

Liberty Ledge / Sewataro Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, September 10, 2026

6:35 PM to 9:06 PM

Meeting held remotely on Zoom

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

Members Absent: none

Other Panelists: James Goudie-Murray, Sudbury Management Analyst

Open of Meeting

Chair Dave Henkels began the meeting requesting a moment of silence to reflect in memory of the three Sudbury residents who lost their lives twenty-five years ago on September 11, 2001 in the terror attacks on that day; and to honor the first responders from around the country.

Dave Henkels then called the roll at 6:35 PM. Kay volunteered to produce the minutes.

Survey Results

James reviewed key information gathered in an 80-page report based on the results of the survey that closed on September 7.

1. There were 710 responses. The survey comprised three sections: an open-ended question, a nine-option prioritization list, and a set of 19 questions about combined usage.
2. All responses to the question of what would most benefit the community in the next 10 to 20 years along with the complete survey responses will be available on the LLSAC webpage for public and committee review.
3. In the prioritization section total weighted scores for combined priority selections were:
 - summer camp – 1992
 - open space and passive recreation – 1175
 - active recreation – 1106
 - community programming – 962
 - educational programming – 304
 - entertainment – 240
 - affordable housing – 171
 - market rate housing – 126
 - other – 63

James provided a chart showing “other” suggestions, some of which were grouped by association.

4. Granger and Debbie noted that the pattern of survey results seems aligned with the community input received so far.

5. Jen commented that the 2019 Flash Vote survey results included a correction factor for valid participation. She noted that it is possible that some non-Sudbury people participated in the survey, but there is likely no way for us to determine that factor.
6. Kay acknowledged that the committee has received a significant number of email messages from people who took the survey and commented that the third section was confusing and seemed to include housing as a factor more than any other.
7. The consensus was that whatever issues there were with outside participation and the third section of the survey, results in the second section dealing with prioritization were clear and we have open ended comments to look at for further pattern clarification.

Continued Discussion of KP Law response to questions

Members discussed including in the final report a basic explanation of the legal steps taken to purchase the property and secure a contract with a camp operator. Clarification of the role of the Select Board and the role of Town Meeting would be useful based on misunderstandings apparent in some of the emails the committee has received. No interpretation or rewording of the legal opinions offered by KP Law would be attempted and the opinions in their original form should be appended to the report.

Review and Discuss Options for Recommendations

James had generated two sets of recommendations for further discussion: Nine Near-Term (within 5 years) and five Long-Term (beyond 5 years). These were based on last meeting's discussions of potential recommendations that had been drawn from the brainstorm options members had submitted.

Near-Term Recommendation categories:

1. Continue Camp Operations through the Final Five-Year Extension
2. Increase the Benefit of Camp Operations to Sudbury Residents
3. Establish Clear Municipal Oversight of the Liberty Ledge Property
4. Expand Public Access, Recreation, and Community Programming
5. Improve Accessibility, Wayfinding, and Public Understanding of the Property
6. Conduct a Comprehensive Evaluation of the Property
7. Define the Area Necessary for Camp Operations
8. Protect the Property's Natural Resources While Long-Term Planning Is Underway
9. Convert 213 Haynes Road to an Affordable Single-Family Residence

Long-Term Recommendation categories:

10. Maintain Permanent Municipal Oversight of Liberty Ledge
11. Use the Next RFP to Reevaluate the Camp Operational Area and the Overall Use of the Property

12. Consider a Long-Term Camp Operator Agreement Only When It Produces a Clear Public Benefit
13. Preserve Flexibility for Multiple Uses of the Property
14. Protect the Natural Character of Liberty Ledge as the Property Evolves

Items 1 through 9 were discussed in detail and language revisions were suggested:

- Members worked on editing wording to advise the Select Board on negotiating priority enrollment and greater affordability for local children to enroll in Camp Sewataro. These issues should be considered when drafting the final 5 year agreement with the camp operator.
- Municipal oversight was discussed with an emphasis on the Town's best interest in knowing the condition of the property and its assets and liabilities. This naturally led to refining the list of aspects of the property that warrant examination and study.
- Discussion moved on to the topic of expansion of public programming at non-camp times. The intention is for a Town-designated Liberty Ledge person or entity to coordinate the town departments and committees in pursuit of more public programming and access to passive recreation. Members asked to include a list of some of the collected programming ideas. Deb asked that consideration be given to expanding the public access area during the non-camp hours within the camp season by opening designated walking trails through the property.
- On signage the first point discussed was that the entrances to the property should have signs in the style of other Town-owned recreational properties (granite posts with a green sign between) with the name Liberty Ledge headlining it and clearly naming it as public property. Having "home of Camp Sewataro" or something similar included is fine - somewhat like "Fairbank Community Center -Senior Center" at that facility.
- Signage and wayfinding are component requirements of the ADA and members decided the reference to the ADA should be moved to the section on evaluating the property. They discussed how to express that an ADA self-evaluation is a legal obligation.
- Regarding evaluation studies of various aspects of the property, members considered whether "as appropriate" was a good phrase to include. If included, it recommends flexibility to select which aspects of the property should be examined in what order based on purpose and available resources.

- A recommendation addressing the determination of areas reasonably necessary for camp operation and those that are not, and another recommendation to refrain from disturbing areas that are not currently in camp use until studies are complete were accepted as written.
- Members agreed that the Town should *explore* (word selected after some discussion) making the residence at 213 Haynes Road affordable housing in consultation with whichever housing committee is appropriate. Determination of the boundaries of that property was discussed and left for the Select Board to figure out.

Members decided to defer discussion of Long-Term Recommendation to the September 24th meeting and to also meet on October 1st. The aim is to vote on the language of the whole set of recommendations on October 1st, prior to the October 8th planned Public Input Session

Public Comment

1. Mark Marchionne, 28 Julians Way: Recommends that the committee discuss the Long-Term Recommendations at the start of the next meeting. He read a prepared statement in which he offered a long-term strategy including the Select Board agreeing to a 5-year extension of the vendor's current contract and agreeing to a framework for a 20-year or more future contract that would involve the required RFP process. He suggests the Select Board place an article on the 2027 Annual Town Meeting warrant to that effect, and if it is approved it would give the Select Board the authority, but not the obligation, to proceed with that process.
2. Laura Briggs, 94 Belcher Drive: Commends the work of the LLSAC and expressed concern regarding pressure from some in the community to put certain things into the recommendations. She noted that the Friends of Sewataro are focused on the long-term strategy, and see broad possibilities for recreational and after-school care, childcare, and summer camp for children on the property and they do not want housing to be on the property.
3. Bobbianna Neuberg-Langille, 9 Willard-Grant Road: Appreciates the committee's work and asks, "Does the committee really know the details about how a camp works? And is that level of detail what the Select Board asked for in the mission statement?" She cautioned that without this knowledge the committee should avoid "getting into the weeds" regarding what the camp needs. If we start nit-picking every little thing it's going to make it so that the camp won't even be able to function.

Close of Meeting

Kay inquired about the report section that Adam Burney had submitted which was on the agenda. That material will be on the next meeting agenda.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 9:06 PM.