

Select Board Minutes
Tuesday, February 6, 2024
7:00pm

The Select Board Regular Meeting was held virtually in accordance with Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, An Act Making Appropriations for the Fiscal Year 2023 to Provide for Supplementing Certain Existing Appropriations and for Certain Other Activities and Projects, and signed into law on March 29, 2023, this meeting was conducted via remote participation.

Select Board participants:

Rich Maiore, Charles Oliver, Erin McBee, Kara Minar, Don Ludwig

Town Department participants:

Town Administrator Tim Bragan, Assistant Town Administrator Marie Sobalvarro, Executive Assistant Julie Doucet, Finance Director Jared Mullane, Recreation Director Anne McWaters

Additional participants:

James Shook, Katie Wool, HCTV Chair Robert Curran, Finance Committee Chair Eric Ward, Park & Rec Commissioner Marissa Steele, PBC Chair Pablo Carbonell, CPIC Chair Nate Finch,

204 Lanes – Transfer of Liquor License

On-premise beer/wine

James Shook introduced himself as the new owner of 204 Lanes. He grew up in Harvard with family still in town. As an entrepreneur, the Harvard bowling lanes being for sale is an exciting endeavor for him. He explained the process to purchase the bowling lanes began last year and the closing happened about three weeks ago. He said there will be no operational changes at this time. By a roll call vote, McBee – aye, Minar – aye, Oliver – aye, Ludwig – aye, Maiore – aye, the board voted unanimously to approve the transfer of license.

Appointments

Permanent Building Committee

By a roll call vote, McBee – aye, Minar – aye, Oliver – aye, Ludwig – aye, Maiore – aye, the board voted unanimously to appoint Carl Sciple to the Permanent Building Committee.

Cable Committee

HCTV Chair Robert Curran announced the committee has two interested volunteers. Current CPIC member Jeffrey Lin and new resident Katie Wool. He introduced Katie Wool who spoke about her background and interest in serving on the committee. Executive Assistant Julie Doucet confirmed the committee has one opening at this time. The board decided to appoint Katie Wool considering Jeffrey Lin in serving on CPIC now. He will be considered for the next vacancy that occurs. By a roll call vote, McBee – aye, Minar – aye, Oliver – aye, Ludwig – aye, Maiore – aye, the board voted unanimously to appoint Katie Wool to the HCTV.

Public Communication

Board of Health Chair Sharon McCarthy commented on the lack of communication during the budget process and the board’s concern with proposed cuts to their budget. She urged the board to support a level funded budget that will not reduce their services to the community.

Library Trustee Jen Manell advocated for the library budget to meet the Municipal Appropriation Requirement (MAR) requirement. She described the services that could be affected if the MAR is not met. She implored the Select Board to fund the minimum requirement to secure MAR.

Minutes

By a roll call vote, McBee – aye, Minar – aye, Oliver – aye, Ludwig – aye, Maiore – aye, the board voted unanimously approve minutes of 1/9, as presented.

Park & Recreation update on fields

Recreation Director Anne McWaters and Park & Rec Commissioner Marissa Steele came to provide an update from the recent field needs study completed by Gale Associates.

They learned the main areas of concern or problems to be solved are as follows:

- Current recreation fields are overused
- Current suffering from poor maintenance, drainage and planarity issues.
- In need of one 60' diamond
- McCurdy Track near it send of life
- Harvard Park suffers from insufficient parking on game/event days
- Harvard Park lacks amenities

From the report three possible options were detailed with cost estimates included. (Attachment A)

Anne McWaters said the commission is fully aware a project of this magnitude would require major fundraising and CPC funds to minimize the cost to taxpayers. She also understands the sensitivity of turf versus natural when it comes to athletic fields. They are pleased to realize the possibilities and will come back to the Select Board with more accurate estimates and a recommendation. Charles Oliver suggested McCurdy Track be dealt with now separately from the larger vision for the fields. Everyone agreed this was a good approach. The Select Board thanked them for their efforts thus far.

Staff Report/updates (Attachment B)

DPW Building: update, and excluded debt article

Permanent Building Committee Chair Pablo Carbonell gave an overview of the current building, the pole barn and the proposed project details. Assistant Town Administrator Marie Sobalvarro asked the board to include the project as an excluded debt article for town meeting. CPIC Chair Nate Finch encouraged support for the project. He cautioned costs will not decrease if we wait and the building is in deplorable condition. By a roll call vote, McBee – aye, Oliver – aye, Ludwig – aye, Maiore – aye, Minar – nay, the board voted to approve an excluded debt question for the DPW project. (4-1) Kara Minar did not vote in favor of the motion. She stated she is in favor of the project but did not believe now is the right time to ask voters.

