

Ideas from Breakout Group on Recreation, CP Workshop, May 12, 2011

- 1) Create recreation opportunities that encourage physical activity, indoors and outdoors, for Bedford's citizens of all age demographics (multi-generational).
 - Offer less physically demanding recreation opportunities to seniors and less mobile citizens through adult education and clubs.
 - Encourage more collaboration between Recreation Department and Council on Aging to identify recreation opportunities for seniors.
- 2) Update "Open Space and Recreation Plan."
- 3) Update "Recreation Needs Study."
- 4) Develop long-range Recreation Capital Expenditure Plan. The plan needs to consider, but not be limited to, user fees, operating expenses, training costs to educate staff how to properly maintain facilities.
- 5) Develop long-range plan for Springs Brook Park. Selectmen, DPW and Rec Department to play key role in plan development. Public input is also critical.
- 6) There is a need to increase field inventory. Soccer and lacrosse (LAX) require the highest immediate priority; however, additional baseball and softball fields are also needed. There is a need to assess where viable developable land opportunities exist within town (Princeton Properties land was discussed).
 - How can Town's evaluation & permitting approval processes be expedited?
- 7) Improve long-range planning for fields use. Obtain input from all interested parties (Users, Public, Rec Department, DPW, and Facilities Department).
 - Incorporate findings of Ad Hoc Outdoor Area Recreation Area Study Committee.
 - Prioritize field use (town program vs. private/club program; adult teams vs. private/club teams) There was a preference expressed for adult teams/programs to be more highly prioritized over private/club teams.
 - Consider fee structure for use of fields.
 - Artificial turf fields were not discussed; however, it's there is a viable argument to be made for adding an artificial turf field to the Town's playing field inventory.
 - Explore expansion, J Field (JGMS) and/or B Field (BHS).
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- 8) Improve avenues for bicycles, trails and general walkability around town. Walkability around town was considered by the group to be as important as increasing playing fields inventory.
 - Promote more sidewalks.
 - Investigate use of easements to improve connectivity between conservation lands.

- Develop “User’s Guide to Bedford Trails” to educate the public about the manner in which trails may be used (are they suitable for bicycles, walking, strollers? Are they paved vs. unpaved? Is parking available? Etc.)
- 9) Considered ways to resolve differences among competing interests that desire developing land for recreation purposes (i.e., creating trails & open space vs. constructing playing fields)? Consideration should be given to incorporating parks into recreation land development projects, which could provide the hub for joining open space and playing fields within recreation developments.
 - 10) Identify indoor recreation opportunities (pool, track, field house, multi-use facilities).
 - User fees were discussed; fee structure (resident vs. non-resident), affordability.
 - Siting for such facilities was also discussed. Town center campus is most viable location for track/field house and pool; however, there is little room for expansion. A field would likely have to be sacrificed to construct a new facility.
 - Springs Brook Park could be considered for pool location if current repair measures are unsuccessful.
 - Relocating existing tenants from their spaces within town center campus facilities to other facilities in town should also be considered (may require constructing new facilities to house these tenants).
 - 11) Maintain town center campus setting. Institute traffic management measures – crosswalks, sidewalks.
 - 12) Improve methods for distributing information about recreation opportunities around town.
 - Public meetings, the Internet, local cable access TV and social media could be used to build connections and partnerships among the several local organizations and committees that focus on recreation resources.
 - 13) Foster/encourage recreation-oriented businesses to locate in Bedford. Propose incentives to draw them to Bedford.
 - 14) Seek out opportunities to tap into Middlesex Community College student labor resources through work study for assistance with field maintenance.
 - 15) Provide youth/teens a dedicated meeting/recreation space. Provide these older kids a where they can take advantage of passive recreation opportunities or just meet and socialize.
 - 16) Develop parks around town to provide recreation opportunities for multi-generational users.
 - 17) Reassess carry-in/carry-out policy. It isn’t working as well as had been expected. DPW should provide trash receptacles (solar compacting trash cans?) and recycling containers at public recreation facilities and empty trash containers on a regular basis.

- 18) Investigate opportunities to take advantage of facilities at Hanscom Air Force Base (i.e., use of pool and bowling alley).
- 19) Basketball courts, tennis courts and skate park inventory seems sufficient, but maintenance costs are required to keep facilities safe for public use. Facilities staff noted that tennis courts need repairs/upgrades
- 20) Discussed the interrelationship between the Recreation Department (runs programs), DPW (maintains outdoor fields) and Facilities Department (manages indoor facilities - gyms) and whether there are ways to improve this three-pronged management approach through the creation of a Parks Department. The opinion of the Recreation Department representative in attendance was that it would be difficult to say how to improve the current situation, considering each department has their own unique niche.
- 21) Pop Warner football program would like the opportunity to use fields in Bedford, but shortage of fields in Lexington is not driving this desire.
- 22) Facilities staff indicated that storage for equipment is inadequate, scattered around schools. Increase equipment storage at Town Center Building/Town Hall.