

**MINUTES
AVON RECREATION COMPLEX (ARC)
RECREATION & PARKS (RPC) SUBCOMMITTEE
AVON ROOM TOWN HALL BLDG. 1
APRIL 14, 2015**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 AM by Chairman Peter Ponziani in the Avon Room, Town Hall Building 1. Members present: Chairman Peter Ponziani, Todd Donovan and David Jadovich. Alternate member Donald Droppo was absent. Also in attendance were staff members Recreation & Park Director Ruth Checko, Public Works Director Bruce Williams, Director of Athletics & Student Activities Greg Ferry and Town Engineer Larry Baril. BSC Group Manager of Landscape Architecture and Project Manager Luke McCoy also attended.

II. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETING – March 31, 2015

VOTE: Mr. Donovan motioned, Mr. Jadovich seconded and all agreed to accept the March 31, 2015 minutes as presented.

III. PROJECT UPDATE

Mr. Ponziani asked Mr. McCoy for an update on the possible use of the high school site for the placement of turf field (s). Mr. McCoy gave a power point presentation beginning with the current high school site, showing the layout of the playing fields. He broke it out into three possible scenarios in order to meet the statement of needs: a) expansion of field in current location, b) multi-purpose artificial field within the existing track and c) multi-purpose artificial field located on the current field hockey field. Mr. McCoy noted that you could fit a 65 yard soccer field in the existing field but that it would only leave a 4 foot runoff before you'd hit the track which doesn't work for safety reasons for the athletes. He reminded that 65 would be the minimum width you'd need in order to fit the high school level game. He suggested you could move the inside lanes to the outside but the ends would have to move as well which would mean the whole thing would have to be reshaped.

The second scenario reshapes the field shifting it up towards the baseball field leaving the bleachers in place. It also would be a minor cost to add two more lanes to make it a total of 8. Mr. McCoy continued that this would require retaining walls and that an ADA compliant sidewalk be installed. He added that he didn't want to impact the parking as to remove any as it is very limited now. Egress would be needed to access all of the fields. This plan would entail quite a bit of site work and one corner would affect the setback. Mr. McCoy continued that the field could be rotated putting the bleachers and press box right behind the third base foul line of the baseball field.

Placing the turf field on the existing hockey field does not work because it is too small. Mr. McCoy suggested looking at the playing field but noted that the entire space would have to be artificially turfed to address the transition from natural grass to turf as not being good for the athletes. He continued that you could artificially surface the whole field but now the issue of

bleacher and press box location and lighting would have to be addressed, noting the limited space, proximity to neighbors and setback, and steepness of the site.

Mr. Donovan asked Mr. Williams how difficult it would be to get a variance in the one corner towards the front. Mr. Williams suggested he speak to Mr. Kushner in the zoning department to get a better answer. Mr. McCoy noted that drainage would have to be included in that type of discussion as well as the variance issue.

IV. ARCHITECT UPDATE

Mr. Ponziani summarized that the first scenario would leave everything in place while turfing the current football field but by doing so would not make it large enough to make it safe for the athletes. Mr. McCoy added that there would be increased wear on the track because all of the teams would be using it. Mr. Ponziani asked that Mr. McCoy look at the pros and cons of concepts B & C.

Mr. McCoy recapped that concept B would leave the bleachers in the same place and that it would make the track shorter and fatter, meeting the minimum size for the 65 yards required for soccer and add 2 lanes to make it 8. Mr. Donovan would like to keep the current structures where they are thus not encroaching on the playing fields. The negatives would be the work to the ADA sidewalks, retaining walls, encroaching closer to the playing fields but not as much, and drainage and utilities. Mr. McCoy continued that the good part would be the closer proximity to the street would make it easier for utilities and tying into storm drainage vs. other scenarios. Mr. Donovan noted that the stairs would have to be rebuilt. Mr. Ponziani mentioned the setback issue which Mr. McCoy said would be less than 20' and more away from the neighbors. Mr. Ferry asked if there'd be any room for storage. Mr. Williams asked if it could be closer to the road to which Mr. McCoy said would flip the bleachers to the other side and that he'd look at it more closely.

Mr. Ponziani asked Mr. McCoy to discuss concept C. He noted that moving it up brought the issues of the retaining walls and walkways but encroaches closer to the baseball field leading to foul balls hitting the press box and bleachers. Mr. Donovan asked how we could get 1000 seats for spectators using concept B. Mr. McCoy said that he'd have to look at that and said there could be an option of adding 250 seats in another location, having the current total at 750. Mr. Ferry noted that if you could get lights that you could get enough for the 1000 seats. Mr. Donovan asked about lights – either 4 or 6 posts. Mr. McCoy said it would be up to the committee to decide but that he suggested either a four or six 50' candle system. He continued that the track would be lit for community use. Ms. Checko asked if the lights would be used for throwing events to which Mr. McCoy said it could be designed that way.

