Liberty Ledge / Sewataro Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, June 24, 2026 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM
Fairbank Community Center, Multi-Purpose Room, 40 Fairbank Rd, Sudbury MA 01776 with HYBRID option

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

Other Panelists: James Goudie-Murray, Sudbury Management Analyst

Introduction

Chair Dave Henkels called the meeting to order via roll-call at 7:00 PM. Mr. Henkels welcomed participants attending in person and remotely and reviewed the Committee's meetings, property tour, and consultation with Town boards and departments. He emphasized the importance of public input in developing recommendations for the Select Board.

James Goudie, Management Analyst and Committee staff liaison, reviewed the Committee's charge to explore future uses of Liberty Ledge/Sewataro and submit recommendations by October 31, 2026. He explained that the session would inform further research, outreach, and a community-wide survey; no final decisions would be made that evening. He reviewed participation guidelines, access to online materials, and the property's existing buildings and recreational amenities using maps and an aerial video.

Jackie Holcomb requested clarification regarding the process's objectives. Mr. Goudie reiterated that participants' ideas would guide the Committee's exploration of future uses. Another participant recommended including images of the camp in operation to better represent its activity and benefits to children. Mr. Goudie acknowledged the comment.

Activity 1

Mr. Goudie introduced a small-group activity examining the property's strengths, challenges, opportunities, and concerns. He explained that the purpose was to share perspectives rather than reach consensus. In-person groups reported their discussions, and staff shared comments from remote participants.

Participants identified strengths including the camp's programming, employment opportunities, revenue generation, and operator-funded maintenance and insurance. They also highlighted existing recreational facilities, gathering spaces, natural resources, wildlife habitat, and proximity to the rail trail. Challenges included limited publicity, unclear information about public access and reservations, inadequate signage, and insufficient coordination with Parks and Recreation and other Town departments.

Suggested opportunities included expanded community events, swimming lessons, after-school care, teen gathering spaces, concerts, farmers markets, and other recreational programming. Participants emphasized preserving the camp's childcare and employment benefits, considering longer-term operating arrangements to support investment, and evaluating maintenance costs if operations changed. Other concerns included protecting trees and habitat, considering climate impacts, respecting the original purpose of the Town's purchase, and ensuring benefits beyond revenue generation. A participant also requested that online attendance counts be visible during hybrid meetings

Activity 2

Mr. Goudie asked participants to envision how Liberty Ledge/Sewataro could be used in 20 years and record one idea per sticky note. In-person groups shared their ideas, and staff reported suggestions from remote participants.

Many participants envisioned a thriving summer camp supported by a long-term agreement, continued preservation of open space, and expanded year-round community use. Suggestions included Parks and Recreation programming, after-school care, teen and senior activities, swimming lessons, school partnerships, and opportunities for camp and public programming to occur concurrently.

Participants proposed concerts, outdoor movies, farmers markets, festivals, community gardens, arts programming, and gathering spaces. Recreational ideas included skating, splash pads, playgrounds, horseback riding, expanded sports, ropes courses, and winter activities. Other suggestions included using existing residences for affordable housing, senior housing, a makerspace, and hosting corporate retreats or weddings.

Participants also identified improved accessibility, restrooms, signage, publicity, rail trail connections, parking, and vehicle circulation as potential improvements. Environmental priorities included protecting natural landscapes and wildlife, balancing expanded use with conservation, and exploring solar power and carbon neutrality. These ideas were offered for further consideration rather than as agreed recommendations.

Activity 3

Mr. Goudie introduced Activity 3, asking participants to group their proposed future uses into ten themes: recreation and camp; conservation and natural resources; education and learning; housing; community programming; arts, culture and heritage; accessibility and inclusion; facilities and infrastructure; economic development; and other ideas. In-person participants placed their sticky notes under the appropriate themes, while remote participants organized ideas on their worksheets. Committee members and staff then grouped similar suggestions.

Activity 4

For Activity 4, participants reviewed the collected ideas and identified their top four priorities using colored stickers. Remote participants recorded their rankings on their worksheets and were asked to submit completed worksheets and additional comments to the Committee by email.

Mr. Goudie thanked participants and reiterated that their input would inform the Committee’s research and recommendations. He encouraged continued participation, noted the upcoming July 2 and July 16 meetings, and referred attendees to the Committee’s website for updates before returning the meeting to the Chair.

Mr. Henkels adjourned the meeting at 9:00 PM.