

Liberty Ledge / Sewataro Advisory Committee

July 16, 2026

Virtual Meeting 7:00 PM

Committee Members present: G Atkeson, D Henkels (Chair), K Bell, R Gargeya, D. Dineen, J. Pincus

Also Present: James Goudie-Murray, Management Analyst, Carmine Gentile, Sudbury Housing Trust, Kristen Drummey, Camp Sewataro, Scott Brody, Camp Sewataro

Summary

Dave Henkels called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. The Liberty Ledge Sewataro Advisory Committee held a virtual meeting to discuss the future use of the Liberty Ledge property, focusing on community input, survey design, and presentations from Camp Sewataro staff and the Sudbury Housing Trust. The committee reviewed a draft survey intended to gather resident opinions on potential uses of the property, with members suggesting revisions for clarity, inclusivity, and to ensure responses are from Sudbury residents. Camp Sewataro representatives presented their vision for expanded partnerships, accessibility improvements, and increased community programming, emphasizing their role as stewards of the property and their commitment to serving Sudbury families. The Sudbury Housing Trust outlined potential opportunities for affordable housing on specific parcels of the property, while committee members and public commenters raised concerns about development constraints and the need for comprehensive data on current and past usage. Public comments highlighted the importance of balancing recreational and housing needs, ensuring survey integrity, and considering alternative sites for affordable housing. The committee also addressed procedural matters, including the approval of meeting minutes and clarification of member affiliations.

Liberty Ledge Property Survey Review

The meeting focused on reviewing a draft of a survey designed to gather community input on the future use of the town-owned property. Committee members provided feedback on the survey, suggesting improvements such as clarifying questions about housing and commercial development, adding questions about accessibility priorities, and ensuring the survey is limited to Sudbury residents. The committee discussed the importance of taking a broader view of all proposed recommendations and ensuring the survey accurately reflects community priorities while considering the original 2019 article that led to the property's purchase. The committee members provided their feedback on specific questions on the draft, with Radha opposing demographic questions about past camp attendance and support, agreeing with Dave and Granger that all community members should be treated equally. Granger proposed requiring names and addresses for responses to ensure no one responds more than once.

Survey Timing and Distribution Strategy

The committee discussed timing and distribution challenges for the survey. Granger emphasized the need to finalize specific edits to survey questions in a timely manner for its release and suggested a two-week open response period. The committee debated the timeline for running the survey, with Kay and Jennifer suggesting it should remain open until early September to accommodate summer travelers. Debbie raised concerns about reaching non-Google fluent residents, particularly seniors, suggesting alternative distribution methods like Senior Center locations and Dropbox options. At Radha's suggestion, the group agreed to have an off-cycle meeting on the 30th specifically to complete the survey draft and focus on survey distribution strategies. James and Granger were tasked to develop a final draft before that meeting, incorporating the discussed feedback.

Camp Sewataro Partnership Expansion Plans

Kristen Drummey and Scott Brody from Camp Sewataro presented a vision for expanding partnerships with the Town of Sudbury over the next five years. They outlined plans for improved signage and communication, including placing Town of Sudbury signs at property entrances and creating trail maps. The presentation also covered potential collaborations with the Park and Rec Department for programming, accessible improvements based on guidance from the Commission on Disability, and partnerships with local schools for educational programs. Additionally, they proposed expanding pavilion access year-round and introducing a bike tune-up station, while highlighting their current scholarship program that prioritizes Sudbury residents.

Kristen discussed the balance between dreaming big and setting realistic goals, presenting a vision for expanding the camp's facilities including a year-round gym and potential splash pad. She shared videos showing daily activities at the camp to demonstrate its current impact and potential for future growth.

Camp Partnership and Community Benefits

Scott clarified that the camp operates as the town's partner, not beneficiary, and emphasized that the community benefits from the asset year-round, not just during the 8-week camp season. He stated that the camp has doubled the number of Sudbury children served to 500 over seven years and increased local employment to nearly 100 residents. Scott expressed openness to discussing ways to deepen programming and increase financial assistance to families, while noting concerns about potential property development proposals.

The discussion then focused on the renewal process for a camp property. Scott explained that a renewal option requires mutual exercise with the Select Board and would involve negotiating any necessary changes to the operating agreement. If the Select Board chooses not to renew the agreement, the camp would continue to operate only through the end of next summer.

Kay requested detailed data on community programming and resident participation over the past 6-7 years, though Kristen noted they only track attendance for resident events and not property use by external groups like scouting. Scott agreed to provide camper and staff numbers year by year from 2019 forward.

Granger confirmed the annual maintenance costs for the property are around \$300-350,000. Debbie requested more detailed breakdown of specific maintenance items related to the camp operation beyond just financial numbers.

Sudbury Housing Trust Presentation

Carmine Gentile, chair of the Sudbury Housing Trust, presented their recommendations for affordable owner-occupied housing opportunities on the Liberty Ledge property, identifying the vacant single-family home at 213 Haynes Road as having the highest potential for affordable housing. The Housing Trust members expressed support for a comprehensive master planning approach that balances housing, recreation, and fiscal considerations for the camp property. The presentation then focused on 4 additional (undeveloped) parcels off Greystone Lane to the north of the camp, and 2 parcels adjacent to 213 Haynes Road, that might be considered for affordable housing opportunities.

Property Mapping and Development Constraints

The group discussed property mapping and development constraints around a camp location. Carmine and Kay clarified that some areas shown on maps, including roads and specific properties, do not currently exist or are inaccurately represented. Debbie presented a surficial geology map showing bedrock and development constraints, recommending a comprehensive soils investigation before considering any housing development plans. The discussion highlighted the need for accurate mapping and proper site assessment to determine viable development areas.

Public Comments

The meeting then opened up to public comments regarding the issues discussed. Several public commenters, including Charles Morton and Laura Briggs, questioned the focus on developing Sewataro for housing when the town's 11.88% affordable housing ratio already meets the 10% threshold and when there are other potential locations like Fairbanks Circle and the Mass State Crime Lab property.

Additional comments addressed survey design improvements, with multiple participants suggesting measures to validate residency and ensure accurate feedback collection.

Several attendees raised questions about committee memberships and conflicts of interest, particularly regarding Kay Bell's involvement on both the Housing Authority and Liberty Ledge committees. The committee discussed the intentional composition of committee members, with Dan

Carty clarifying that members were selected based on their expertise rather than membership on other committees.

Bill Schineller questioned if land parcels were to be developed by the Housing Trust, would they be simply transferred to the Housing Trust or sold to them to pay down the bond on the Liberty Ledge purchase.

The committee heard suggestions for expanding the camp's use, including potential year-round facilities, a farmer's market, and after-school care programs to address waitlists at local elementary schools.

In response to public comment, Radha read from the Compilation Report Executive Summary as to what the Select Board may and may not do.

"The Select Board may study, plan, and evaluate future uses of the property, including issuing requests for proposals (RFPs) or requests for information (RFIs), and may negotiate agreements within its delegated authority; however, it may not commit additional funds, enter into lease, or disposition agreements, or impose permanent physical or legal changes to the property without further Town Meeting authorization.

Separate Town Meeting or voter approval is required for:

- Capital expenditures beyond acquisition
- Lease or long-term use agreements
- Imposition of permanent legal restrictions or easements"

Radha noted that this information was from the Compilation Report that is available on the committee's web page on the town website. He addressed another comment about committee membership by quoting from the mission statement that members are appointed who have "experience/professional experience in several listed areas. The Select Board did not preclude members serving on relevant committees for example Park and Recreation and so on.

Minutes approval

The committee reviewed and approved the minutes from their June 18th meeting, with James agreeing to correct spelling errors and add absent members' names. Kay recommended including absent members going forward. James will also double check which previous minutes were approved. The next meeting was scheduled for the following Thursday to discuss the polling process, with James checking if the police room would be available for the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 PM.