FY 2025 budget update

Finance Director Jared Mullane reported a deficit still remains. The Finance Committee has reviewed department budgets on a rolling basis with the school department in December. They received the Governor's budget the last week of January with state revenue decreasing however the health insurance increase was lower than expected. Mullane said the Finance Committee will recommend a tiered override approach.

Presentation of Finance Committee recommendations

Finance Committee Chair Eric Ward reported the committee has been in discussions for quite some time now. He reported the committee has decided a first tier must be for level service. He explained departments were instructed to provide a level service budget (absorbs COLA & contractual agreement increases) and a level funded budget detailing what would be cut in order to maintain level funding. The committee realized level funded would create significant reductions. The Finance Committee does not want to always do the bare minimum and is interested in offering opportunity to consider additional requests. They are recommending a tiered override that will allow voters to decide.

Override options

Town Administrator Tim Bragan said the budget process has been thorough and done with much care and consideration. He confirmed unexpected expenses that arise during the year can be approved by the Finance Committee as a reserve fund transfer. Select Board member Don Ludwig was not surprised the town is in need of an operational override. He supports the two-tier approach. Erin McBee agreed. Charles Olivier suggested a mid-level amount instead of the full 780,000 requested. Rich Maiore agreed. Kara Minar expressed interest in taxpayers being given the voice and choice with the understanding this decision will remain in the budget moving forward. The Select Board will finalize their recommendation at their next meeting.

Discuss disposition of the Bromfield House

Assistant Town Administrator Marie Sobalvarro revisited the Select Board's vote to sell the Bromfield House after the short-term residency of the Afghan refugees. The lease was extended through June 2024. She recommended the Select Board formally vote to surplus the property as the next step in the process. All parties agreed the lease would not be extended past June 2024. Kara Minar recalls the school department expressing interest in the building back in 2022. She expressed reluctance to vote. Charles Oliver will vote on the surplus considering the town has voted twice already to sell the property. Erin, Don and Rich were agreeable as this being the next step in the process. Oliver referred to the actions taken to settle in probate and with the Library Trustees.

By a roll call vote, McBee – aye, Minar – aye, Oliver – aye, Ludwig – aye, Maiore – aye, the board voted unanimously to extend their meeting past 10:00pm.

By a roll call vote, McBee – aye, Oliver – aye, Ludwig – aye, Maiore – aye, Minar – nay, the board voted to surplus the Bromfield House. (4-1)

Presidential primary

By a roll call vote, McBee – aye, Minar – aye, Oliver – aye, Ludwig – aye, Maiore – aye, the board voted unanimously to approve the presidential primary warrant.

Select Board Reports

Erin McBee reported on the following Planning Board items:

- MBTA housing at their last meeting. They are focused on the parcel across from Dunkin Donuts.
- Community Workshop on Ayer Road Corridor Vision Plan is being held on February 13th.
- MASS DOT may help with trail connection from Harvard to Devens

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00pm.

Documents referenced:

204 Lanes – Transfer of License – Jan 2024

Carl Sciple vol form – dated 2.1.2024

Katie Wool vol form – dated 10.23.2023

Jeffrey Lin vol form – dated 1.28.2024

DPW schematic design – dated Jan 2024

General Fund - 5 Year Budgeted Revenue / Expense Projection – dated Jan 2024

Budget letters from Departments – dated Jan 2024

Harvard Park Recreational Complex Vision

What is the Problem We Need to Solve?

- 8 of 9 current recreational field venues in Harvard are overused
- Current fields suffering from poor upkeep, drainage & planarity issues.
- Field Deficit:
 - 1 Full Size Multi-Purpose Rectangular (MPR) Field (2 full size MPRs predicted by 2033)
 - 2 Youth Size MPR Fields
 - 1 - 60' Diamond
- McCurdy Track near its end of life - will require complete reconstruction
- Harvard Park currently suffers from insufficient parking on game/event days and lack of amenities

PHASE 1: Options

- Goal target date: To be completed by or in 2025
- Could utilize Devens fields to partially or completely rectify the town of Harvard's field deficit
- 3 options from which to choose— A, B, C

Option A	Option B	Option C
Details: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconstruct McCurdy Track • Upgrade natural turf infield at Harvard Park during the renovation of McCurdy Track • Use Devens fields on long-term basis to solve in-town field deficit of 2-3 multi-purpose rectangular (MPR) fields • Do NOT construct any additional fields in Harvard proper 	Details: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconstruct McCurdy Track • Convert existing natural turf to artificial turf at Harvard Park • Alleviate need to rent fields in Devens. 1 artificial turf field with lights = 2-3 natural turf fields • Do NOT construct any additional fields in Harvard proper 	Details: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconstruct McCurdy Track • Upgrade natural turf infield at Harvard Park during the renovation of McCurdy Track • Transfer ownership of Parcel 55 from ConCom to P&R, making Stone Field a full size MPR field • Use Devens fields on long-term basis to solve in-town field deficit of 1-2 fields (decreased from 2-3 fields in option 1)
Estimated Costs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$1.8 M -\$2.5 M (+ ongoing costs for Devens rentals \$\$\$\$) • Estimate includes a 25% construction contingency 	Estimated Costs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$3 M • Estimate includes a 25% construction contingency 	Estimated Costs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$5.7 M - \$6.1 M (+ ongoing costs for Devens rentals \$) • Estimate includes a 25% construction contingency
Cost Breakdown: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See attached spreadsheet 	Cost Breakdown: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See attached spreadsheet 	Cost Breakdown: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See attached spreadsheet

PHASE 1: Timeline

Spring/Summer 2024	Fall 2024	Winter 2024/ Spring 2025	Summer/Fall 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain updated quotes on track and ancillary field event areas • Obtain quotes for upgrading infield work on natural turf <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is there need for new irrigation • Obtain quotes for artificial turf • Determine what amenities are needed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fencing – can old fencing be used ○ Lighting – probably only makes sense if artificial turf is employed ○ Seating ○ Parking upgrade ○ Potable water ○ Bathrooms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine which option town wants to go with (artificial vs natural turf) • Apply for CPC funds for track/infield with 10yr bonding • Possible warrant for town meeting to transfer Parcel 55 from ConCom to P&R 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select companies for track reconstruction and infield work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work done on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Track ○ Infield (artificial vs natural turf) ○ Possible Parcel 55 construction

PHASE 2

- Proposal of a unified recreational complex to be completed over the next 3-10 years.
 - BSC study shows several areas of the Harvard Park woods, already under P&R jurisdiction, that can be utilized without compromising the neighboring wetlands
- Addresses current insufficiencies regarding parking and bathrooms
- Provides for multi-generational recreational opportunities
- Enables the town to have enough playing fields for organized sports while resting fields on a rotational basis, no longer requiring Devens field rentals
- Potential project highlights include:
 - Additional MPR field
 - Additional parking
 - Bathroom/changing facilities at McCurdy Track/ Soccer Field
 - Pickleball courts and/or tennis courts
 - Pump track
 - Walking paths connecting to the COA
 - Outdoor basketball court

Harvard Park & Recreation has grand visions for this project. A vigorous fundraising effort will be needed to make this project financially viable to the town and as such, P&R is looking to form a fundraising group. Talks have begun with stakeholders and we hope that their insights on behalf of their sports/interests, as well as their support for the vision, will help to bring it to fruition.

Target Interest Groups
Bromfield Athletic Dept/Teams
Harvard Soccer Club
Harvard Youth Baseball and Softball Association
Harvard Youth Lacrosse
H.A.A. Basketball
Havard Ultimate Club
Bolton/Harvard Community Pickleball
Harvard Pump Track Enthusiasts

Funding Sources
CPC
Donations
Grants
Town

**Harvard Park Recreational Complex
Cost Breakdown for Phase 1 Options**

OPTION A

Item	Approximate Cost	Cost Estimate Source
Track renovation	\$1,000,000.00	Gale
Natural turf infield upgrade	\$420,000 - \$715,000	Sports Turf Managers Assoc (industry estimate)
Ancillary items		
Fencing	\$43,000.00	Gale
Goals	\$20,000.00	Gale
Scoreboard	\$50,000.00	Gale
Devens field rental		
Long-term (\$15k per field; 2 field required)	\$30,000.00	Meg Delorier (interim EVP of Devens) per Tim Bragan Hillary Clark (Devens Recreation/Events Coordinator)
Hourly rates		
\$25/hr/field for practices		
\$55/hr/field for games		
Transportation		Dave Boisvert, Bromfield AD
Busing		
Overall Subtotal	\$1,500,000 - \$2,000,000	
Contingency (25%)	\$375,000 - \$500,000	Gale
TOTAL COST	\$1,875,000 - \$2,500,000	

