# Liberty Ledge / Sewataro Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, July 23, 2026 7:00 PM to 10:00 PM

Meeting held remotely on Zoom

**Members Present:** Dave Henkels, Granger Atkenson, Radha Gargeya, Kay Bell, Debbie Dineen, Jen Pincus

**Members Absent:** None

**Other Panelists:** Adam Burney, Planning and Community Development Director, James Goudie-Murray, Management Analyst

**Summary**

The Liberty Ledge / Sewataro Advisory Committee met to finalize the community survey on the future use of Liberty Ledge property. The committee discussed and made several amendments to the survey, including removing certain granular questions about accessibility and connections, keeping the long-form open-ended questions, and adding a "neutral" option to the Likert scale. They decided to keep a section for residents to rank their top priorities but removed a subsequent section with more detailed questions. The demographic section was revised to only include questions about residency and an attestation of single submission, removing requests for name, address, and visitation frequency. The survey's distribution plan was outlined, and the committee debated the survey's timeline, ultimately deciding to extend the closing date to September 7th to allow for broader community participation. The meeting also touched on the process of drafting the committee's final report and recommendations, with a suggestion to focus on "options for consideration" rather than firm recommendations at this stage.

**Liberty Ledge Survey Revision Discussion**

The committee discussed version 5 of a community survey about future uses of Liberty Ledge property, with James presenting the changes and seeking feedback. Adam raised concerns about the survey being too long and recommended removing two long-form questions and several granular questions about physical space features, while keeping the neutral option in the Likert scale. Other committee members, including Jennifer and Granger, agreed that some granular questions should be removed but supported keeping the name and address requirements, with Granger emphasizing the importance of hearing from Sudbury residents specifically. The committee debated how to define housing options in the survey and whether to include questions about development potential, with Kay expressing concerns about the overall value of the general survey approach compared to a more detailed analysis of the property's specific features.

**Community Survey Planning Discussion**

The committee discussed the community survey process for gathering opinions on property development, with Kay expressing concern about relying solely on opinions without hard facts about the property. Adam and Dave clarified that the survey should focus on high-level questions about property use rather than granular details, as the committee would handle the detailed analysis. Radha proposed making survey questions optional and allowing anonymous responses to encourage more community participation, while also suggesting including an "I don't know" option for respondents. The committee agreed on an October 31st deadline for delivery of the recommendations document to allow the Select Board sufficient time for review before potential contract negotiations starting January 1st.

**Survey Modification Committee Discussion**

The committee discussed modifications to the survey, with Granger confirming it would take at least five minutes to complete. The group voted unanimously to keep the long-form questions in the survey, though James raised concerns about the feasibility of processing paper responses if the survey receives a high volume of written submissions. The committee agreed to limit long answer responses to half a page and proceeded with section-by-section voting on remaining recommendations, starting with prioritization questions.

**Survey Priority Ranking Section Debate**

The committee discussed whether to keep or remove a section in the survey that asks respondents to rank four options out of nine possible for the property. While Granger initially suggested removing it due to unclear definitions, Jennifer and Debbie argued that the ranking section provides crucial data that complements the more nuanced combination questions that follow. The group debated the potential for conflicts between different activities and the need for clear definitions, with Kay expressing concern about being forced to choose only four priorities when all options might be relevant. The discussion ended with Granger preparing to make a motion regarding the section's retention.

**Survey Question Simplification Discussion**

The committee discussed simplifying the survey by removing specific sections, particularly granular questions that required site-specific knowledge. Granger initially moved to keep a priority list and remove other sections but withdrew the motion after Adam raised concerns about rewriting the survey at the last minute and potentially missing the Monday/Tuesday deadline for distribution. The group ultimately decided to remove several specific questions, including one about paths connecting buildings, with James confirming he would delete that particular question, though Kay objected to the removal.

**Public Property Accessibility Questions Review**

The group discussed and voted to remove five specific questions (9, 15, 24, 25, and 26) from their priority list regarding public property accessibility, with the motion being seconded by Radha and passed with unanimous support. They then debated the distinction between open space and passive recreation, ultimately deciding to combine these categories since they are closely related and often go hand in hand. The group also discussed combining questions about community spaces and events, with James explaining these concepts came from public input sessions and Debbie suggesting they be renamed as "community events and gathering spaces.".

**Housing Development Options Discussion**

The committee discussed how to handle housing development options for a town-owned property, with debate over whether to include selling the land as an option despite the town already having voted to purchase it. Radha suggested using option 8, “Other”, to allow elaboration on any priority, and Adam recommended separating elaboration into a distinct sub-question rather than combining it with new categories. The group agreed to modify the housing development option to specify "affordable or market rate" housing while maintaining the ability for respondents to elaborate on their choices in the follow-up questions.

The committee discussed survey questions 12 and 13 about housing development on the property, deciding to keep them in the survey as amended.

**Survey Changes and Distribution Plan**

The committee approved several changes to the survey, including moving two questions to the beginning, adding a note about Sudbury residency, and removing most demographic questions except for email collection at the end. They agreed to add a neutral option (labeled as "neutral" or "no opinion") for all questions in Section 3. Regarding demographic information, the committee decided to remove requirements for name and address while keeping a question about Sudbury residency at the beginning of the survey, with an attestation that respondents complete the survey only once. They determined that preventing duplicate responses would be challenging without requiring identifying information and agreed to rely on the honor system for survey completion.

James presented a distribution plan involving digital surveys through the town website and social media, along with physical surveys available at municipal buildings including the Fairbank Community Center, Flynn Building, and Goodnow Library. The survey is scheduled to run from July 27th to August 24th, 2026, with data to be processed and reviewed by the following meeting on August 27th. Kay raised concerns about the timing of the survey closure and suggested exploring the possibility of entering physical survey data directly into Google Forms to speed up processing.

**Community Survey Deadline Extension**

The committee discussed extending the community survey deadline from August 27th to September 7th to ensure more residents could participate after the start of school on September 2nd. Kay raised concerns about equity, noting that some families would be away during summer and miss the opportunity to provide input. The group agreed to proceed with the extended deadline and potentially hold additional off-cycle meetings in September and October to accommodate the timeline changes while meeting their October 31st deadline for final recommendations.

**Liberty Ledge Property Planning Discussion**

The committee discussed an initial recommendation worksheet for brainstorming future uses of the Liberty Ledge Sewataro property. Debbie and Jennifer expressed concerns about completing the worksheet before receiving all survey results and public input, fearing it might bias the process and discourage public participation. The group debated timing, with some suggesting delays until after the survey closes on September 7th, while others argued for using the current timeframe to begin individual brainstorming. Radha proposed an alternative approach of framing submissions as questions rather than formal recommendations to allow more time for information gathering and analysis.

**Property Report Structure Discussion**

The committee discussed how to structure their report on property options, with Debbie suggesting they use "options for consideration" rather than formal recommendations to avoid appearing biased. Adam raised concerns about meeting the October 31st deadline if recommendations aren't finalized soon, while Kay and others questioned the reporting structure and suggested committee members could help draft sections. The group agreed to focus on gathering additional information and combining public input with property details before developing formal recommendations, with James confirming that 18 questions from committee members have been received and are being tracked for responses from Town staff and K-P Law.

VOTE: Kay moved to adjourn the meeting. Dave seconded. A roll call vote was taken: Pincus, aye. Granger, aye. Henkels, aye. Gargeya, aye. Bell, aye. Dineen, aye.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:06 PM.