

## Town of Sudbury Park and Recreation Commission meeting

### ~~DRAFT~~ Minutes

1/13/14

**Present:** Commissioners-Todj Gozdeck, Paul Griffin, Bobby Beagan, Dick Williamson, Jim Marotta

**Guests:** see attached

**Meeting started:** 6:36 PM

Not voting minutes, moving into discussion, budgeted an hour (7:30pm)

Primary objective of meeting is to hear from residents and invited guests. Ultimately, the GALE study saw that Sudbury playing fields were over taxed. Tonight we are talking mainly about DAVIS FIELD. GALE will talk about what the fields could be used for. Tonight's meeting is for Sudbury residents.

Todj will moderate meeting.

### **Public Comment on Potential Field Configurations (Sudbury residents and invited guests)**

**Dick Williamson:** "Davis field is a unique space used by many different groups. Soccer, football, etc. Shared by many users. Speaking tonight on behalf of the model airplane group. This group uses field year round. Another large group is the dog walkers and they are also there year round. We also have groups that launch rockets at the field, ultimate Frisbee and other casual uses. GALE did not look into the casual users. Getting back to the model airplanes, this is not a team sport like many groups that use the fields. We've had a permit for over two decades to use this field and in getting the permit, we've always had the lowest priority.

There is a wide range of ages that fly planes. Davis is a unique space- no other place in Sudbury that is as wide open as Davis which makes it great for plane flying. After the November 12<sup>th</sup> meeting, someone brought in an airplane to show the size and the space that is needed to fly them. The handout outlines the space that the airplane users need/use, including some GPS images. NOTE: model airplane guys have taken a role in maintaining the field and monitoring its use. Encourage dog walkers to use bags, they clean up annually, maintain kiosk, etc. The group puts on a demonstration at the 4<sup>th</sup> of July as well for the town. All in all, unique space that accommodates a lot of users. Whatever is done should accommodate existing users."

**Rita Sanda 32 Victoria Road:** "I go out of my way to get to Davis. Many people of our age go to Davis. We are long time tax payers in Sudbury and we don't want another athletic field for organized sports. We need a place to meet friends, walk and to just enjoy."

**Bill Firth 41 Newbridge Road:** "I've lived in Sudbury for 41 years. We are fortunate that the transition of Davis field went from private ownership to town ownership and that the town decided to keep the field as an open space. It has been a treasure. I am a member of flying club and visit Davis for exercise. I enjoy seeing the freedom of uncluttered open space." Bill relates Davis field to fields that were near his home growing up. "Davis field is a gem because of its simplicity."

**Lisa Turkington 67 Dakin Road:** Question: was there a *study* done or did GALE do interviews?

**GALE:** GALE engaged in a study 6 years ago to do an athletic field's needs assessment and master plan. 2 years ago GALE was asked to return to revisit the plan and make sure that findings and conclusions were still valid. The process looked at existing fields, how they were built, current condition, how they were being used and maintained and the caring capacity for those fields. GALE looked at weather policies, maintenance policies and did a report on those existing policies and the current needs. The study visited fields and interviewed many users at that time- school staff, maintenance workers, coaches, leadership of youth sports, rec department and various other user groups within town. As a result, GALE was able

to identify every scheduled event within the community. The study also looked at the growth patterns and the demographics within the town including users that are being excluded right now due to numbers and lack of facilities. These are “unresourced demands”.

**Rob Brockman 20 Normandy Drive Sudbury:** “Do you have public capacity constraint numbers?”

**GALE:** “Yes, on the park and recreation website. We identified all of the field’s uses vs their carrying capacity and came up with a field short fall. We then came up with a plan for the next 10 years.”

**Elizabeth Engerman 52 Windmill Drive Sudbury:** “What about undeveloped land?”

**GALE:** “We looked at a lot of different elements within the town and created development schemes and permits that would be required for all parcels of land. There are things that you can do at Davis field that are legal and that would be able to receive permits.”

**Elizabeth Engerman 52 Windmill Drive Sudbury:** “What about traffic and parking? There are already issues on 117? What about the safety and installing bathrooms? What about the rail trail access? What would happen to the road and parking on a busy weekend?”

**GALE:** “We have not *designed* anything at Davis.”

**Paul Griffin, Commissioner:** “Yes, we are concerned about the rail trail and what that may do to the plans at Davis. We are concerned that parking requirements for the rail trail may impact the road and parking lot so we voted in favor of supporting the CPA request for the rail trail with the caveat that the parking for the rail trail would not affect parking at our facilities (current and new). We would not want that to be a rail trail parking lot.”

**Gill Emery 184 Ford Road Sudbury:** “My kids referee in town and I work the snack bar at Haskell. I’ve noticed that parking lot has not been as busy and I’ve has seen numbers that show the enrollment at LS is dropping. Who is monitoring field use and getting numbers?”

**Paul Griffin, Commissioner:** “Bob, can you speak to that?”

**Robert Lee 38 Candy Hill Road:** “I’ve been a resident for 17+years. I represent Sudbury Youth Soccer. I also play soccer so to Dicks point, we have participants of all ages as well, kids from K-age 70+. In 2013, we had over 3400 participants using fields and participating in soccer programs. The last four years we have had to meet regularly with multiple organizations to find adequate field space, especially come spring. The wear and tear on Haskell is showing. What once was a beautiful grass field now has dirt spots early in the season and lots of weeds. We use LS stadium, Cutting, Davis, Curtis and Haskell. We try to rotate field usage throughout season to prevent wear and tear but we use the fields all week and weekends, on multiple fields. It wasn’t surprising to us that the overuse of Haskell was occurring. The condition of the field’s is a concern to the player’s safety on the field. We try to work close with park and rec and other programs in town but we find that we are always fighting a battle to find space to use during the season. We want to see Park and Rec find ways to improve the facilities and the safety of the Davis field. From our point of view, we could make use of it. We have 1400 families participating in our program and I think providing the program for another 40 years would be a great thing.”

**Dustin Walker 19 Great Road:** “We are new to the Sudbury area and my wife is a soccer coach at LS so we totally understand the sport piece of things. We are sport fanatics. Part of the reason we chose Sudbury though was because of the balance of the unique spaces that are available to residents here, Davis being one. I have two concerns;

- 1) My concern is that if we open the field up for use, we would run into problems like the ones seen on Haskell.
- 2) GALE confirmed my concern- They looked at fields from a sports usage perspective, not an analytical perspective. Quantitative numbers are needed."

**GALE:** "We have done dozens of town wide recreation assessments and masters plans. You do it through sessions like this, town wide surveys, talking to broader group of people, the town planner, council on aging, gardening clubs...a different group of people. From there, you have to prioritize the need and again it is not just formal athletic needs."

**Ellie Engerman 52 Windmill Drive:** "If Haskell field is being overused by sports and then if we turn Davis into a baseball field it will be overused like Haskell. Now it is nice, we have enough sports. It is one of the only places in town that has not been converted. Why can't you just leave this one as a multiuse recreation field for everyone else that does not play sports?"

**Rich Landrigan 22 Deacon Lane Sudbury:** "I agree with Ellie. Not all spaces have to be developed to be useful and beautiful."

**Chris Borden 292 Mossman road:** "I live 1.4 miles to Davis field and I am a dog owner. I am here to talk about ultimate Frisbee. I've played for 15 years, played at Davis for the last 10 years. I appreciate that the field is available for that use. Throughout the year, it is used by a lot of different users. UF is a growing sport, and we too could use the space more. We are willing to pay to use the field. Davis for UF works. It is not perfect but it works OK. If you were to level the field out and make a few more fields, we would be a prolific user of that space as UF players. We would play every night of the week (April-August now)."

**Linda Filker 15 Chanticleer Road:** "I'm a dog walker, I go to Davis 5 days a week. Davis is large enough for large dogs like my dog Winston. I am happy to pay taxes because of the open spaces. Davis is a friendly community gathering space. Why don't you spend the money to improve the current facilities, get more uniforms, invest in drainage, etc. The Sudbury student population is decreasing- everyone can use Davis, not everyone can use a baseball field."

**Todj Gozdeck, Commissioner:** "In the hopes of summarizing, is it consistent that there is an interest in leveling the field? We would like to get comments on that, if someone would be against leveling the field."

**Louis Arnold 11 Hadley Road Sudbury:** "I live 1 mile from Davis field. It is great to see a field that everyone in the community can use. I am a member of the radio flyers group. I can fly over the lower areas where people do not play soccer. We have a unique property here."

**Nadine Rutledge Concord Road Sudbury:** "Sudbury lacks a village green. I hear the sincere love of the field and that has become the village green."

**Todj Gozdeck, Commissioner:** "Are people against leveling the field?"

**Elizabeth Engerman 52 Windmill Drive:** "Yes, It will effect surrounding wetland and wildlife. Can you explain what the leveling entails?"

**Todj Gozdeck, Commissioner:** “We have not created any plans so we do not have the information about what it entails. We are still having the discussion.”

**GALE:** “It can be many different things.”

**Paul Griffin, Commissioner:** “The idea with Davis is to improve and make safer what we already use for recreation. We already use Feely and Featherland and we have discussed improving the fields so they are less wet in the spring. A lot of thought has been put into it. Leveling is RAISING the lower portions of the field. It is improving what we already use for recreation. That would have no impact on dog walkers or anyone in this room. We are looking to improve how it is used for recreation.”

**Dustin Walker 19 Great Road Sudbury:** “My concerns are that leveling will be the first step for Davis and then once level, it will be made into other fields.”

**Mike Walsh 14 Sawmill Lane:** “I am here representing the baseball community and I was an invited guest. One thing that we have a challenge with is 5 subpar fields. Noyes 1 and 2, Crime lab, Loring, and Nixon. We put a ton of money into these fields but the kids use the fields for recess and they are substandard. We have been talking for years about a need for a baseball need.”