OPTION B

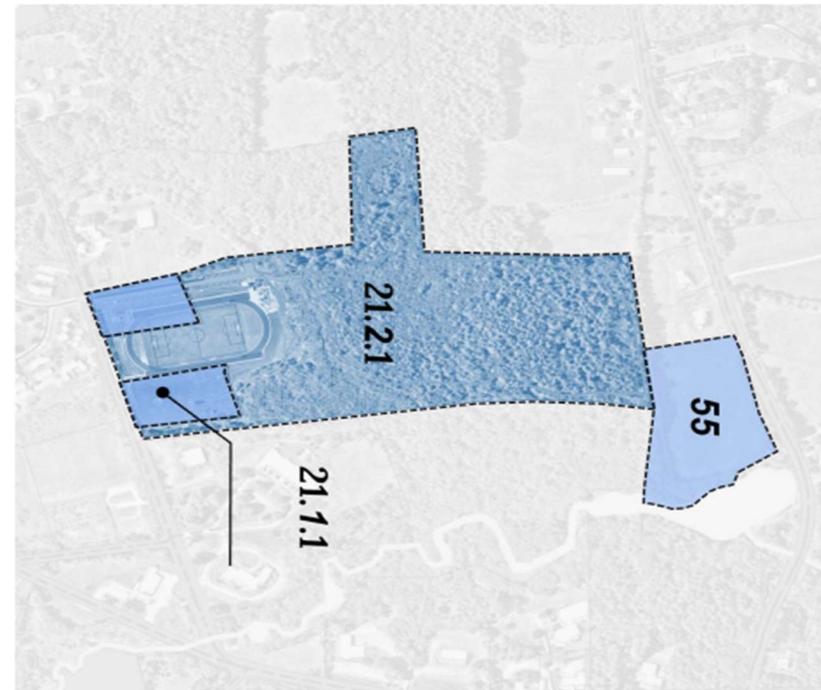
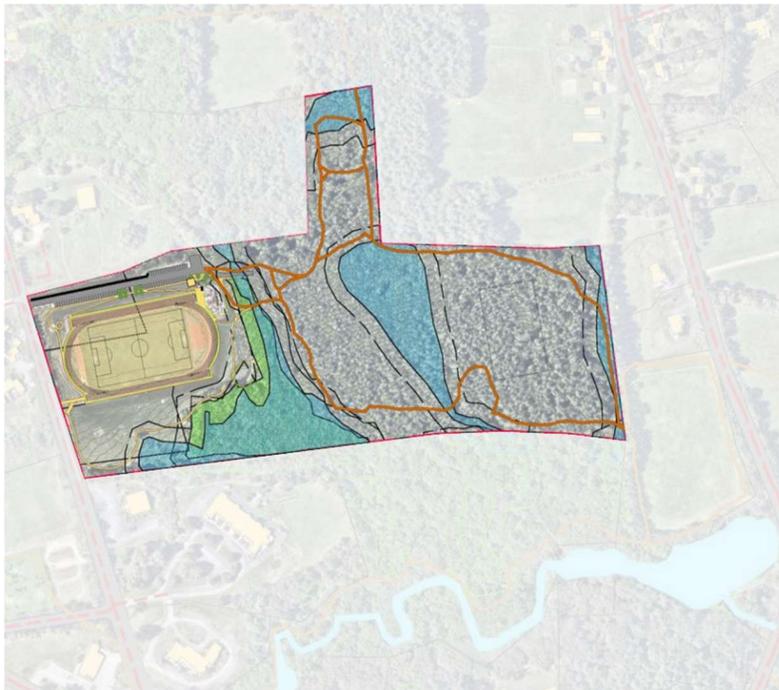
Item	Approximate Cost	Cost Estimate Source
Track renovation	\$1,000,000.00	Gale
Synthetic Turf Construction	\$830,000.00	Gale
Fencing	\$43,000.00	Gale
Goals	\$20,000.00	Gale
Scoreboard	\$50,000.00	Gale
Lighting	\$500,000.00	Gale
Overall Subtotal	\$2,443,000.00	
Contingency (25%)	\$610,750.00	Gale
TOTAL COST	\$3,053,750.00	

