Liberty Ledge / Sewataro Advisory Committee
Thursday August 27, 2026 at 6:30 PM
Virtual Meeting
Meeting Minutes

Members Present:

Dave Henkels, Chair; Kay Bell; Radha Gargeya, Vice-Chair; William Granger; Jennifer Pincus

Also in attendance:

Adam Burney, Director of Planning & Community Development, Town of Sudbury; James Goudie-Murray, Management Analyst, Town of Sudbury

Chair Dave Henkels recognized by name all the people listed above who were present.

Call to Order

Roll Call:

Bell-present; Gargeya-present; Granger-present; Henkels-present; Pincus-present

At the conclusion of the roll call, Chair Dave Henkels called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM.

Meeting Minutes Recorder

Radha would take the minutes.

Review and Vote on Minutes July 2, 2026

Kay moved to accept the minutes of the 7/2/2026 meeting as amended. Granger seconded.

The minutes were accepted by a 5-0 vote:

Bell-aye; Gargeya-aye; Granger-aye; Henkels-aye; Pincus-aye

Upon Dave's request, James read the letter from the Park & Recreation Commission, dated August 2026, as follows:

"The Park and Recreation Commission sees unique value in the Liberty Ledge property for the Town of Sudbury to access recreation opportunities that promote mental and physical health for all our residents. The parcel offers unique features that complement our other town spaces and unlock new programming possibilities for both active and passive recreation. We see potential to realize this benefit for the town residents in conjunction with summer camp operations.

We support the Park and Recreation Department's effort to increase formal recreation programming at the Liberty Ledge property. Therefore, we advocate that the LLSAC Committee

and the Select Board members implement a use agreement and management process for the property that fosters development of Park and Recreation Programming now and into the future."

Dave said the questions from the Committee have been submitted to the town counsel. The response from the counsel will be reviewed and possibly released by the Select Board at their 9/1/2026 meeting. Dave also thanked the community for their input through email and their participation in the survey.

Discuss Options

Adam said that with the 16 or so questions from the committee, and considering town staff's and town counsel's responses, the committee could give recommendations that can inform the Select Board as they prepare RFPs (Request for Proposal) in the future. Operational aspects need to be evaluated logistically, legally, and if they are operable. He suggested to make the recommendations high level and conceptual, and it could be an iterative process to get to what the final product looks like when the current agreement sunsets.

The committee thanked James for consolidating the 23 options under six categories with bulleted points under each category. The six categories are:

- Camp Operations & Resident Benefits
- Public Access, Recreation, and Programming
- Park, Conservation, and Agriculture
- Property Management, Accessibility, and Wayfinding
- Long-term Study, and Governance
- Housing Options

Kay said that the options were informed by public input and the various presentations to the committee; what the committee is discussing are initial approaches which are fluid and not to be taken as final recommendations.

The committee reviewed the document by category. The committee agreed to consolidate similar recommendations and focus on high-level objectives rather than specific implementation details.

Debbie Dineen joined the meeting at 7:01 PM. Dave recognized her, and Debbie voiced her presence (Dineen-present).

There was initial discussion about to how to process the categories and the bullet points under each category. The committee agreed with James' suggestion to start by considering each bullet in each category and determine whether to keep it, expand it, or merge some of them.

Property Management, Accessibility, and Wayfinding

Granger said that the property use such as camp operations, and the property management are distinct from each other and a future RFP could reflect that. There was discussion about the maintenance of the property and if it were to be managed by a different entity, what would be the net costs and benefits to the town.

Radha said the committee could mention 'what' needs to be done, 'why' it needs to be done, and perhaps give the 'how' as suggestions.

Camp Operations

Key discussions centered around camp operations, including whether to renew the current agreement for five years or pursue a longer-term arrangement, and how to prioritize Sudbury resident enrollment.

Jennifer said that some of the bulleted items such as property management and preference for Sudbury children may apply to more than one category and we should devise a way to capture that.

Debbie said some of the performance standards, particularly public access and public programming, should be better defined and reported in the 5-year extension.

Public Access, Recreation, and Programming

The committee also discussed public access and programming, with Granger suggesting that a central town body should take over coordination of property use from the current camp operator. Granger said that the camp is one of the users, and if another party wants to use the property, they should go to the town and not to one of the other users (which is the camp).

The committee discussed recommendations for improving public access and coordination of the town-owned property currently managed by Camp Sewataro. Granger advocated for a more prescriptive approach, suggesting the town should take over coordination responsibilities rather than leaving it to the camp, while Radha proposed an exploratory approach suggesting the town study different arrangements for maximizing public access throughout the year. The committee agreed to focus on two main themes: finding a better system to access the property than the existing system and exploring revenue-generating opportunities for private events during non-camp periods. The committee decided to provide specific examples of expanded programming under these categories rather than making general recommendations.

