

Revised 12/2/15

## Town of Sudbury – Community Preservation Committee

### PROJECT SUBMISSION FORM

Submitter: Sudbury Park & Recreation Commission

Submission Date: 11/30/2015

Group or Committee Affiliation (if any): Sudbury Park & Recreation Commission

Submitter's address and phone number:

44 Fairbank Rd  
Sudbury, MA 01776  
978-443-1092

Purpose (please select all that apply):

- ☐ Open Space  
☐ Community Housing  
☐ Historic  
☒ Recreation

Submitter's email address: prc@sudbury.ma.us

Project Name: Davis Field Enhancement

Project Description: This project enhances the existing athletic playing area of Davis Field while maintaining the essence of the parcel. At the 1974 Town Meeting, the town voted to purchase this parcel for purpose of developing an athletic complex. From the Park and Recreation Commission report within Article 12 of the 1974 Town Warrant: *"A unique feature of this article if passed, is that eventually we would have a park featuring additional facilities for tennis, basketball, soccer, football, softball, baseball and any other activity popular at that time, directly adjacent to 50 acres of Conservation land, that can be used for more passive forms of recreation."* Today we are proposing a more modest idea: simply improving what is already in use for athletics.

Why is this project necessary?

1. There is a high demand for field space that is not met with our current inventory of fields.
2. Over-usage of our current fields which is leading to worsening conditions – dirt patches, weed growth, compacted soil, etc. – see Haskell field for example.

An Athletic Fields Needs Assessment and Recreation Master Plan were completed in 2012 by Gale Associates, Inc. The assessment and plan supported what was already seen by Park and Recreation – scheduling conflicts due to high demand, over-usage of fields leading to poor field quality, etc. This proposed project is a start toward addressing the needs concluded in the Assessment and Master Plan.

The Park and Recreation commission has long thought the enhancement of Davis Field to be the best and most cost effective way to begin to meet the field demands.

### Projected Use and Traffic Study

We are in the process of conducting a traffic study for this project. It should be noted that the intent of this project is to improve what we already use and to allow it to be used in the spring when it is now too wet to play on. We anticipate the impact on traffic to be minimal as we are currently using the parcel for athletics.

### Current Usage of the Field Area

The primary user is Sudbury Youth Soccer Association.

Fall 2015 usage was as follows:

- Saturday: 16 teams (12 per team) for 4 hours
- Sunday: 13 teams (14 per team) for 4 hours
- Monday: 3 teams (12 per team) for 2 hours
- Tuesday: 3 teams (12 per team) for 2 hours
- Wednesday: 2 teams (12 per team) for 2 hours
- Thursday: 2 teams (12 per team) for 2 hours
- Friday: 3 teams (12 per team) for 2 hours

### Project Costs and Scope:

| <b>Fiscal Year</b> | <b>Total Project Cost</b> | <b>CPC Funds Requested</b> | <b>Other Funding Sources (amount and source)</b>                  |
|--------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| 2017               | \$158,400                 | \$148,400                  | \$10,000 for traffic study. Source: youth athletic groups.        |
| 2018               |                           |                            |   |
| 2019               |                           |                            |   |
| 2020               |                           |                            |   |
| <b>Total</b>       | \$158,400                 | \$148,400                  | \$10,000 for traffic study. Source: youth athletic organizations. |

The attached map shows the area to be graded, resulting in a level athletic playing area. That portion of Davis Field (consisting of the rectangular fields and area in between is approximately 5 acres.

Breakdown of the estimated costs for the field renovation:

- Traffic study: \$10,000
- Install 2,000 lf of erosion control: \$17,000
- Clear and grub existing field area (includes excavating existing topsoil from field area: \$7,000
- Rough grade field area (includes rough grading field area to proposed subgrade elevations): \$15,000
- Drainage (includes approximately 1,000 lf of drainage trenching in and around new fields): \$30,000
- Screen existing topsoil: \$15,000
- Finish grade and spread screened topsoil: \$15,000
- Hydro Seed proposed field area: \$35,000
- Subtotal: \$144,000
- 10% Contingency: \$14,400
- **Total: \$158,400**

## Proposed Field Area

This image shows how the new field area overlays with the existing athletic field layout.