V. COMMUNICATION FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Mr. Ponziani asked if there were any other comments from the committee members. Being none, he opened the discussion to the audience.

VI. COMMUNICATION FROM AUDIENCE

Joan Shumway – 34 Coventry Lane - asked if the eastern boundary of the playing field was fixed and if the baseball field could be tilted to give more space. Mr. Ponziani said no to which Mr.

McCoy concurred because tweaking it could affect everything else. Ms. Shumway asked if concept B could be done in phases. Mr. McCoy said the lighting conduit could be laid but not with the foundations because it could run into problems with the lighting suppliers discontinuing items, potentially forcing a rework of them. He continued that they would do the bases with the lighting or just put in conduit for future lighting choices.

Dan Neagle – 529 West Avon Road – concurred with Mr. McCoy for the need to not dig lighting bases ahead but lay conduit for the future and felt concept B was the best choice. He discussed the drainage issue as flowing to the 30” storm water pipe laying on the south side that he thinks is crushed. He remembers a study being done and cautioned that it or a piece of the RCP would have to be replaced because the fields are only as good as the drainage beneath them. Ms. Checko reminded that the committee had been aware of the drainage and noted that the Town Engineer was present at the meeting. Mr. Neagle noted that this was a feasibility study at this point.

Kathleen Davenport – 92 Somerset Drive – questioned if you kept the track at 6 lanes would the need for the retaining walls still be there. Mr. McCoy said yes because you’d still have to do all this work and for not too much more increase in price you could get the extra two lanes.

Susan Rietano – 11 Edwards Road – posed that the property adjacent to the school across the street be used and through a discussion with Mr. Robertson, Mr. Zacchio and Mr. Mala, reported that there wasn’t much room there for extra parking but that it could possibly be a great location for storage. She asked Mr. McCoy, given all the variables, which one would he choose. He said the most economical and feasible one he’d choose would be concept B because of it keeping the bleachers and the press box but that it would also allow to focus on the track and field which includes the problems of the drainage and utilities. He continued that secondly he’d choose B or C starting with all new bleachers and press box and field because it could allow for doing the work all at once.

Flo Stahl – 2 Sunset Trail – asked if the concept B plan, moving the field closer to West Avon Road, is the one that will be presented at the next meeting April 28th and will there be costs. Mr. Ponziani said the committee will decide which plan will be presented and ask Mr. McCoy to put numbers to it. Mr. Neagle reminded that the land still existed on Thompson Road and construction wise you could do minimal at the existing site. Mr. Ponziani reminded that ultimately the decision would be up to the Town Council and the town and that it was safe to say that we were not going to do both locations.

Ms. Reitano said that additionally improving fields at either location would create an atmosphere that allows the kids to stay, to watch each other’s games and the area where we really suffered was in the facilities and the sense of community and culture at the high school. Mr. Neagle didn’t think turf would solve that as we already had fields all over town. Ms. Reitano continued that it would allow kids to watch each other all on one campus. Mr. Donovan agreed that the field could be lined for lacrosse so that games could be played at this location in addition to Buckingham.

Mary Deppe – 35 Westland – asked what sports would be lined on the turf field. Mr. McCoy said it would be a full multi-sport field and with both boys and girls lacrosse. He reminded that it would fit soccer which is the largest of all of them.

Mr. Ponziani asked the committee members for a vote. Mr. Jadovich would move with concept B and cost in a turf field for the hockey field because of the difficulty of transitioning from grass to turf. Mr. Donovan agreed and added that it would give us an extra field to practice on. Ms. Checko would like alternates for lighting included. She asked Mr. McCoy if the bleachers were as ADA compliant going into construction. Mr. McCoy said they were fine if you don't touch them but they'd be looked at as well as everything else. Mr. Donovan asked to price in a press box and bleachers for 1000 and added that B would allow for the least down time. Ms. Checko asked if he could take a look at Mr. Williams' idea of moving closer to the street. Mr. Ponziani said that Mr. McCoy certainly could.

VOTE: Mr. Ponziani motioned to go with concept B to which Mr. Donovan and Mr. Jadovich agreed.

Mr. Ponziani noted to include putting turf on the field hockey field as well with costs for the next meeting April 28th, 6:30PM. Mr. McCoy said we'd decide at that meeting which Town Council meeting to present the project. Ms. Checko reminded that the Town Council would need a packet of the plan for the Thursday before their meeting, May 7th, which would probably push it to the June meeting unless we could agree sooner. Mr. McCoy would like the two weeks as it would give him enough time to prepare.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

VOTE: Mr. Jadovich motioned, Mr. Donovan seconded and all agreed to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 AM.

Peter Ponziani, *Chairman*

Susan Gatcomb, *Clerk*