

Park & Recreation Commission Larz Anderson Skating Rink Task Force Meeting Minutes  
6/24/21

Park and Recreation Commission	Meeting Minutes
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**Date: June 24, 2021, 6:00 PM**

**Place: Zoom Webinar**

**Commissioners Attending:** John Bain, Nancy O’Connor, Wendy Sheridan, Antonia Bellalta

**Commissioners Absent:** Jim Carroll

**Task Force Members Attending:** Jeff Thibault, Avi Urbas, Priscilla Karnovsky, Julie Jette

**Task Force Members Absent:** David Driscoll

**Non-Voting Task Force Members Attending:**

**Non-Voting Task Force Members Absent:** Bob Little and Paisley Boney

**Staff:** Erin Gallentine: Commissioner of Public Works, Alexandra Vecchio: Parks and Open Space Director, Jessica White: Parks and Open Space Assistant, Michael Bartlett: Parks and Open Space Operations Manager, Scott Landgren: Senior Landscape Architect

TOPIC	KEY POINTS/DISCUSSION	
Welcome and Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>E. