

**MINUTES
AVON RECREATION COMPLEX (ARC)
RECREATION & PARKS (RPC) SUBCOMMITTEE
SELECTMEN'S CHAMBER TOWN HALL
MARCH 31, 2015**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 AM by Chairman Peter Ponziani in the Selectmen's Chamber, Town Hall Building 1. Members present: Chairman Peter Ponziani, Todd Donovan, David Jadovich and alternate member Donald Droppo. Also in attendance were staff members Recreation & Park Director Ruth Checko and Town Engineer Larry Baril as well as BSC Group Manager of Landscape Architecture and Project Manager Luke McCoy. Town Council member David Pena also attended.

Mr. Ponziani noted that the Town Council asked the sub-committee to take another look at the high school as a possible location for athletic field(s) in addition to investigative work already done at the Thompson Road location. He added that this design plan would follow the pattern of BSC Group's work done at that location as well.

II. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETING – October 21, 2014

VOTE: Mr. Donovan motioned, Mr. Jadovich seconded and all agreed to accept the October 21, 2014 minutes as presented.

III. PROJECT UPDATE – Avon High School Synthetic Turf Field(s)

Mr. Ponziani asked Mr. McCoy for a re-cap of the work done at Thompson Road. Mr. McCoy relayed that a final master plan had been done for a main field with a synthetic surface, with bleachers and a press box, and a secondary field with the option to be a synthetic or natural surface which could be converted later. The plan would include a renovation to the existing butler building which would contain some storage and add restrooms and concessions. A gathering and playground area, as well as nature trails and connection to the bike trail were also included. He continued that parking and a walking path to the school for overflow parking with cost was part of the plan presented in the fall. Mr. McCoy said the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the high school as an alternate site and to compare which would greater meet the needs. He noted that the sites were different and the high school could only fit one field but that it already had parking. Ms. Checko reminded that the Town Council wanted to make sure to meet the statement of needs. Mr. Ponziani reported that notices were given to the neighbors as part of the public process to give all an opportunity to participate.

IV. ARCHITECT UPDATE a) Kaestle Boos Synthetic Turf Study, b) BSC Group Scope of Work for High School

Mr. Ponziani asked Mr. McCoy to look at the existing site to determine if it could be expanded to include a full all-purpose field without extensive site work or be possible to move two interior lanes of the track to the outside to make it fit. He added if this could fit and not lose the baseball field. He continued that he'd like a cost and design of an artificial surface within the space and relocation of the bleachers to the east side of the field and include the lighting as well. Mr.

Ponziani noted the press box should be looked at with the cost of electrical and infrastructure. Ms. Checko noted that the press box would be an alternate requested by the Town Council and the Town Manager. Mr. McCoy offered that alternates could be line items as in the Thompson Road study. Mr. Ponziani asked that he also prepare a design and cost estimate for an artificial turf field on the property assuming it could fit on the site along with moving the bleachers, press box and lighting and infrastructure. He continued with a third proposal that would be to install an artificial surface on the current hockey field adjacent to the football field with costs of lighting, infrastructure, moving bleachers and press box. Ms. Checko offered that the hockey field is not a regulation sized field.

Mr. Donovan posed that a new field at the high school be lined for field hockey which would eliminate the need for that field. Mr. McCoy reminded that the key fit would be for football and soccer being the longest and widest so that any other sport would fit within that realm. He added that to get into federation for high schools the soccer fields should have 65 to 70 yards width of playing surface. Mr. McCoy noted that an artificial turf surface could get right up to the edge of the track as space saving. He asked too if looking at 6 or 8 lanes would be part of the options. Mr. McCoy continued that the goal would be to have the least impact to the space around and noted that the high school parking already had a variance. Ms. Checko suggested Mr. McCoy check with Steve Kushner about the variance and if it still existed.

Ms. Checko introduced the Town Engineer Larry Baril. Mr. Baril noted that there is some questionable drainage on the southeast side of the site. He added that the problem had been addressed through maintenance on the system which had not been done and said the area does get wet in the spring and with heavy rains. He continued that it may not impact the project but that he would want to consider the storm drainage in the design. Mr. McCoy concurred that it could impact possible additional site infrastructure costs with having to bury larger drainage pipes.

V. COMMUNICATION FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

VI. COMMUNICATION FROM AUDIENCE

Mr. Ponziani turned the discussion over to the audience.

David Magrini – 31 Brookridge Drive – asked that the project include the removal of the scoreboard at the baseball field as it didn't work and add dugouts, new mound and refurbish it as well. He asked too that the process be sped up with the design, referendum and construction. Mr. Ponziani said that would be up to the Town Council to establish a schedule.

Susan (inaudible) – suggested utilizing the pool property across the street from the high school as a possible site for overflow parking or to alleviate the need for space or to make more room for a practice field. Mr. Baril said he didn't know enough but heard that they were taking the building down which is owned by the fire department. He noted too in addition there were wetlands on the site. Several residents discussed speaking with Mr. Robertson about it.

Sarah Roberson – 24 Sudbury Way – asked that if the town were to upgrade there that they add more trees to buffer from the neighbors and that there is a lot of trash back there that she

voluntarily picks up. She continued that maintenance at the high school has to improve and urged the town to think about this if they're going to fix it up. Ms. Roberson continued that yes, the drainage problem is still there and to consider the impact on the neighbors when improvements are going to be made in terms of the increase in the amount of games played and lighting and traffic.

Keith Zelazny – 25 Brookridge Drive – questioned comparing adding two fields at Thompson Brook with no net increase of fields at the high school and how this impacts the children. Mr. Ponziani said that cost will be a factor and it will ultimately be up to the Town Council which direction they will go. Mr. McCoy explained that the overall playability will increase with the artificial turf surfaces and the correct sizes of the fields. Mr. Zelazny offered that it would exponentially increase the use of the fields if they are constructed at the Thompson Road location vs. the high school. He questioned if the monies that were recently used to renovate the track be considered in the budget to re-renovate it with a new field, calling it a waste of money. Mr. McCoy noted that a natural grass field can be used for about 300 hours a year and then needs to be rested whereas an artificial one can be used between 800 and 1,000 hours per year.

Kathleen Davenport – 92 Somerset Drive – inquired about additional fields available at Fisher Meadows which also has a plan in place as a possible location to consider for additional playing space. Mr. Ponziani noted that Fisher Meadows was in the floodplain, making construction of a synthetic field unfeasible. Ms. Davenport corrected that it not be a site for synthetic fields but could provide extra playing ones. Mr. McCoy noted that a wet natural grass field will get ruined and would be subject to being closed during certain times of the year thus limiting its use. Ms. Davenport asked Mr. Pena about a previous Town Council meeting with Mr. Evans and Mr. Robertson discussing looking at the high school site which would give Mr. McCoy free reign that he would have at Thompson Brook specifically for parking to which Mr. Pena said he'd check with Mr. Robertson to see where it was left. Ms. Davenport asked Mr. McCoy if he had experience moving a track. Mr. McCoy said yes that he has had experience doing all kinds of things and costs would be considered in moving or redoing parts and that keeping asphalt seams to a minimum should be considered.

Mary Deppe – 35 Westland Road – noted that there were a lot of problems with the track after it had been redone and maybe that money could be put back into it towards the track that Avon desperately needs. She continued that the students were practicing in places that were not really appropriate for training and the youth kids were not able to start their seasons and fields were being rented because of the lack of adequate fields for the town. She hoped that this would come to an agreement and move forward.

Ed Howley – 32 Coventry Lane – questioned if the baseball field could be moved on or off site. Mr. Ponziani noted that the point of the high school as a location was to keep everything on site and reminded that we are dealing with a limited budget. Mr. Pena agreed that we wanted to keep everything on the compound and it was in the charge to do so. He said too he would look into the parking. Mr. Magrini suggested referring to a study done in 2005 that looks at the entire area and the associated cost to reconfigure the site.

Debbie Elcock – 195 Burnham Road – referred to a practice field on the southeast corner and how it fits into the charge. Mr. Ponziani said the charge is to see if an artificial turf field can be put inside the track, keeping the baseball field the way it exists now. Ms. Elcock continued that the changes were to be made to the field near West Avon Road.

Mr. Droppo asked about the timing of the project as reopening a previous study of the site seems to be wasting more time when people here wanted to push the project through. He added that we wouldn't want to drag on for months and months when time is of the essence. Mr. McCoy concurred but wanted to vet each option and suggested keeping to a two week meeting schedule to do so. This would allow his firm to provide the information timely.

Peter Reboul – 23 Sudbury Way – reminded that the plan conform to zoning regulations. He referred to a May 30th, 2007 memo from former Town Manager Phil Schenck that spoke of the drainage problems at the site. He continued that the site required a zone B buffer and that now it was not in compliance and that it would collapse the usable space if it were. Increased use of the field would result in traffic issues and conflicts with use of a facility in a residential zone. He added that he is supportive of the field and it is something the town should do but he feared the rush to lay a field down would not necessarily result in the right thing or the right complex. Mr. Ponziani concurred that the concerns are good ones but assured that Mr. McCoy would take these issues into consideration in his proposal as he did in the Thompson Road design plan.

VII. FUTURE MEETINGS

Ms. Checko asked if evening meetings could be scheduled to accommodate more residents. Mr. McCoy will have a power point presentation at the next meeting showing different options for track layouts, hoping to narrow down the best choices. Ms. Checko suggested the next meeting be held Tuesday, April 14th, 7:30 a.m., followed by an evening meeting Tuesday, April 28th and that she'd be looking for room availability.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

VOTE: Mr. Jadovich motioned, Mr. Donovan seconded and all agreed to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 a.m. None opposed.

Peter Ponziani, *Chairman*

Susan Gatcomb, *Clerk*