OPTION C

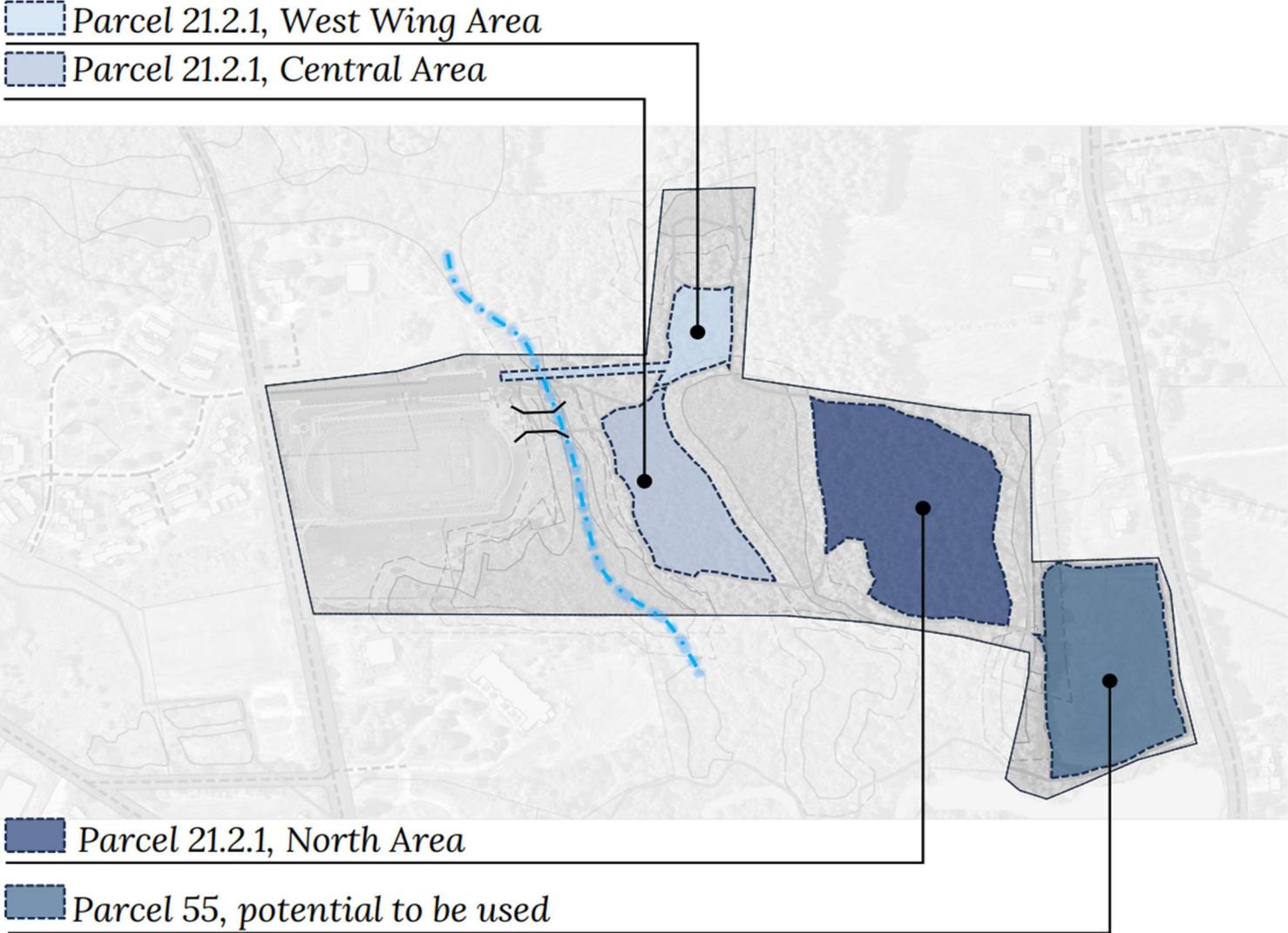
Item	Approximate Cost	Cost Estimate Source
Track renovation	\$1,000,000.00	Gale
Natural turf infield upgrade	\$420,000 - \$715,000	Sports Turf Managers Assoc (industry estimate)
Ancillary items		

Harvard Park Recreational Complex: Proposed Site Developments

- The following are excerpted pieces of the comprehensive BSC study done on the Harvard Park Woods.
- These schematics show the potential areas for development, possibilities within each area, and the iterations that Harvard Park and Rec would recommend

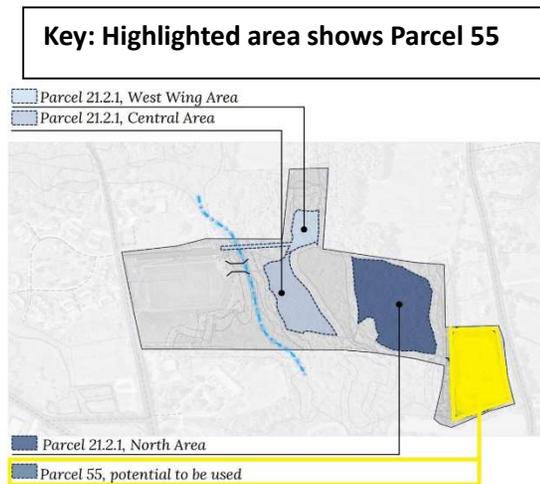


Potential Areas of Development that Avoid Wetlands



Parcel 55: Stone Field (Old Mill Rd)

- One full size multi-purpose recreational field (MPR)
- Up to 103 parking spaces including handicap access
- No vertical structures permitted, per deed on land
- Optional amenities: rain garden, picnic area



Parcel 21.2.1: North Area (5.5 acres)

