

DRAFT

Virtual Meeting 06:33 pm

June 2, 2025

Commissioners: Mara Huston, Bobby Beagan, Laurie Eliason, Granger Atkeson, Ben Carmel, Chair

Guests: Kyle Rowan, Caitlin Rogosh, Gale Associates

Park and Recreation: Dennis Mannone – Director

Roll Call: Laurie-here, Granger-here, Mara-here, Bobby-here, Ben-here

Chair Comments: Ben stated the intention of the meeting is to present the Field Needs Assessment Survey drafted by Gale Associates regarding the assessment of 15 athletic fields in Sudbury. Presentation will be followed by a Park and Recreation Commission discussion and then meeting will be opened for public comment. Ben asked that one representative per user groups speak and the comments be kept to the standard 3-minute rule for public comment. The final report is expected in July 2025, incorporating feedback from tonight's meeting.

Kyle Rowan, Project Manager, and Caitlin Roche, Staff Designer, from Gale Associates presented the background regarding the Field Needs Assessment Survey results and plan and said Gale has been working with the Sudbury Park and Recreation and user groups since the beginning of the year. He said the draft is 75% complete and input from the Park and Recreation Commission as well as public will be gathered tonight. The report is broken down into 5 primary bullet points; to evaluate the physical characteristics, conditions, and inventory of 15 athletic venues selected by the Town for potential renovation, upgrade or redevelopment. In addition, to quantify the field demand at each of these locations versus the capacity that is offered and to evaluate and program the Town's need for upgraded, redistributed or new athletic fields. It is also to provide master planning services resulting in a renovation strategy for the athletic programs and venues that meet the needs of the community going forward and to assist the Town in programming and planning for the operational maintenance and capital improvements.

Kyle presented data covering the 15 sites with detailed descriptions of their current conditions, soil quality and usage patterns. Mara suggested adding a section to the report with dimensions of athletic fields and a photo or image of the field.

Dan Lee, LSRHS AD, discussed sports at the high school and emerging sports and what type of fields are required. Mara asked Kyle to work with Dan to make sure all the data is captured in included in the survey. Commissioners discussed the potential for more turf fields and suggested Haskell field as a location.

Laurie asked if the report would show what sports are anticipated to grow over the next years, and what fields are needed. She questioned maintenance efficiencies at the fields and thought parking needs to be considered at the fields. She has concerns about the parking at Broadacres once it is developed since the current parking lot is full at times with Rail Trail users.

Granger asked Kyle to speak to the pros and cons of consolidation of fields rather than mixed field space. Kyle responded the benefit of consolidation is in regard to maintenance and maintenance equipment at one site. All materials for each field would be stored at the complex site rather than the

need to store material at multiple locations. Usage and scheduling is also at an advantage in a complex rather than multi-use location.

Bobby asked about usage at the Haskell baseball field and if it was less than in the past. Dennis said the field is being used, but definitely less this spring than in years past. Bobby was in favor of another turf field however he would like to see them with lights so they can be fully utilized by the Town. Kyle stated the report will include past historical use and anticipated future trends.

Dennis stated the Town departments will have to work together to solve the field issues and the on-going maintenance issues at the fields so that they are getting the best usage and results for the residents.

The Commissioners discussed the potential for adding lights to turf fields, while considering the impact on usage and field lifespan. Kyle agreed that it could be a concern and lights would add to the usage of the fields. Mara asked about the estimate for drainage at Feeley. Dennis will work with Gale on the drainage estimates and plan for Feeley. Mara suggested creating liaison positions with LSRHS, SPS, and perhaps SPS to have a PRC liaison, to work on these field issues together.

Field amenities can get quite expensive and reports now show more temporary facilities at sites, since restroom facilities can cost over a million dollars. In regard to tennis courts, Kyle stated it depends on when they were first installed and how they have aged. He said courts will be included in the report, but they don't go into noise issues or neighbor impact. Ben asked about field permit fee comparison. Kyle responded that Gale could include that type of information in the report. Ben suggested Dennis discuss this topic with Victor. Sewataro will be included in the Open Space and Recreation Plan.

Dan Lee, LSRHS Athletic Director, pointed out the high school uses the softball field at Featherland. If that field becomes a baseball complex his concern is the high school may not be able to field a JV tennis team or JV softball team.

Bobby noted that Davis Field was purchased by the Town back in 1974 specifically for recreation fields. He said the field has been underutilized and should be seen as a source for recreation. In the past it was heavily used for soccer and football, but now is underused and many use it as a field to walk their dogs.

Public Comment: Scott Ritter, 14 Russet Lane, spoke to the proposed conversion of Davis Field into playing fields. He said what brings the affluent families who fund the schools is the enchanting character of Sudbury's rural suburban environment, its quiet, natural beauty. He felt Davis field, in particular, was one of the jewels of Sudbury. He was not in favor of any development at this field. Geoff Howell, Sudbury Men's Softball, gave some history of the Men's Softball and said they will complete the survey. He would like to see a second field for rain makeups and better drainage at the Feeley fields.

Joe Sicree, 80 Woodmere Drive, Coach of Sudbury Youth Soccer and President of the Charles River Radio Controllers Club. He felt Davis field usage was underreported because it is used by a lot of residents. He said access to the fields will be enhanced by the Rail Trials. He asked how Davis field was viewed in the Open Space Plan and how the Environmental Commission and Sudbury Valley Trustees are involved in the process. Commission responded that these concerns and questions will also be involved in the Town's Open Space and Recreation Plan.

Bobby commented that it has only been in the last few years that youth sports haven't been using Davis Field. He added Davis Field is under the jurisdiction of the Park and Recreation Commission and the Conservation Commission would only be involved if there were some type of development that would impact wetlands.

Brian Cooperman, 26 Hollow Oak Drive, coach of the middle school frisbee team which uses Davis Field. The field is fine field for frisbee, but the drainage and grading may not be the best for soccer. Rebecca Cutting, 81 Maynard Road, owns the farmland adjacent to Cutting Field. She expressed concern with the thoughts of lighting the field for night play. She said most conservation lands are not open at night. She asked when the next opportunity is to see the next iteration of the Field Survey Planning Document. Dennis said he would meet with Gale in the next week or so and determine a new deadline date after the discussion and input from tonight's meeting.

Zach Warren, 9 Old Lancaster Road, President of the Lincoln/Sudbury youth baseball, said the Executive Committee is very much in support of the proposal for Broadacres and Featherland. The idea of having one central baseball facility would be great. He questioned how to get the satellite fields at the elementary schools in better shape where they can be maintained properly. He clarified that there still is a need for three 90-foot diamonds. Steve O'Keefe, 30 Paddock Way, Sudbury Soccer, asked if it was possible for user groups to participate in the process of figuring out how to use fields Sudbury. He expressed concerned about the condition of Haskell Field and said it does need some attention.

Monica Rogan, 80 Goodnow Road, asked about the timeline for the overall planning and development of the recreational fields. She asked about communication efforts to engage the community. Dennis responded the meeting was posted on the Commission website, Facebook, and emails were sent to user group distribution list. He said Commission meetings along with agendas are posted on the Town website.

Ben thanked Kyle and Caitlyn for attending and their presentation and looked forward to seeing the new draft that included comments from tonight and any additional surveys they received from user groups.

Motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded. Vote: Granger – yes, Laurie – yes, Mara – yes, Bobby – yes, Ben – yes. Vote passed 5-0 in favor.