**GALE:** “Right now, the fields themselves are overwhelmed in terms of the number of events they are required to sustain and the use they get over the year. The level of use in the town, regardless of maintenance, the amount of use is unsustainable. The only recourse that you have at this point is creating additional capacity. You must expand on parcels that exist to accommodate your number of users. Fixing current fields will not help- you have to increase fields or decrease use. There is a capacity issue within this town. You must either:

- 1) Limit demands by cutting teams and participants
- 2) Create more capacity in terms of additional fields. Making current fields better is a waste of money because the numbers that you have in this town are too high for the sustainable usage on your current fields. We did look at turf and partially developed parcels of land in other areas of town, land other than Davis. If Davis is not part of the solution there are other alternatives that we will have to look at in terms of capacity. The population is tangent as we looked at it. For instance, the diversity of sports in this town and gender equity creates this increase. Women’s lacrosse is the fastest growing sport for instance and you do not have enough field space to accommodate that growth.”

**Bob Haarde 37 Belcher Drive:** “I am a Selectman and I appreciate everyone showing up. The goal here is to find solutions for all user groups, I think we can and hope we can. It has been documented that we need sports fields. In regards to the demographics it is projected to plateau and go down but then they are projected to increase. I hope to work together to develop the best facilities. In terms of other options, Davis was not your first or second choice for a space to use for new fields. Can you speak about the Malone Gravel Pit?”

**GALE:** “The Malone gravel Pit was the first recommendation. Malone has good traffic characteristics, good soils, sands and gravels for draining. Some environmental constraints but parcel was large enough to avoid jurisdiction restrictions. Well considered parcels.”

**Bobby Beagan, Commissioner:** “The study done on the gravel pit looks at its uses for housing and recreation. The latest plan for Malone is for low income housing. A large fraction of Malone is in concord, owned by Sudbury, another section is water department land.”

**Bob Haarde:** “There is a CPA article going to town this May to fund a study for housing in the Malone gravel pit which is why the first option of GALE research was not pursued.”

**Rob Brockman 20 Normandy Drive Sudbury:** “Again, with issues with Feely and Haskell regarding capacity- have there been documented days that you cannot use the fields because of water?”

**Mike Walsh 14 Sawmill Lane:** “Yes, Feely especially. The field typically is not available until sometime in May.”

**Robert Lee 38 Candy Hill Road:** “We (SYS) were unable to play for the first two months of the season because we were waiting for the grass to grow. We moved games and did as much as we could to move games to fields that were ready. Working with superintendent and looking at numbers, there has been a 0-3% decline in SPS. Numbers have been similar for soccer.”

### **NEW COMMENTS, -NON RESIDENTS**

**Bruce Schnieder, Sudbury Dentist:** “I want to talk about the demographics- 1) you are discounting a demographic of seniors that do not participate in sports. 2) You don’t want dogs on athletic fields. If Davis goes to athletic fields where do the dogs go?”

**Todj Gozdeck, Commissioner:** “Thank you all for coming, great to hear the input and great for GALE to hear the input. Stay involved. We will continue to post minutes and agendas online. NEXT STEPS: to see potential possibilities for the field, which will complete the study. That is where we are right now.”

### **AFTER PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Discussion about usage of Davis by the radio flyers group. Paul Griffin asked group ~~asked~~ to pinpoint some ideal days/times that they would fly understanding that “as much as possible” was not specific enough. It would help if radio flyers could come up with some solutions and some ways to meet in the middle. To ask for the field every day is unreasonable. Need a reasonable proposal and define what they really need vs what would be great. It would help the discussion to think about what would ~~workWORK~~, what wouldn’t be *perfect*, but what would work. ~~Radio flyersF~~ should think about what seasons, days, etc. would be most important and present that proposal.

Discussion about group that ~~wemay have been under represented-need to be most worried about~~ is the casual users.

### **ACTION ITEMS:**

Moving forward, it would be helpful for GALE to reflect a broader range of recreation users. The focus in these meetings has been 90% organized sports. GALE should give ~~us~~ the Commission some input numbers wise, for non-organized recreation usage. Ask GALE to quantify the non-organized users (walkers, dog walkers, etc.). Would have some numbers to show the difference in the user group and the demand. See what ~~he~~ GALE can give us for this uncaptured piece.

Also want GALE to show costs regarding:

- 1) Leveling the existing area
- 2) Expanding in the southeast corner
- 3) Adding fill closer to parking lot on sloped area

Hay fields to the east are sometimes where the dogs are pushed if the radio flyers are flying. That is private land. A structure in the southeast corner could work, a baseball diamond with fencing could also

[work](#). IF the fencing went out 300 feet it would be an issue, but if it were [way](#) over on the southeast side and the fencing was removable, it could work. Wayland has a space that can be used for flying but [that](#) it cannot be used until the fall, it is used to grow hay. There is very little parking too. There is another field in Medfield along the Charles River. It is a pretty isolated spot and it is used exclusively for gas powered planes. There are pilot stations at Medfield with safety protocol that users must follow.

**OLD ITEMS:**

Jim Marotta met with the interim AD at the high school relative to the lights at the turf. Been going back and forth. Trying to set up a meeting

**Next Meeting:** second Monday of the month, February 10<sup>th</sup>

**Motion to adjourn:**

Jim Marotta motions.

Paul Griffin seconds.

**Adjourn 8:23pm**