

**Dover Parks and Recreation Commission
Caryl Park Abutters Meeting
January 28, 2010**

Minutes

P&R Commissioners In Attendance: Peter Davies, Rich Oasis, Scott Seidman, Nancy Simms

P&R Employees In Attendance: David MacTavish, Jess Cooney

Others In Attendance: Bill Seymour (Gale Associates); Andy Waugh (Warrant); Residents of Oakley Road, Park Avenue and Dedham Street

Meeting Called to Order at 7:35pm

Peter Davies introduced Bill Seymour from Gale Associates.

Bill Seymour took the floor:

The existing fields are inadequate to satisfy the demand. These are natural grass fields which need to be rested to keep them healthy and productive in the future, but they are not being adequately rested. A grass field can endure 175 uses per year if it is properly maintained and rested in either the Spring or the Fall but not the Summer. The grass needs to repair and knit itself back together during one of its growing season. The actual formula is a little more elaborate and is based on the age of the players (adult vs. kids) and the maintenance plan in place. Typically when these things are taken into consideration, the number of field uses goes down from this number.

Based on our assessment and with input from the P&R commission, we developed our designs to include 2 rectangular fields, 3 baseball fields, and 1 softball field. We met with abutters and paid attention to their concerns which were for instance traffic flow and patterns on Dedham Street, the viewscape into the park, aversion to clear cutting, water flow and volume usage, lighting, environmental impact, and the density of the build-out. By the way, the existing parking lot is not in compliance with the Commonwealth's Stormwater release regulations.

We prepared 8 different layouts. We presented them to the P&R Commission. They narrowed the eight down to two that we will focus on tonight. But first I do want to walk you through all eight plans in order to help you understand how we arrived at the final two plans.

Bill discussed the 8 plans:

Design C1:

Q: How are the number of parking spaces determined?

A: Standard calculation is $(80\%) \times (\text{Double the number of players})$. Ideally you design the lot to take into consideration queuing, emergency vehicle access, and aesthetics. You don't want one huge parking lot. This design gives you twice as many fields and three times as many parking spots.

Q: What is the surface of the parking lot?

A: Pavement is what you want so that you're in compliance with the Stormwater Release Regulations.

Q: Site lines for entrance and exit are not good; it looks dangerous.

Q: What type of vegetation is currently between Dedham Street and the parking lot? It would be good to leave it there rather than destroy it.

Q: The traffic volume is really bad, especially around the tennis court parking lot.

Design C1A:

The alignment of the baseball fields are better here than in C1. There is a walking trail which ties into the existing trail system. The main rectangular field is up front, close to Dedham Street. Parking is mostly in the same spot it is now. You could probably get another rectangular practice field over the outfields of the baseball diamonds.

Q: Doesn't this depict where baseball falls in the pecking order in this town?

A: Not at all. *Bill detailed the items included in the design specific to baseball.*

Q: Who exactly is in need of more field time – Dover, Dover-Sherborn, or other towns. Are you planning on renting the fields to other towns?

A: Dover P&R currently has a policy that it does not rent fields on a recurring basis. Laurel fields in Sherborn are rented out.

Design C4:

The main rectangular field is at the front of the property. The baseball fields are tied into together and are able to share seating. There is a walking trail that ties into the existing trails. There is good orientation for the baseball fields.

Q: Do we get enough of what we want with this option?

A: Bill brainstormed on all possible configurations. This particular design does not meet all of our needs.

Design C3:

This scenario has one contiguous rectangular field in the front of the property. In the back are two contiguous baseball fields and one additional baseball field along side. The current tennis court baseball field is converted into a softball field. An amenities building is situated somewhat in the middle of the complex. A walking trail circumscribes the rectangular fields and another circumscribes the baseball fields.

Q: This set up is ugly.

Design C6:

This scenario puts two contiguous rectangular fields in the back along with the bulk of the parking. The back baseball field is moved toward Dedham Street to address the shading problems. A small t-ball field is added at the northwest corner of the park at the end of the current parking lot. Much of the current foliage is kept as a buffer. The viewscape is better since the rectangular fields are away from Dedham Street. Like sports are compartmentalized. Given the traffic concerns around the tennis court entrance, we will need to relook at the parking set up here.

Q: Will there be lights?

A: There will be no lights up front on the baseball fields. Baseball is a spring sport only and there are no daylight constraints in the spring. There would be lights on the rectangular fields, but they would be hidden by much of the vegetation. Our surveyors determined that the elevation at the site of the back fields would be 10 feet lower than the elevation of Dedham Street. The light towers are about 70 feet tall and the trees that are back there are at least that tall.

Q: How many parking spaces will there be in the back lot and will it be paved? Will the parking lot by the tennis courts be paved?

A: The back parking lot would have 96 spaces, and it will be paved. The tennis court lot will probably be paved as well.

Q: We don't want parking on Dedham Street and we don't want the enforcement responsibility to fall on our shoulders.

Q: How does this plan address the needs of other park users?

A: It provides improved parking for walkers by moving the parking lot closer to the trails. It will also help keep the dogs off the Caryl Park playing fields.

Q: What will this cost?

A: We don't know yet. The annual maintenance cost for the baseball fields will be no different than what is currently incurred. For the rectangular turf fields, the maintenance cost will be close to nothing. Included in the initial cost is a sweeper that can be pulled by a vehicle already owned by P&R.

Q: What is the lifespan of the turf?

A: Twelve to fourteen years at which time only the carpet will need to be replaced. Replacement cost of the carpet will be about \$300,000 per field.

Q: What time will the lights go off? Will there be a hill of light at 10pm at night?

A: Today's technology focuses the light much better than previous systems. The downside is that you need 70 foot light towers to best avoid glare and bleed, but this site has trees of that height so they may not even be seen.

Q: Do we really need to double the number of fields? Is it really needed?

A: The youth coaches are volunteers, most of whom have paying jobs. It is impractical to expect that these volunteers can make it to weekly practices before 4:30 in the afternoon. So we have two practice time slots to work with: 4:30 to 6:00 and 6:00 to 7:30. In the spring when we add lacrosse and baseball and softball to the mix, there are even more teams vying for field time.

Q: Demographics are trending down; will there be the demand 30 years out?

A: We believe there will be.

A (soccer representative): With grass fields, we are subject to weather cancellations. These situations are fatiguing, inconvenient and can raise safety concerns. Turf fields are not subject to weather cancellations; this would solve the problem.

A: These turf fields would also take the pressure off Dover's other fields such as the Chickering fields. They would not have to be overused and would be healthier and safer.

Q: Who would get the short end of the stick and have to play on Chickering?

A (soccer representative): All the fields would be in better condition. Soccer players like playing on grass.

Q: Why are you looking at this site and not at the Medfield land up at the high school?

A: Conservation Commission will not allow grading or other work on these fields. It is unlikely that they would grant approval for synthetic turf on those fields. There are gas lines going through the property which would preclude bringing in the heavy construction equipment. Ultimately, these fields are controlled by the regional schools and are used by their students. Converting these fields to turf does not create the additional space needed for the youth sports programs.

A (Con. Com. Representative): ConCom did approve crossing over the swampy area to get to the fields.

Q: When do youth sports programs start?

A (lacrosse representative): After school and after parents can get out of work. In the fall this means from 4:00 until dark. In the spring this means 4:00 until about 7:00 once the fields are dry enough to open which is usually mid April.

Q: How late will these fields be lit AND how does this compare to options at region?

A (baseball representative): Right now, baseball can't play when girls lacrosse is practicing at Caryl. There is very limited field space at the region for the youth sports programs to practice or play.

Q: What time will the lights go off?

Q: Why are we being asked to deal with traffic, lights and noise at 10:00 at night when we have the Medfield fields? Will the users be youth sports and adult sports?

A: We have had multiple meetings over the past 4 years exploring alternative sites, including the Medfield State Hospital fields. There are no viable alternatives.

A (soccer field manager): There is more to the MSH land than the small wetlands issue mentioned earlier. There are very tight restrictions on what can be done there. Most of the restrictions are from ConCom, but there are also state restrictions. For example, the Athletic Director at the high school tried to get approval to put a cross country trail up there. He was turned down flat.

Q: Aren't kids playing three sports a season? Do we want to encourage that?

A: We hear you: you don't want lights and don't want adults playing until 10:00 every night.

Q: I'm also going to add a third item: How can you place a \$3 million burden on the town when you haven't explored all the options, especially the Medfield land.

A: The attorney general has in the past allowed private funds to be used for public projects. Doing this provides great cost savings. Roche Brothers donated \$1.5 million for DeFazio. Half of the soccer complex in Lancaster was paid for by citizens. In Nashoba, Ernie Boch offered to pay full price of a turf field if he could print in the middle of the field, "Come On Down".

A: Even if ALL the fields at the high school and middle school were converted to turf and lighted, there still would not be additional field time for youth sports.

Q: What are the ages of the kids we are talking about?

A (soccer representative): Soccer program serves pre-K through 8th grade.

A (lacrosse representative): Girls and boys lacrosse programs start at 2nd grade and go through 8th grade.

A: Baseball and softball is at 1:00 in the afternoon for preK and K. First grade starts the late afternoon schedule.

Q (lacrosse representative): Is DeFazio field in Need a good proxy for the type of lights being considered?

A: Yes. Needham has state of the art lighting system. They required very tight lighting standards. As did Curry College. These are the two best local examples of the technology.

Q: How will you deal with kids being back there maybe doing things they shouldn't be doing?

A: Yes, it is a secluded site. We will have to address that, maybe with gates, police scrutiny. Once we have a more detailed plan in place, we will have a public meeting and present it.

Q: This is not a bad plan unless you have to live with it.

Q: Please keep us in mind no matter how this pans out. Our priority list of concerns is noise, lighting, traffic.

A: I know we can contain the noise and I know we can contain the lights. The traffic issue will require more time and study.

Meeting adjourned at 9:05pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Nancy Simms, P&R Commission