

Parks and Recreation Commission meeting: October 19, 2021 @ 4:00 pm

This meeting is being recorded.

Call the meeting to order.

Motion to approve the minutes, Andrew Cromartie and Mike Cozort

Dick Webb reviewing phase 9 of campus wide master plan:

DW – Reviewed highlights of project. Schedule and cost of the work. Athletic focus. First part of effort was not athletic based at all. If the need arose for another school facility, where is the best location for that? That was the starting point. Focus on Middle and High school athletics. Relocation of varsity baseball field, 5 x tennis courts. This work has been approved, designed and bid. Not successful in finding a bid. Phase 9 is bundling what has been previously designed and engineered on Backus Lane to bundle with behind the high school. Phase 9 is only one part of the overall plan. A lot of pressure on the grass fields from overuse. There is only so much that a natural grass field can handle. Bring the grand stands up to code (accessibility and building codes). New 400m track. Inside track the field provides multi-sport usage. Primary use will be football and lacrosse (lax) but other sports can be accommodated on this field. Dramatically improving the quality of the lighting for the field. The track is a key component of this project. NPS is the last public high school with a cinder track. The current track is not close to anything regulatory. The light fixtures currently are an issue: dark spots. Trying to get a uniform lighting in place for the field. Spill and glare are current issues with the lighting in place. Grandstand seating, working to improve the elevation and accentuate the grading to provide the increased capacity: currently 600 seats, new will have 980 approx. More accessibility for new grandstand ie handicap seating. Press box will be more accessible.

Second field: Closer to Sparks Avenue, another synthetic turf field. Primarily designed to support lax and field hockey play. No lighting planned for this field. Conduit will be provided for future lighting if needed/wanted.

Synthetic Turf: No SBR rubber included. PFAS issues, the soil is being tested currently. Really high-quality turf, 10-year warranty. Synthetic turf does not mean NO maintenance. There is still maintenance required but they are certainly lower maintenance. There are requirements to use the proper equipment and training. All of this is included in the project scope. The contractor will provide training on the maintenance of the turf.

Parking/Circulation Improvements: Net gain of 62 additional spaces.

Backus Lane Baseball & Tennis Improvements

Benefits of athletic improvements: The need to increase the playing capacity of the fields in a safe and responsible matter; lengthens playing season; functioning 400 m track to support a track program. Social and educational benefits.

Project Costs: \$16.4m

Plan to bid the project in Jan/Feb 2022 so that at Annual Town Meeting it is a formal bid number. Hopefully project will start immediately in July 2022 and finish in Spring of 2023.

Libby Gibson: Will there be community access and use for these new facilities? Community will be wondering.

Tom Desmond: Net pick up of 1 field?

RW: Relocating baseball but not adding. We are achieving an additional 'spring' field in the Sparks Avenue area, not necessarily a brand new field.

TD: Showing Student/youth usage chart. Charting projected hours and allocate them across the different fields and facilities. How many kids do we have to service? What are they interested in? What are the parents hoping for us to provide for their children to get in exercise? This new project will take the pressure off the field and the synthetic fields will provide a more practical solution. Facilities should really be limited to Nantucket residents.

RW: Spent a lot of time with the Athletic Department in understanding the program needs for all athletic programs and the PE needs for elementary age students. The master plan responds to the anticipated program needs.

TD: Maybe there are fields out in Tom Nevers that aren't necessarily up to regulation size. Just to practice and hold clinics and other lessons.

RW: Designing fields to maximize practice capacity. You don't need the whole soccer field to achieve a soccer practice. More dimensional flexibility when looking at it from a practice perspective. Focusing on not only practice but also the games.

TD: These projects need to be put together. The usage needs to be shared. Obviously going to need a lot more discussion and input.

Diane O'Neil: Question about sharing: The Nantucket Public Schools (NPS) has never been allowed to use the Nobadeer fields. How would we share? When we're already overused. We are moving kids around to find field space to play games. That's why we need turf because we need that extra playing time.

TD: When I mention sharing I'm thinking about only the NPS children. Not seasonal people or general public. We want to be able to provide the Nobadeer fields for NPS use and that's why we were adding another turf field.

Mike Cozort: This new field system will be a huge benefit for the entire community. Any additional time and use of fields is garnered by the turf and lighting improvements. Might be an opportunity in savings in equipment.

TD: Maybe there are practice fields out in Tom Nevers for the younger children.

