

Open Session Comment for RC Meeting -12/13/11

I request that the Recreation Commission reconsider and reverse its decision to build multi-purpose athletic fields on the Middle School site. The situation has changed substantially during the past year and the conditions you outlined nearly a year ago no longer apply.

Two facts prompt my request. First, at our initial neighborhood meeting you described your proposal for two fields with an estimated cost of \$500,000 including engineering work. Several of you said this was a conservative estimate and that if the cost exceeded that amount you would look for another site. In fact, you indicated that a single field on a good site would only cost about \$125,000. On November 30th we learned the cost of two fields would exceed \$1 million and a single field is estimated to cost \$1/2 million. That is thought to be twice as much as is typical. So the current estimate is four times what the cost would be on a better site. If you continue to pursue efforts to build even one field how can we believe your word?

Second, within the last six months the Recreation Commission has on several occasions said they thought their decisions regarding the fields at the Middle School were separate and independent of any consideration of the use of those fields as a septic leaching field. I have disagreed saying the two are linked. While the Commission may make its own decision regarding the use or non-use of the Middle School site, it can not and should not proceed with any construction until the leaching field use issue is resolved. Any attempt to do so would be a waste of time and money.

At this juncture no one knows what the ultimate decision will be. The Tighe Bond engineer has said the site is suitable for a leaching field. However, I'm confident it will take at least several years for the final decision to be reached considering what remains to be done. We have to wait until:

- After TB estimates the size and cost of any field.
- After TB prepares systems options for DAAC to consider.
- After DAAC has to decide which option(s) they like and how to present them.
- After the area residents and the BOS have to decide whether or not and how to pay for the project.
- After Town Meeting will have to approve the project because it involves a change in land use which can require a 2/3 vote. In addition, the town may be asked to fund a more detailed feasibility and design project.
- After Various public agencies will have to review and approve the project and its design.
- After all that the project can get go-ahead approval and funding.

It is very likely that this process won't be completed until 2014 or later. Only after all the "afters" will the Recreation Commission be free to move safely with its final designs and construction. The fields probably wouldn't be ready for use until 2018 or later, long after Wayland's population has matured and the fields won't be needed at all.

In light of the multi-year construction and the several year growing period you say is needed before the fields would be ready for use, it seems prudent to set aside the Middle School effort and devote your energies to other sites that can be developed more rapidly. As a result, I am asking the Commission to table any further action regarding the Middle School site.

I hope you will give this suggestion careful consideration.

Bill Hearne
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