-committee also considered the location for any potential athletic center during its deliberations. The topic of location is more fully described in the recommendations made below.

Based upon the data collected and the information gathered from various sources the Gym/Physical Activities Sub-Committee makes the following recommendations to the Dover Community Center Building Committee:

### **I Construction of an Athletic Center on the Caryl Site**

The primary recommendation of the sub-committee is the construction of an athletic facility at the Caryl site *as part of a broader community center project*. The sub-committee agreed unanimously on this recommendation based upon a number of factors:

a. Assuming the Building Committee recommends to the Board of Selectmen some form of a community center, the strongest coalition of support for a community center would include the users of an athletic center. It is apparent from the data that if built, a full-sized athletic center would be used by youth groups and by seniors for activities tied to a community center.

Further, a community center proposal which does not include an athletic center could lead to competing interests for taxpayer dollars if the town considered the construction of an athletic center as a separate project, whether at the same time or in a later year.

b. An athletic center would provide space for dance, yoga and other physical activities.

c. An athletic center would provide the Park and Recreation Commission the opportunity to sustain its present programs and to expand programs with greater gym availability.

d. An athletic center could provide revenue opportunities to offset the operating expenses of the entire community center.

e. It is the sense of the sub-committee, and not based upon any formal study, that the cost of a portion of any athletic facility could be reduced by private fund raising.

## **II Alternative Recommendation: Construction of an Athletic Center at an Alternative Location**

a. The sub-committee discussed the construction of an athletic facility at an alternative location such as on land adjacent to the Chickering School. This alternative would include opening a dialogue with the Dover School Committee on feasibility.

b. With a facility adjacent to the elementary school, it would allow for after school sport programs to be held within walking distance from the school.

c. The sub-committee considered that any such proposal could be expanded to include a discussion of play fields/synthetic turf at the Chickering or Caryl play fields.

## **III Alternative Recommendation: Construction of an Athletic Center with Synthetic Field at the Caryl Site**

a. The sub-committee discussed the possibility of the construction of an athletic center with a synthetic field at the Caryl site in the event that the town rejects a community center project; if an alternative site is chosen for the community center and the proposal does not include an athletic center or; if the town chooses to proceed with separate projects for a community center and athletic center.

b. The sub-committee believes that local sports clubs have financial support for the construction of a synthetic field which could be built upon for the construction of an athletic complex.

c. Such a proposal would address the use of the Caryl site if the community center is located elsewhere.

#### **IV Components of Gym/Physical Activities Space**

Based primarily upon the site visits to Chatham, Harwich and prior visits to Weston, together with the experience of the Park and Recreation Commission representatives to the sub-committee, the sub-committee makes additional recommendations concerning the components of an athletic center (applicable to all recommendations above):

- The construction of a fully equipped athletic facility;
- Ample storage space;
- Stands/bleachers;
- weight room/fitness center;
- ability to partition the space for concurrent activities;
- walking area/lane circumventing the interior;
- minimum 10,000 sq. ft. (for comparison purposes the middle school gym is 10,000 sq. ft.)
- Concession stand/area

This list is not intended to be all inclusive but rather reflects the sub-committee's opinion as to the minimum requirements to build a successful program.

#### **V Further Activity/Research**

Should the Building Committee decide to recommend a path which includes further discussion of a community center project and which includes a gym/physical activities space, the sub-committee would take the opportunity to further explore the following items:

- a. Revenue/Expense figures for similar facilities;
- b. Management/operational models for similar facilities;
- c. Fund raising;
- d. Size/cost estimates
- e. Any other item the Building Committee deems appropriate.

Respectfully Submitted,  
The Gym/Physical Activities Sub-Committee

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