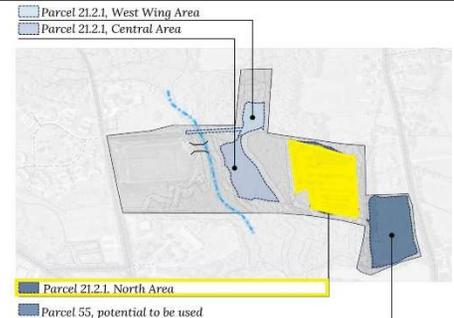
- One full-sized MPR or one full-sized softball field
- Handicap parking
- Space for extra amenities
 - Pickleball courts, tennis court, basketball court, swing set, bathroom facilities, rain garden
- Schematic design options allowing customization based on input



< Inset shows option of basketball court and/or tennis court instead of pickleball in above MPR schematic

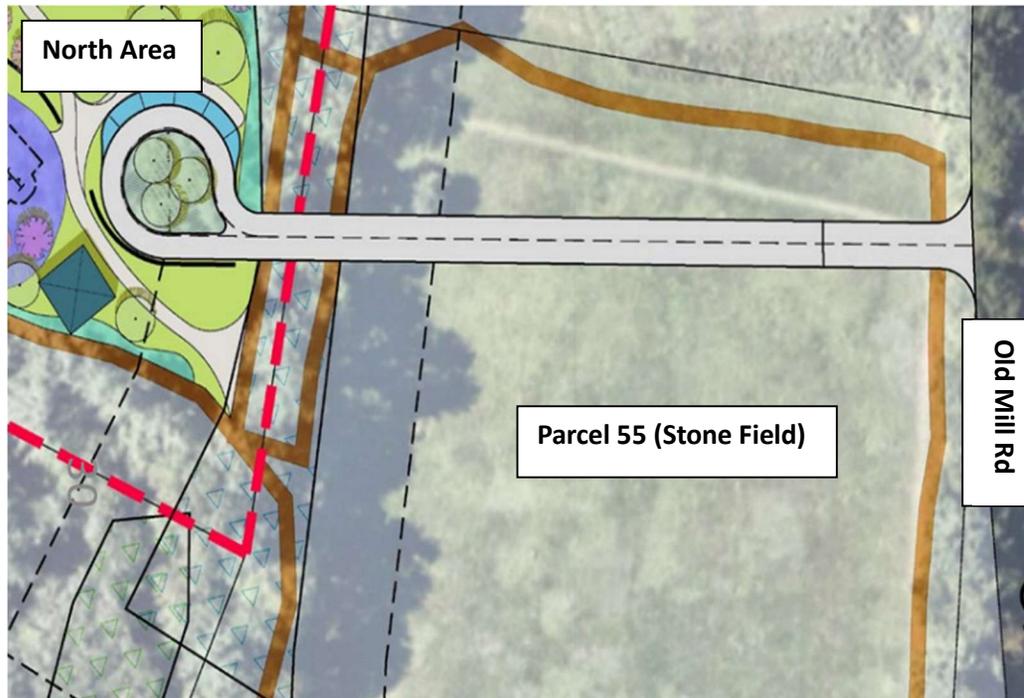


Key: Highlighted area shows North Area

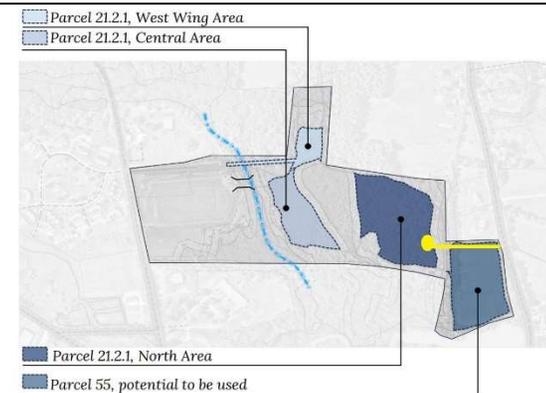


Parcel 21.2.1: North Area Emergency Access

- If unable to develop Parcel 55, emergency access to the North Area via Parcel 55 would be necessary.



Key: Highlighted area shows Emergency Access

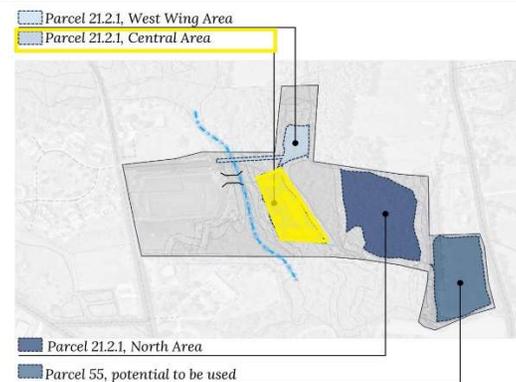


Parcel 21.2.1: Central Area

- More challenging/smaller area than Northern Area due to grade change and proximity to wetlands
- 3 options provided by BSC – image below shows preferred option
- Preferred option: pickleball courts, pump track, centralized handicap parking, bathroom
- Not shown: option to fit mid-size MPR requiring large retaining wall
- Proximity to COA ideal for multigenerational recreational opportunities

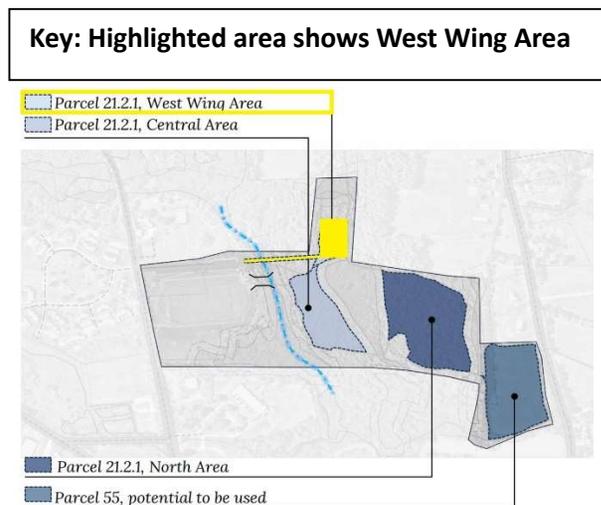
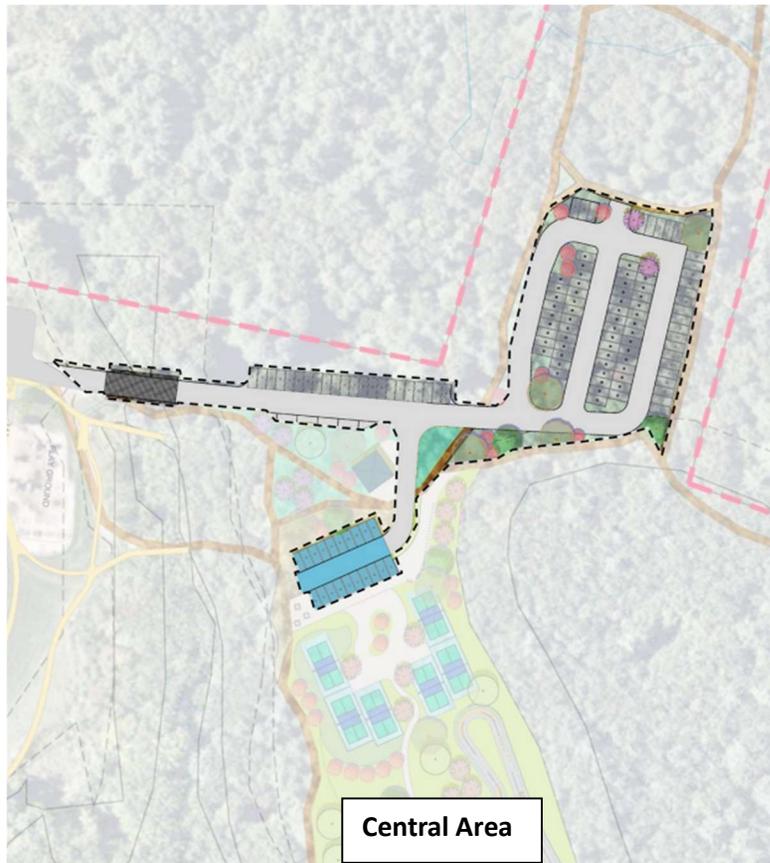


Key: Highlighted area shows Central Area



Parcel 21.2.1: West Wing Area

- Parking complex with potential for up to 125 spaces.
- Actual number of spaces will be based on:
 - Total number of fields being developed
 - If Parcel 55 is developed, how many parking spaces it will provide
 - Overflow from McCurdy Track



Fencing	\$43,000.00	Gale
Goals	\$20,000.00	Gale
Scoreboard	\$50,000.00	Gale
Construction of Parcel 55		
Site Prep	\$183,088.21	BSC
Earthwork	\$335,601.93	BSC
Hardscape	\$38,800.00	BSC
Parking/Walking Path/Gate	\$176,360.00	BSC
MPR Field	\$1,571,000.00	BSC
Plantings	\$82,972.22	BSC
Utilities	\$170,000.00	BSC
Lump Sum Items	\$512,364.47	
Devens field rental		
Long-term (\$15k per field; 2 field required)		Meg Delorier (interim EVP of Devens) per Tim Bragan
Hourly rates		Hillary Clark (Devens Recreation/Events Coordinator)
\$25/hr/field for practices	????	
\$55/hr/field for games	????	
Transportation		
Busing		Dave Boisvert, Bromfield AD
Overall Subtotal	\$4,600,000 - \$4,900,000	
Contingency (25%)	\$1,150,000 - \$1,225,000	
TOTAL COST	\$5,750,000 - \$6,125,000	

Staff Report, February 6, 2024

Building/Facility/Project Related:

- DPW Renovation: Attached is the latest high-level schematic for the DPW project. The Connector Building and Mechanics Bay, currently uninsulated concrete block walls with single-paned windows and heated by propane and waste oil, would be new. The six-bay garage is existing to remain.
- Tighe and Bond is making significant progress on both the Water Connection to Devens and on the Landfill monitoring project.

FY24 Operations:

- We have found out some potentially serious news regarding the area of the landfill. While digging holes for the DPW building project, they found over 10 feet of trash near the fuel tanks and half way down the pole barn building. These areas are outside the area that was believed to be the confines of the old landfill. This will have implications on both of the projects, DPW Building Project and Landfill Monitoring Project.
- Tim Kilhart is working with the State DOT/MassHighway regarding the issue of water running onto Mass Avenue from the new school driveway. The Superintendent and her folks worked on the issue over Christmas break and we are waiting to see if that solved the problem. If not then we will have to approach a resolution to the issue in another manner.
- After the last snow event we had to start deficit spending as we have spent over the \$200,000 that had been allocated in the budget.
- Our planned move to Blue Cross Blue Shield a couple years ago is now an even better move since MNHG, our old insurance group, is planning to dissolve. They say hindsight is 20/20 and in this case Marie's foresight to move us out of MNHG due to the issues they were having and our ability to get better rates with BC/BS was right on.
- The Town Clerk's website lists important State and Federal election dates, and deadlines here: <https://www.harvard-ma.gov/town-clerk/pages/2024-municipal-and-state-election-schedule> Additionally, there's info on the Annual Town Election to be held on April 9: <https://www.harvard-ma.gov/town-clerk/pages/annual-town-election-april-9-2024>

FY25 Budget:

- The Finance Committee finalized their recommendation to the Select Board regarding the FY 2025 budget. Per their earlier request for what a second round cut, below level service, may look like that is in your packet along with what it would mean for each of the departments. The Finance Committee decided to recommend a level service budget that will require an override and then offered another tier that funded all of the request that were made during this budget cycle. More discussion to come during the agenda item on tonight's agenda.

Legislature/Beacon Hill: (information from State House News unless otherwise noted)

- Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation's (MTF) analysis of the 2024 tax revenue and 9C cuts, <https://www.masstaxpayers.org/sites/default/files/publications/2024-01/FY%202024%20Revenue%20Shortfall%20%26%209C%20Cuts%20FINAL.pdf>, says the revenue growth in FY24 is only ahead of the FY23 year-to-date collections by 0.3%. The MTF goes on to say that the State's spending trends needs to return to earth as flat revenue assumptions will leave little room for additional spending initiatives.
- The MTF also provided their review of the Governor's FY25 Budget, <https://www.masstaxpayers.org/sites/default/files/publications/2024-01/01-24%20FY25%20Governor%27s%20Budget%20Brief%20FINAL.pdf>, with some praise as well as some cautionary notes.
- The Governor submitted her proposal to provide local governments with tools they can use. A section by section summary is enclosed. While the Governor proposed her Municipal Empowerment Act it has received a cool reception by the House and Senate.
- One issue the Governor had discussed but did not include was her Liquor License Reform which would have given more control over the number of liquor licenses any city or town could have. Her people said that they want to have more time to work with stakeholders on the language of the bill.
- The State has approved \$200 million allocation in Chapter 90 for more than a decade but inflation has eaten away at what that \$200 million covers. In today's dollars the \$200 million originally approved in 2012 (same amount approved for 12 years) is now worth 65% less due to inflation and that means the same \$200 million only buys \$69 million in today's dollars.
- The State's January tax haul continued the tax deficit slide. The tax revenue came in \$263 million less than the revised benchmark. The original benchmark was \$4.121 billion and it was adjusted last month by the Governor to \$3.858 billion. The actual revenue received (\$3.5 was 6.8 percent below the revised benchmark.

Notices, Reminders, Dates of Note:

- Town reports were due on the 18th and if you have not submitted yours you need to get it to Julie immediately.
- MassDOT will be holding public information meetings on February 13th and February 20th regarding the Route 2 Study. Information is enclosed.
- Included is a list of the positions up for reappointment and any current vacancies. Julie will be notifying the SB liaison and Chair of the appropriate board or committee regarding reappointment or the filling of vacancies. She will also begin contacting incumbents and request their statements of intent regarding reappointment by March 15. Annual appointment announcement will be advertised on town website. Any new volunteer forms will be due no later than May 1st to accommodate the annual appointment process in June.