

West Boylston Parks Facilities Committee (PFC) Meeting Minutes – November 13, 2014

PFC attendees: Patrick Crowley, Gary Flynn, John Hadley, Patrick Inderwish, James O'Day, John Owanisian, Christopher Rucho, Timothy Shea

BETA Engineering attendees: Randall Collins, Steven D'Ambrosia

Attendees representing Goodale Park users: Steven Blake (Parks Commission), Jim Pedone (WB Little League), Mike Bartkus (WB Schools AD), Keith Brown (Youth Soccer), Deb Mattison (Open Space), Jen Breen (Recreation Dept.), Mark Baldi (WB Arts Foundation), Sarah Latorre (Youth Softball), Lionel Bella (Youth Soccer), Vin Vignally (Open Space)

Banner Reporter: Michael Kane

- PFC Chairman Inderwish opened the meeting at 6:34PM.

Motion: A motion by Mr. Rucho and seconded by Mr. Flynn to approve PFC minutes of October 28, 2014 was approved (Messrs. Hadley and Inderwish abstained).

- Mr. Inderwish welcomed the attendees and provided an overview of the Goodale Park master planning process, indicating the master plan will yield cost estimates and alternatives for the park's future layout.
- Several Goodale Park users provided written responses to the questions (from PFC) below in advance of the meeting:
 1. What town-wide parks facilities does your program or group currently use in the town of West Boylston?
 2. Do these parks facilities currently meet your needs? If not, what are the top things you would like to see changed?
 3. What specific improvements to Goodale Park ONLY would you envision that would better meet the needs of your program?

Motion: A motion by Mr. Rucho and seconded by Mr. Crowley to add the written responses to the November 13, 2014 meeting minutes was approved.

- State Representative and PFC member Mr. O'Day described the environmental bond bill that includes \$5M in funding for Goodale Park improvements:
 - Representative O'Day credited Senator Harriette Chandler for her support of the bond bill.
 - The bond bill includes many projects and was described as a competitive process – bond bills can have a “shelf life” of five years.
 - Decisions concerning allocation of funds to various projects may occur in the January/February 2015 timeframe – new governor/administration adds some uncertainty to the process.
 - Mr. O'Day strongly recommended a letter writing campaign expressing support for Goodale Park improvements.
 - A large number of letters from WB residents and boards was suggested for early December.
 - The letter writing campaign should target key decision makers – please refer to separate attachment from Rep. O'Day's office identifying contact names and addresses.
 - Phone calls and text messages to decision makers also mentioned as an effective method to voice support for allocation of funds to the Goodale Park project.

- Mr. Rucho added the PFC will move ahead with master planning process regardless of outcome of bond bill funding.

Action item: Mr. Owanisian will provide Goodale Park users with list of decision maker contacts and sample letter.