## **How the Project Meets General and Category Specific Criteria for CPC Projects**

This project meets the following **General Criteria**:

1. This project is eligible for CPA funding as a rehabilitation and restoration of land for recreation use.
2. This project is consistent with the town's Master Plan and Open and Recreation Plan.
3. This project has received endorsement from the following municipal boards and departments:
  - a. We are working on this and plan to have support well before the 2016 Town Meeting.
4. This project preserves the essential character of the town as described in the Master Plan. This project will maintain Davis Field's natural resources and beauty while having zero negative impact on surrounding forests and wetlands.
5. This project is practical and feasible because we are using existing Park and Recreation land.
6. We think enhancing Davis Field – an existing Park and Recreation parcel – is the least expensive and fastest way to meet community need.

We meet the following **Specific Criteria** for Recreation proposals:

1. The enhancement of Davis Field provides new and better fields for lacrosse, soccer, Ultimate Frisbee and others while maintaining an open piece of recreational land. Current users including radio flyers, rocket launching, leashed dog walking, kite flying, etc. will continue to have access to the parcel.
2. This project will allow the Park & Recreation Department to better manage its fields and provide an enhanced sense of community for field users and their families.

We meet the following **Specific Criteria** for Open Space:

1. The design provides for an improved facility for user groups while preserving the character and beauty of Davis Field.

## **Presentations and Meetings with other Town Boards, Committees and Departments**

As part of the project planning the Park & Recreation Commission will be presenting the plan to a number of municipal committees and employees in order to obtain feedback and suggestions

### **For Community Preservation Committee Use:**

Form received on: \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_

Project presented to CPC on: \_\_\_\_\_

Determination: \_\_\_\_\_

## Haskell Field - Effects of Overuse

2008



2010



2013



2015



## Sudbury Park & Recreation Commission Athletic Field Q&A – December 2, 2015

- What are the Park and Recreation Commission's plans in regards to athletic playing fields?

At its June 9, 2015 meeting the Park & Recreation Commission voted 4-0 in favor of the following motion:

*"The Commission will continue in efforts to address the Town's playing field shortage. In doing so the Commission will continue to pursue a flat level playing surface at Davis Field as well as construction of a suitable parking lot, but has decided to remove the Little League baseball fields from its plans at Davis Field. In order to address the Little League field shortage the Commission will seek a suitable location for the construction and/or renovation of approximately four usable Little League fields. In the interim the Commission supports all reasonable efforts to maintain playing fields, particularly Little League fields, in playable condition, or better. The Commission looks to address Town's playing field needs as soon as possible."*

- What is the Park and Recreation Commission proposing to do at Davis Field and how is this different from the project rejected at Town Meeting?

The Commission is pursuing a flat level playing surface at Davis Field with the parking lot remaining as is. The size of the level surface area is smaller than that proposed at Town Meeting as the baseball component has been removed and playing field area reduced to about five acres from 11 acres in the prior proposal.

The adjacent 37.38 acre Davis Farm Conservation Land will remain as Open Space under the purview of the Conservation Commission while Davis Field recreational space under the purview of the Park and Recreation Commission. These are two separate parcels purchased separately in 1970's by the Town with both deeds having restrictions dictating use and purview.

- Who says there is an athletic field shortage?

The Park & Recreation Commission, an elected body, has indicated this for the past 10 years or more. This shortage has been documented by third party experts, first in 2003 and most recently in the 2012 Athletic Fields Needs Assessment & Master Plan Update prepared by Gale Associates. Also, these sentiments are echoed by athletic field user groups such as baseball, soccer and lacrosse. In addition, the Director of the Sudbury Park & Recreation Department has also expressed such concerns, especially since continuing to operate the fields as they have been over the past several years will cause irreparable damage and result in existing fields, primarily at Haskell, to undergo costly renovation. A portion of Haskell Field is currently closed for the spring and fall seasons to avoid such renovations further exacerbating the shortage.

The 2012 Athletic Fields Needs Assessment concluded need and substandard field conditions with 28 percent of Sudbury playing fields below acceptable standards with fields scheduled at 118 percent of sustainable capacity.

## Sudbury Park & Recreation Commission Athletic Field Q&A – December 2, 2015

- Why do we need this at all? Population is declining.

Although school age population is declining, recreational demand continue to increase as does the propensity to play. Recreational opportunities specifically for women are increasing through such programs as growth in girls' lacrosse and softball. In addition, non-traditional sports such as Rugby are growing, with LSRHS making Rugby a varsity sport. Sudbury Youth Soccer Association has experienced growth in high school programs. In recent years LSRHS has had upwards of 120 kids tryout for the boys' soccer team, with about half of those kids getting cut. There is also a group of boys and girls who do not tryout for the LS soccer teams realizing it's highly unlikely they'll make the team, but would like to continue to play the sport. Adult recreation continues to grow, but there are limited opportunities to accommodate this growth or provide suitable practice time for existing teams.

