

LLSAC Draft Recommendations

Immediate-Term Recommendations (within 1 year)

1. Continue Camp Operations Through the Final Five-Year Extension

The LLSAC recommends that the Town exercise the final five-year extension available under the existing agreement for the operation of Camp Sewataro. It is further recommended that this extension period be used by the Town to better understand the Liberty Ledge property, improve public use of the site, evaluate the Town's long-term needs, and prepare for the next procurement process.

As part of negotiations for the upcoming five-year extension, the LLSAC recommends that the Town seek modifications to the agreement, within the four corners of the RFP, subsequent management amendments, and applicable procurement requirements, that further the all of the LLSAC's recommendations.

2. Increase the Benefit of Camp Operations to Sudbury Residents

The LLSAC recommends that the Town seek to increase the direct benefit of Camp Sewataro to Sudbury residents as part of the five-year extension with the camp operator.

Following is a list of benefits we are recommending the Town negotiate for:

- Priority enrollment opportunities for Sudbury residents that increases enrollment of Sudbury families;
- A reevaluation of the existing fee and scholarship structure, including consideration of a sliding fee scale or other mechanisms to make camp participation more affordable to more Sudbury families; and
- Early, clear communication to families about enrollment, fees, and financial assistance through additional channels of communication beyond the Town website.

The specific mechanisms used to accomplish these objectives are recommended to be determined through negotiations between the Town and the camp operator. Any revised enrollment and fee information is recommended to be settled and shared before registration opens for the 2028 camp season, so families can make informed decisions when space first becomes available.

3. Establish A Clear Municipal Entity Responsible for the Liberty Ledge Property

The LLSAC recommends that the Town designate a Town staff member, department, or other municipal entity with responsibility as the primary point of contact for coordinating and representing the Town's interests in the Liberty Ledge property.

It is recommended that this municipal responsibility include the public and municipal use of the property; working with the camp operator and Town departments and relevant town committees; monitoring implementation of the management agreement; managing any future Town conducted studies and long-term planning efforts; coordinating with the managing partner on property maintenance and capital needs (including those identified herein); and ensuring that identified projects and improvements, supported by public funds, are completed within established timelines.

The individual or entity responsible for the property need not directly perform each of these functions, but it is recommended that they have the means/authority to ensure that the necessary work moves forward.

Medium Term Recommendations (within 5 years 2027-2032)

4. Expand Public Access, Recreation, and Community Programming

The LLSAC recommends that the Town take a more active role in maximizing the use of Liberty Ledge by Sudbury residents when camp activities are not occurring.

The Town should work with the camp operator, Park and Recreation Department, schools, Council on Aging, Commission on Disability, community organizations, and other potential users to expand year-round recreational, educational, cultural, and community programming at the property including, but not limited to:

- Farmers' Markets
- Outdoor movie nights
- Community concerts
- Organized drop in hikes
- Winter Cross Country Skiing
- School based Nature Education
- Holiday Events (i.e. Fall Festival, Easter Egg Hunt, Winter Holiday Lights Festival)

Additionally, it is recommended that the Town better advertise opportunities for residents and community organizations to utilize the property, including special events as well as drop-in regular use such as active and passive recreation. The potential for a fee structure and policy for the rental of the property is recommended to also be explored as part of future planning.

5. Improve Accessibility, Wayfinding, and Public Understanding of the Property

The LLSAC recommends that the Town improve residents' ability to access and navigate the Liberty Ledge property.

The LLSAC recommends that signage identifying public entrances (similar to other town properties), this is a critical item and it is recommended to be undertaken as soon as possible.

Signage and wayfinding identifying trails, facilities (open/not open to the public), parking areas, and areas available for public use,

Additionally, LLSAC recommends that clear and complete information regarding when and how the property may be accessed, year-round, including during the summer outside of camp hours be posted at both property entrances and be available on the Town's website and other public repositories,

We recommend that all signage, access, and use information be posted in accessible formats.

6. Conduct a Comprehensive Evaluation of the Property

During the next five years, the LLSAC recommends that the Town invest in developing a comprehensive understanding of the physical characteristics, infrastructure, opportunities, and limitations of the Liberty Ledge property.

The following are items that it is recommended that the evaluation consider:

- Buildings, structures and facilities above and below ground;
- Topography, soils/ledge, wetlands, vegetation, and other natural resources;
- Water, septic, drainage, stormwater, and other infrastructure;
- Complete an ADA self-evaluation of the property and use the findings to develop a prioritized plan for future accessibility improvements as required by law;
- Existing trails, circulation, parking, and connections to nearby walkways and trails;
- Parking and traffic patterns during camp, public events, and other uses including possible uses of Haynes School's parking lot;
- Areas currently used for camp operations;
- Areas that are currently undeveloped or minimally disturbed;
- Areas where ecological improvements can be made on the property; and
- The suitability of different portions of the property for future municipal uses.

The recommended purpose of these evaluations is not be to predetermine a single future use, but to provide the Town with the information necessary to make informed long-term decisions about the property.