MC: I don't agree in putting both projects together; I'm afraid that if we combined both projects will go down. It's a better strategy to stagger these projects so that we are adding debt when we have retired debt on other projects around town.

RW: The committee is very sensitive of the costs of the project and how it impacts the town; the town has other needs as well; which is why the committee elected to focus on the fields; focus on the projects that will most directly benefit the students. Bid this project as soon as possible because these prices are not going down. Bid with a sense of urgency to keep the numbers as low as possible.

TD: Where are the seating areas for the baseball and tennis courts?

RW: Yes, there are seating areas but not as robust as at football.

TD: Are there restroom areas?

RW: No permanent restroom facilities proposed. Port o Potty solution. The committee has looked at different options; not inconceivable to have a structure for this. But these are components that are being looked at for farther down the road.

Gene Bolinger: Observations: You are doing the exact right thing having an understanding of both Parks and Recreation and Community School perspectives. Identify if there are any opportunities for facility to be used (a window of time).

TD: Maybe we make a nice nature walk between Nobadeer and Delta fields

RW: Just to show the committee so that the dialogue happened. The hope would be that perhaps there are windows of time to use the fields differently. You have a very high public school participation rate for athletes. This is putting so much pressure on the fields. This really is to just show you our plan and schedule.

LG: No vote needed. We would like to get a matrix of use from the school as well as a matrix of use from the parks master plan. To see where there are deficits or overlaps.

Tom Nevers Park Resilience Planning:

LG: FEMA sea level rise predictions came out and there was a thought that we should revisit what was planned for that area.

Vince Murphy - Coastal Resilience Coordinator: Erosion Hazard Map came out but was not able to be incorporated to Parks Master Plan. There is an issue with some proposed plans due to the erosion zones and impact. There is an idea to develop a dune system so to not disrupt the existing plan too much. Not sure of cost for the dune project yet. Questions?

TD: Real time erosion is happening in Tom Nevers and it is exposing so much metal debris like artillery shells.

LG: A lot of debris in the area you're speaking about, especially after a storm. The more debris you pull out the more collapse will occur. If we're going to have fields that would be the time to excavate. But now with the projected sea level rise, we need some advice for what to do.

VM: The coastal resilience Plan (CRP) is to help the Parks plan not to supplant the efforts that have already taken place.

LG: See how long the debris field goes. Not a good idea to move forward with the majority of phase 1.

TD: Condemn the area up close to cliff because it is a safety hazard. Propose a permanent fence 10 or 20' from the cliff.

LG: Maybe Weston & Sampson comes out to visit to take a look. Maybe the court gets moved. Something more passive goes in the erosion zone. But that's where Weston & Sampson will need to take a look to give it a little more thought.

Mary Longacre: Speaking on behalf of the Island Fair Committee. Hoping that there is still a home for the Island Fair in Tom Nevers field. It's short term usage but it does require some infrastructure.

TD: Working on Parks Partners list.

VM: Will need to work on a cost-benefit analysis to see which method - retreat vs protect - will work best.

TD: Would like to make a motion that Parks and Rec has reviewed Vince's analysis and to further the study. Andrew Cromartie approved motion.

ML: We need clear space for Island Fair, not athletic fields.

DPW Facility presentation by Weston and Sampson:

Jamie Fair: Showing future build out of what Department of Public Works (DPW) could look like. All aspects of DPW programed into this so it is a sizeable facility. This scenario assumes the full build out of this area. Airport Commission is not in favor of DPW going there. Issue of endangered species in this area. Species in this area that are protected; discuss mitigation plans how it would work to advance the design.

LG: Clarifying the comment that Airport is not in favor: this was a comment from an Airport commissioner that wants the town to understand that there is a rental cost required by the FAA.

JF: The central location is ideal. Better than current DPW location because of flooding issues there currently.

MC: Are the fields that are shown as soccer fields are combo use fields? Ie lacrosse, soccer etc.

GB: These are multi-use fields. They can accommodate soccer usage which is the largest surface area and then anything smaller than that.

LG: Does that Parks committee think that this is a good idea? To have the facilities right there next to the fields?

TD: It seems like it's the obvious place for it.

LG: There is public feedback about turf fields rolling in. Concerns with PFAS and chemicals. We need the school matrix to be fully informed on the configuration to move forward.

TD: Motion to adjourn.

Meeting ended at 6:01 pm.

Minutes submitted by Merrill McCluskey. Approved November 4, 2021