- Mr. Collins then provided an explanation of the master planning process and described some of the challenges associated with the Goodale Park site:
 - An aerial view of Goodale Park was presented.
 - The slope of terrain was described as a major challenge.
 - ADA compliance issues and the undersized track were mentioned.
 - Mr. Collins provided a graphic view of the park's size constraints by modeling a football field at various locations in the park.
 - It will likely be difficult to accommodate all users desired features within the park's footprint.
 - The goal of activity is to present a Goodale Park Master Plan at the Spring 2015 Town Meeting.
- Mr. Collins then kicked off and facilitated a discussion to gain input from the Goodale Park users in attendance – inputs listed below:
 - Mr Brown (Soccer): Limited space for soccer practice and games.
 - Mr. Blake (Parks commission): Soccer has the greatest need, irrigation is a concern and wells are recommended to reduce costs, more practice fields are needed.
 - Mr. Bartkus (WB School's AD): Baseball field is over-used with soccer and football practice occurring on baseball field, more practice space needed, more parking space needed, need for rest rooms and improved lighting.
 - Ms. Latorre (Soccer): More practice fields are needed.
 - Ms. Breen (Recreation Dept.): Asked if we have control over use of facilities...Mr. Inderwish replied this is generally managed by the Parks Commission. Mr. Crowley replied that use of a pool would likely be regulated through fees for pool passes. Water facilities (Splash Park and/or Pool) are desirable and an indoor facility would be optimal for year round use, more parking is needed, limited field space with schools having preference, need for rest rooms and storage facility. Summer recreation programs drew a few hundred kids.
 - Mr. Pedone (Little League): Currently use both Mixter and Goodale facilities. No room for fall baseball. Need a 3rd baseball field, concession stand, bullpens, batting cages, room for spectator seating. Listed number of teams: 4-5 T-Ball, 6 coach pitch, 7 AAA, 5 majors teams.
 - Mr. Vignally (Open Space): Sidewalks and Pools ranked highly in recent open space survey. Recommended inclusion of walking trails for passive recreation, trails to interconnect various fields, incorporating trees into design. Need for seating, parking and improved accessibility and lighting. Summer House should be incorporated into design. Suggested inviting abutters to future meeting.
 - Mark Baldi (WB Arts Foundation): Improvements to the stage are needed: roof, back wall, and electricity. Need improved parking and access to stage area.
 - Mr. Inderwish (Football): Field needs improved drainage and installation of a crown. Improvements needed to access and parking. Advocated for synthetic field and consideration of re-orienting field. Should consider building a structure for use as a multi-purpose building. Retaining walls could be possibly used to accommodate spectator seating. The track could be developed for use both as a facility for schools as well as for passive recreation.
 - Mr. Shea (WB DPW): Suggested synthetic turf for baseball field which could then be better utilized as practice area. Continue to use natural turf for football field. Mentioned Dek Hockey as potential use.
- Discussion of next steps:

- Mr. Collins explained user info from this meeting will be assembled by BETA.
 - Next PFC meeting on December 2 is intended to gain additional public input.
 - PFC will then meet on December 16 to potentially look at alternatives for Goodale Park.
- There being no further business to discuss a motion to adjourn was approved at 8:41PM.

Important note: The comments that follow represent written user responses received prior to the start of November 13, 2014 PFC meeting...

Jen Breen...West Boylston Recreation Dept.

Thanks for the opportunity to allow me to voice my wishes for the Recreation Department with regard to the parks facilities in town.

As you know, the Recreation Department has seen good growth over the last several years. However, it has not grown as much as it could have, due to limitations on space and availability of facilities.

The Recreation Department has run soccer camps both at the MHS fields and at Woodland St. We have run a field hockey/lacrosse program at the high school field and we use space all over Goodale Park for the half day programs and the full day summer program. These programs consist of taking the kids to play organized games on the baseball fields, setting up water games/activities for the hot summer days and also making use of the tennis and basketball courts.

I believe that some type of water feature would be a huge draw for families in the town. Many surrounding towns have splash pad/water play areas, which are less expensive than a pool and hold a lower liability. Some type of water feature that would be able to be used by the Recreation Department in the summer would be a fantastic addition not only to our program, but to the town as a whole.

I also believe that more organized field space is a must for Goodale Park. We are constantly finding that it is very difficult to organize and run programs due to the fact that the schools, and organizations like Little League and WBYSA are constantly given first right of refusal to the fields after the schools (which I completely understand and respect). That being said, it is incredibly difficult to try to grow and run programs that may allow for children who do not currently participate in organized town sports to find something that may like to do. I also have difficulty securing space for children ages 3-5 who have very limited activities offered to them in West Boylston.

I am hopeful that the space at Goodale Park will be developed with the entire town in mind. I believe that more field space, a water feature, possibly the revitalization of the volleyball court and more ample parking, could inject a renewed love of the town into our population, and allow for a place for neighbors to come together with their families, which will help build a stronger community.

I thank the committee for their hard work, and am grateful for the opportunity to offer my opinion on the development of the plan for the park.