Park, Conservation, and Agriculture

The group discussed the possibility of implementing deed restrictions on the property to limit certain activities for a finite period, with Dave suggesting this as a tool for future flexibility.

Debbie raised concerns about the legal feasibility and potential conflicts with the town's original purchase conditions.

Debbie pointed out that the owners of the Sewataro property approached the town about a conservation restriction. Debbie and the then Town Manager Melissa Rodrigues met with the state Division of Conservation Services, and they were told that the property cannot be placed under conservation restriction as the property is already developed with houses, lawns, septic system, and in-ground sprinklers.

The discussion highlighted differences between deed restrictions, which cover the entire property, and long-term agreements with operators, with Kay noting that these serve different purposes. Kay also noted two restrictions that are in place: cell towers and night lights.

Adam said that instead of deed restrictions, the committee could say that certain areas are not to be disturbed, cognizant of natural resources, outside of safety, maintenance, and stormwater mitigation.

The committee agreed to modify their language around deed restrictions, opting for a more flexible approach that would map out protected areas rather than implement legal restrictions that could limit future uses.

The committee acknowledged the need for further legal review and town counsel input before proceeding with any recommendations.

Jennifer said that some of the uses mentioned here are for passive recreation such as a park whereas active recreation was included in the previous category ‘Public Access, Recreation, and Programming’.

The committee discussed potential uses for a town property, focusing on balancing preservation with practical municipal uses. They agreed to remove forestry-related recommendations and instead proposed identifying specific areas for long-term undisturbed natural resources, including stormwater management and ecological protection.

The committee decided to recommend that the Select Board work with the Agricultural Commission to assess any farming potential on the property, similar to how the Conservation Commission currently manages seven town-owned farm fields.

<u>Long-term Study, and Governance</u>

The group discussed the need for a comprehensive site assessment of the camp property, including septic systems, drainage, and water sources.

Debbie said that the town should identify what we have in terms of stormwater drainage. Kay said that we need to look at the design, capacity, and condition of all the septic systems.

Jennifer said that water management should be part of evaluating the existing pools and the suggested splash pads and hockey rinks. The committee agreed that a consultant should evaluate the entire site to determine feasible building envelopes, assess the condition of existing systems, and identify areas for potential expansion or improvement. The discussion highlighted concerns about the current septic system's capacity given the camp's growth from 600 to 700 campers, as well as environmental issues like mosquito breeding from poor drainage.

The group concluded that while a general park design study group wasn't needed, a targeted consultant study focused on expansion and system improvements would be more feasible for town approval.

The committee discussed combining a property study with the 5-year renewal recommendation, with Jennifer suggesting it should be included under the 5-year plan rather than as a separate item. They agreed the study should be prioritized as a baseline critical assessment of the property's flora, fauna, and safety, with Debbie suggesting it should remain visible as a separate line item rather than getting lost in other recommendations.

Jennifer said such a study will not only be useful for expansion (say, more kids at the camp) but also for the maintenance of what we have.

Debbie cautioned about the use of public-private partnership model in that it needs to take into multiple users of the property of which the camp is but one user, and whatever structure is built belongs to the town.

The group also discussed potential housing options on non-essential camp land, with Granger identifying two buckets of land to consider - an area near the entrance and a northern segment currently used for camp facilities storage. Jennifer emphasized that any development should be studied comprehensively rather than focusing solely on housing options, and the committee agreed that a study should determine suitability for any type of development before making specific recommendations.

<u>Housing Options</u>

The committee discussed the lots in the north – part of which is being used by the camp’s facilities, with the majority of the area unused. The committee said that the town should decide which part of the land is for camp use and which part is not for camp use.

Kay said that if it is determined that the north lots are not suitable for development, it includes the camp also, that is, the camp cannot develop in that area. The committee again agreed that it is necessary to set clear boundaries of the property for camp use.

The committee agreed to focus on housing options at 213 Haynes Rd.

There is a 1-acre parcel near Haynes Rd which is land-locked and could be of agricultural use.

Debbie said the suggestions for increased programming could need some manipulation of the property and it needs to be assessed if it is suitable or not for a particular program.

Elimination

The committee agreed to hold off discussing elimination options until they have had a chance to review the town counsel's opinions.

The committee agreed to meet on 9/3, 9/10, and 9/24, and considered 10/8 for a public input meeting.

The committee also agreed to a 6:30 PM start time for all future meetings.

Adjourn Meeting

Jennifer moved to adjourn the meeting. Kay seconded.

The motion passed by 6-0 vote:

Bell-aye; Dineen-aye; Gargeya-aye; Granger-aye; Henkels-aye; Pincus-aye

The meeting adjourned at 9:07 PM.

Documents considered during this meeting:

- Supporting documents including LLSAC Future Use Ideas