7. Define the Area Necessary for Camp Operations and Protect the Property's Natural Resources While Long-Term Planning is Underway

During the five-year extension, the LLSAC recommends that the Town work collaboratively with the camp operator to identify and document the portions of Liberty Ledge that are reasonably necessary for camp operations.

Establishing a clearer understanding of the camp operational area will allow the Town to distinguish between land needed to support the camp and other portions of the property that may be available for public access, municipal programming, or other future uses; or suitable for environmental improvement.

Until the Town has completed its property evaluations and determined the appropriate long-term use of currently undeveloped portions of the site, significant expansion of camp activities or other new land disturbance into those areas should be avoided. Similarly, no alterations to the property currently used by the camp should be undertaken without coordination with the Town.

The LLSAC recommends that the Town preserve the natural character and environmental resources of Liberty Ledge while it evaluates the property's long-term potential.

Undeveloped and minimally disturbed areas are recommended to generally remain undisturbed until the Town has sufficient information to determine their appropriate future use. This recommendation is not intended to permanently designate those areas for conservation or preclude future municipal uses. Rather, it is intended to preserve the Town's future options while the necessary evaluations and planning are completed.

8. Convert 213 Haynes Road to an Affordable Single-Family Residence

The LLSAC recommends that the Town explore converting the existing home at 213 Haynes Road into an affordable single-family residence. It is further recommended that any new property boundaries considered do not infringe upon the access road into the Liberty Ledge property or other land used for camp operations.

The specific mechanism for accomplishing this recommendation is recommended to be determined by the Select Board in consultation with the appropriate housing agencies and Town staff.

Long-Term Recommendations (2033 and beyond)

9. Maintain Permanent Municipal Responsibility for Liberty Ledge

The LLSAC recommends that the Town maintain an active and ongoing role in the oversight and coordination of the Liberty Ledge property and assets.

It is also recommended that future agreements clearly distinguish the responsibilities of the Town from those of any private operator and ensure that decisions concerning environmental stewardship, public access, long-term planning, capital investment, and the overall use of the Town-owned property remain subject to municipal responsibility and approval.

10. The Next RFP for the Property should Solicit a Camp Operator

The LLSAC finds camp a good use of the property that provides a public benefit. The LLSAC recommends that the town prioritize a camp operator as part of the next RFP structure. If the Town undertakes further procurement for the management of the property, at the end of the current management agreement it is recommend that it use the information gathered during the preceding five years (outlined in Recommendation 6 & 7) to determine what portion of Liberty Ledge be included in the management agreement with a private entity and what portions, if any, will be retained for other municipal purposes.

The LLSAC recommends that the scope of the future agreement reflects the demonstrated needs of camp operations, the results of the Town's property evaluations, community priorities, and the Town's long-term goals for the site in the context of the Town's comprehensive planning efforts, including currently unforeseen municipal needs.

11. Preserve Flexibility for Multiple Uses of the Property

The LLSAC recommends that future planning for Liberty Ledge recognize that the property is large enough to potentially accommodate multiple compatible uses.

We also recommend that continued operation of a summer camp not preclude the Town from considering municipal uses, on portions of the property that are not necessary for camp operations or on camp property outside of camp season or non-camp hours during camp season.

The LLSAC also recommends that future decisions be informed by the property evaluations, community input, operational experience, and the needs of the Town at the time those decisions are made.

12. Consider a Long-Term Management Agreement

When the existing agreement expires and a new procurement process is required for the future use of the property, we recommend that the Town consider offering a longer-term agreement to the selected proposer. The LLSAC recommends that the Request for Proposal clearly outline the roles and responsibilities of the selected operator and include identifiable benefits for the Town and Sudbury residents.

A longer-term agreement would be appropriate where the additional term enables:

1. Substantial investment in the property,
2. Construction or improvement of facilities that also benefit the community,
3. Increased revenue or other financial benefits to the Town,
4. Expanded public programming,
5. Improved accessibility,
6. Increased opportunities for Sudbury residents, or
7. Other significant public benefits.

The LLSAC recommends that the length and terms of any future agreement reflect the value being provided to the Town. A longer term should not be offered solely for the benefit or certainty of the private operator; it should provide a corresponding long-term benefit to the Town and its residents.

It is recommended that a longer-term agreement be provide for

1. a periodic, at defined intervals, assessment and revisions of financial and other benefits to the Town, with each revision favorable for the Town than that of the previous period,
2. an annual review of the current agreement and revisions.

13. Preserve Natural Characteristics

The LLSAC recommends that Long-term development and use of Liberty Ledge seeks to enhance and restore the property's natural features, open-space character, native vegetation, trails, ponds, and other ecological resources while allowing appropriate improvements that support the property's public and recreational uses.

The LLSAC recommends that new construction or significant alterations be evaluated in the context of the Town's broader goals for the property. Oversight of all development shall include such inspection and permitting processes typically applied to municipal projects in Sudbury.

This principle should not prohibit appropriate future improvements but should ensure that development occurs deliberately and with consideration for the environmental character that makes Liberty Ledge a unique Town asset. The execution of this preservation should be included as a facet of all future management agreements.