Sincerely,

Jen Breen

S. Latorre...Girls Softball

1. What town-wide parks facilities does your program or group currently use in the town of West Boylston? Girls softball field
2. Do these parks facilities currently meet your needs? If not, what are the top things you would like to see changed? Additional field
3. What specific improvements to Goodale Park ONLY would you envision that would better meet the needs of your program? Additional field for the girls to have for both practices and games.

Mark Baldi...West Boylston Arts Foundation

Bob,

The West Boylston Arts Foundation's responses are below:

1. The WBAF uses the stage at Goodale Park for summer concerts, and the town Common for the Fall Festival.
2. The stage at Goodale Park needs a roof and back wall to shelter equipment and performers, a back stage storage/dressing room would improve the functionality of the stage, as would a light bar; additional electricity and restrooms at Goodale Park are also needed. Additional electrical outlets at the Town Common would be helpful.
3. See above.

Bob Dunne...West Boylston Youth Soccer

Please consider my input at our meetings for W. Boylston Youth Soccer to accurately represent the feelings of the board as I am Past president and still a member of the board. This matches with feedback I have gotten from them during numerous conversations on the subject. Basically, the league would most benefit from a single, 200 x 400 field footprint in the upper pine grove running parallel to Newton St with face-in parking between the field and the stone wall along Newton St for approx. 60 cars. This would likely remove almost all other field use needs for soccer other than Woodland St and the Goodale Park game (AKA: "Football") field, thus freeing up space for year-round baseball or other sports use of both Goodale A/B and Mixer fields.

I have cc'd Lionel Bella, current President of WBYSA on this email so he is in the loop. I'm sure he will add some comments as sees fit.

Lionel Bella...West Boylston Youth Soccer

Hi Randy,

Please see my responses below.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Regards,

Lionel
WBYSA, President

Youth Soccer

What town-wide parks facilities does your program or group currently use in the town of West Boylston?

The WBYS program uses multiple fields to support programs for 7 different player groups:

- a. **Girls Softball Field:** U6, U8
- b. **Mixter Field:** U10 Boys, U10 Girls
- c. **Woodland Fields:** U12 Girls, U12 Boys, U14 Boys

Do these parks facilities currently meet your needs? If not, what are the top things you would like to see changed?

The locations of these fields, single field playing areas located a fair distance from one another, do not allow for interaction with other teams during the practice season. The U6 & U8 programs have engaged in a multi-team practice session on a larger field space that has proven very effective in skills building. Having a single, unified multi-field site would allow for more interaction between teams for collaboration opportunities such as skills knowledge sharing, and inter-team scrimmages

What specific improvements to Goodale Park ONLY would you envision that would better meet the needs of your program?

The establishment of a large, multi-field playing area to support the U10, U12, and U14 programs, both practice sessions and games. If linked to the Goodale Park area, would recommend the establishment of some common facilities (i.e. restrooms, snacks, equipment storage) that could be leveraged by the surrounding field areas (i.e. softball, baseball, football) as well.

Jim Pedone...WB Little League

Hi Randy,

I am Jim Pedone, the President of West Boylston Little League.

Sorry for the late response, but here are my answers to the three questions you have asked:

1. What town-wide parks facilities does your program or group currently use in the town of West Boylston?

Currently WBLL uses both baseball fields at Goodale Park, the baseball field at Mixter, and Woodland Park.

2. Do these parks facilities currently meet your needs? If not, what are the top things you would like to see changed?

Currently, these facilities do not meet our needs. First, we could use another baseball field. Currently, during the season, all of the fields are used for games and there is not any room for teams not playing to be able to practice. In addition, the two fields that are at Goodale do not have enough room for a 200' fence at each field. In addition, I would like one of the fields to be

able to be use as a 50' x 70' field. This is 70' base paths and a 50' pitchers mount compared to 60' base paths and a 46' pitchers mound that is currently used.

3. What specific improvements to Goodale Park ONLY would you envision that would better meet the needs of your program?

Specifically I would like to see 3 baseball fields. One of them would be 50' x 70' with at 225' fence, and the other 2 could be 46' x 60' with a 200' fence.