

TOWN FIELDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
January 29, 2014  
MEETING MINUTES  
Veterans Memorial Building, Room 104  
Millis, MA 02054

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm. The following persons were present: Jim McKay, Andrea Wagner, Rich Nichols, Sean Doherty, Steve MacInnes, Jenn Cederberg, Charles Aspinwall. CDM Smith's representatives were: Chuck Adelsberger, Ian Mead, and Eilish Corey. Andrea Wagner agreed to Chair the beginning of the meeting.

**NOMINATIONS:** Nomination by Jim McKay, seconded by Sean Doherty for Andrea Wagner to be Chair. Nomination by Jim McKay, seconded by Andrea Wagner that Sean Doherty to be Vice Chair. Both nominations passed unanimously.

**TOWN FIELDS COMMITTEE CHARGE:** Ms. Wagner reviewed the charge of the prior Town Fields Committee. She noted that some of the prior charges will revert to CDM Smith and some will be assumed by the Committee.

**CDM SMITH:** Chuck from CDM Smith addressed the committee and stated that he and the other representatives present are open to suggestions and comments as we go along. Ian Meade from CDM Smith outlined the roles of the staff members from CDM Smith noting that Alicia and Chuck are overseeing project management. Chuck stated that the RFP was excellent and really was helpful in detailing the scope of the project. He encouraged committee members to contact CDM staff at any time in the event questions arise. Chuck went on to review the status report which was handed out in a packet with the agenda and contract between CDM Smith and the Town.

Chuck stated that it is clear that community engagement is very important in order for this project to move forward in a positive direction. He asked the committee to review the stakeholder meeting questions as well as the Community Survey questions. Rich asked if there is a way to send the community survey questions out via a list serve. Mr. Aspinwall stated that this is possible. Ian asked Chuck to review the major points of the scope of the project.

**REVIEW EXISTING INFORMATION:** Chuck stated that there was a wealth of information that was provided during the RFP stage and that more information will need to be collected. He noted that CDM Smith will be analyzing the condition of the existing fields and that Kim will be working closely on that. He informed the Committee that he has spoken with Steve Cassidy on behalf of Millis Youth Baseball and soccer about the population being served and trends in the number of participants of these two programs. He recognized that the Town has a lot of open space and presented a blown-up map of the areas which are going to be studied. Ian stated that they will be looking at a needs assessment including what kind of fields we have, what is available to be developed and what is needed in the Town. Chuck echoed this by speaking about identifying priority projects and whether or not there is a need to expand the number of fields currently available: "if you build it, they will come". He noted that funding and operational issues will be studied to see if what the Town has for funds to support further development. He stated that we will need to look at whether or not there is funding to maintain the current or expanded field space.

Chuck stated that ultimately the goal is to sell the plan to the Town at Town Meeting which is why community engagement is so important. He stated that moving forward the public will have to be

involved. He informed the committee that a draft report will be brought to the Board of Selectmen in preparation of moving forward to Town Meeting if necessary. Mr. Aspinwall asked through what mechanism will community input be gained aside from using the survey. Chuck stated that we are still in a fact finding mission and want to meet with Oak Grove and the Schools and include field maintenance staff and athletic staff. After that additional information gathering, public meetings will be held where we can gain input from the Town similar to a Town Meeting.

Rich stated it will be important to involve everyone concerned as the last time a committee was formed, it “blew up” on social media and that if parents feel like their input is taken into consideration, this will be crucial. Sean reviewed the previous committee’s work as well as the spin-off project proposal that went to Town Meeting. Chuck stated that the goal is to touch everyone in Town before Town Meeting. Ian stated that information will be pushed down and out through the committee. Chuck recapped his meeting with Steve Cassidy and noted that Steve brings with him a wealth of information but noted, at the same time, that he is only one person and that much more input needs to be solicited. Rich reminded CDM Smith that Flag Football is also a booming program in Town. It was noted that football and soccer overlap and utilize the same fields. Chuck stated that many user groups are so desperate for field time they utilize the fields when they really should be at rest (weather conditions, times of day, etc.) He stated that rules for the use of fields will need to be developed. Sean went on to review a brief synopsis of what is taking place on the Town fields. Artificial turf was brought up briefly for discussion. Sean stated that there are blueprint issues relating to expanding the High School fields, particularly expanding into parking areas. It was noted that parking spaces can be relocated instead of being removed. Rich discussed looking at the areas around the schools that do not need to be reserved for emergency purposes (e.g. up on the hill) and whether or not they are suitable to create additional parking spaces.

Andrea brought the group back to recapping who CDM Smith has already met with and clarified what the next step in the fact finding process would be. Chuck stated next would be meetings with the Schools and Oak Grove. Steve stated that the Commission is meeting tomorrow night and that their specific topic is going to focus on fields and field usage. Chuck stated that he may be able to attend the Oak Grove meeting tomorrow night to hear what they have to say about the fields. Steve stated it would be helpful to have a direct link to the commission to answer their questions and inform them about the process being undertaken. Sean asked for clarification on what type of format CDM would like to meet with the schools. Andrea suggested including Dave Byrne, Dave Baker and Chuck Grant in any meetings with the schools.