- How much of Sudbury's athletic field needs are met by LSRHS?

A substantial amount of field is supplied by LSRHS, particularly multipurpose rectangular fields (MPR). There are three MPR fields at LS. The town is afforded equal use of the Community Field (the football stadium field) via the L-S Community Field Agreement. However, the Town has no right of use or control over the balance of the fields which in turn could be problematic if such use was not continued to be allowed. Currently, both boys and girls lacrosse teams rely almost exclusively on LS fields, particularly the side-by-side turf fields. In addition youth football exclusively uses LS. However, LS is experiencing growth in its programming, particularly club and girls programs. As such, this could reduce field availability for Sudbury recreational programming.

- Dog walkers are against the Davis Field proposal.

There is an active group of dog walkers that use Davis Field for walking their dogs. This activity can continue at Davis Field as it currently does at other Town recreational facilities and parks. As required by Town Bylaws, dogs need to be under control on a leash.

- Who else benefits from this proposal?

Davis Field is a vast open field area that currently is and will continue to be used by Sudbury residents for a variety of uses – dog walking, nature walking, active recreation, radio flyers – everyone who currently uses this area will be able to continue to use it, as well as hopefully new users.

## Sudbury Park & Recreation Commission Athletic Field Q&A – December 2, 2015

- Why disturb Davis - use Melone instead?

As stated on its deed Davis Field was sold to the town “for park and recreation purposes, under management of its Park and Recreation Commission”. Davis Field is an existing recreational field that could better serve the recreational needs of the Town by leveling the field area to provide more space. Doing so would be the most cost effective solution to addressing multi-purpose rectangular field needs in Town. To date, the town has spent considerable monies on engineering and permitting for Davis Field renovations. In total Davis Field is 29.48 acres with approximately with five acres of level field area proposed. As a comparison, Haskell Field has 20 acres of level playing space.

On the other hand, the Park & Recreation Commission has no jurisdiction over Melone, and the utility of Melone for such a use, although promising, lacks any planning effort beyond theoretical sketches. There are substantial grade changes within the Melone property, and roughly a 70-foot elevation change to the portion of Melone located in Concord. The site also has wetlands and substantial portions of the site fall within wetlands jurisdiction, particularly the Concord portion of the site. Access to the site is also in question given the current location of access on Route 117.

The Park and Recreation Commission will be active in discussions on Melone when the Board of Selectmen determines its use.

- Concern for having Davis off-line

During renovations playing field surfaces will be unavailable for several months, and several months thereafter as grass begins to grow. Thus, for instance, if work commenced in the spring, use of the fields for non-athletic uses should be available, at least in sections, by the fall of that year.

- Concern for traffic. Need a traffic demand study to review impacts during rush hour.

If a traffic study is needed, one will be done as part of the Site Plan approval. However, the traffic issue is one that is likely overstated. Use of Davis Field as athletic fields will occur in the 10 week fall and spring seasons. However, because of the shorten length of daylight hours in the fall the fields would be used substantially less in the Fall. As for rush hour impacts, traffic is heading west with most if not all Davis Field traffic heading east from various Sudbury locations to an athletic event. In addition, some if not most of the vehicles may stay at the field and leaving after peak rush hours, particularly if younger teams are scheduled to practice at these times as parents of younger children tend to stay or be more involved. Thus, there's about a 10 week window in the spring when existing traffic back-up along Route 117 could be exacerbated, but with prudent scheduling much of the negative effect of traffic exiting Davis Field could be minimized.

## **Sudbury Park & Recreation Commission Athletic Field Q&A – December 2, 2015**

- Too many unanswered questions?

The Park & Recreation Commission, Park & Recreation Department, the Department of Public Works, the Community Preservation Committee and the Planning Department, among others have spent a considerable amount of time and resources in planning as well as addressing issues raised. Plans have been altered to address issues and the plan current in place, with the exception of perhaps traffic and permitting, has been thoroughly vetted.

- What issues are outstanding?

Outstanding issues that remain are germane to permitting and funding. As has been discussed, the Conservation Commission will likely require some type of mitigation with the Parkinson Land being placed under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission as suitable mitigation. The Parkinson Land is located behind the Ti-Sales field.