Andrea asked for clarification on what is being requested of the committee in terms of reviewing the survey and what timeframe is appropriate for this task. Chuck stated that early next week, they would like to have the committee’s feedback and that CDM would set up the survey “monkey” and have responses sent directly to CDM. Steve asked whether or not the survey would be anonymous. Chuck stated that this could be optional but the survey would offer a way for individuals who want to be contacted to provide this information as well as how individuals could contact CDM Smith. It was clarified that early next week, comments on the survey should be sent to CDM Smith. Committee members will also fill out the stakeholder questionnaire and send in their responses to CDM. Chuck went on to review the draft outline Alicia prepared which was included in the handout. He noted that this outline will expand over time. Jim asked for clarification on who will be filling out the field evaluation forms. Chuck stated that CDM will take on this task but would appreciate the input of the field caretakers. He said that part of the evaluation will include what the priorities are for each field: what needs to happen up front? Rich asked about setting a timeline and prioritizing the projects. It was

discussed that it will be important for the public to understand that the projects will be staged and things might get worse before they get better. Ian stated that the plan will largely depend on what the Town is willing to spend on recommendations. Chuck also stated that reviewing field scheduling is critical.

**REVIEW OF LEGAL ISSUES:** Mr. Aspinwall asked Att. Klein and Chuck for clarification on how the legal issues with each property will be identified and addressed as they are being considered for use. Att. Klein stated that she has been researching the properties and what might restrict their usage and has some preliminary findings including conservation restrictions, deed restrictions, funding sources, etc. She stated that there is no property that has been identified so far that ultimately could not be used as recreational space but there are some covered under Article 97 restriction and their use would have to be changed. It was pointed out that this process, through the court system, takes time to go through. Att. Klein stated she is researching what type of funds were used to purchase the properties, what Town Meeting votes stated the purpose was, etc. She told CDM Smith that ultimately her goal is to allow the Town to achieve what they would like to in terms of any use changes in order to bring new fields to the Town if that is the conclusion of the study.

Att. Klein went on to review her findings for each parcel of property and whether or not they are subject to Article 97. Andrea asked about clarification of the designation of the Town Park as a park which would therefore restrict the size of any structures you could place on it. She noted that this would also apply to the Pleasant Street property.

Chuck reminded the group that the plan is to have a report to the BOS by mid-April so that we will be ready to go for the May Town Meeting.

Steve asked about the impact of wetlands on the ability to build fields. Chuck stated that CDM will be meeting with the Conservation Commission and that they have GIS mapping available so that wetlands will be easily identified. The replication of wetlands was discussed and what drives this process. CDM clarified that they will be using all information collected and provided to identify where buffer zones are vs. flood zones vs. river front property and what would need to be done in terms of replication. This process involves filing with the Conservation Commission and investigating potential mitigation. Steve stated that these wetlands issues can be very time consuming to resolve and questioned at what point the process with the Conservation Commission should begin. CDM clarified that this process would be at the end as the clock starts to tick once Conservation stamps its approval.

Steve recalled some work that was done to investigate sod vs. seed planting at Oak Grove Farm. He told the committee that bringing in contractors to do the work gets very expensive and the Town does not have enough resources. Sean pointed out that the Oak Grove Farm Commission has over \$60,000 available for fields. Steve clarified that these funds can only be used for maintenance: not for building. Andrea asked how CDM would like to receive feedback on the surveys. Chuck asked for the comments to be directly emailed to him and that he would address all of them.

**FUTURE WORK:** Andrea asked for suggestions on how often the committee should meet given the tight timeframe. It was noted that the prior committee met monthly in the beginning and then weekly toward the end. Chuck said that he is available to come to meetings as the committee needs.

Andrea asked who would coordinate the next step in the process of getting the survey on the website. Charlie stated that in sharing information, we need to keep the Open Meeting Laws in mind. It was decided that the BOS/TA's office would coordinate the next step.

The consensus of the group is that the content of the survey was acceptable but committee members would review it and provide comments by Monday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Chuck noted he could meet with the committee next week as he would be in Town meeting with the Schools and Oak Grove. He asked for clarification on who would be appropriate people to include in this meeting.

The committee decided to meet again on Thursday, February 13<sup>th</sup>. Chuck stated he would have more information to present to the committee at that time. Steve asked permission to share information being generated at the meetings with all members of the Oak Grove Farm Commission. Andrea stated that Steve can forward the information if he chooses.

**ADJOURNMENT: 9:00 pm** Motion to adjourn by Sean, seconded by Steve. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted: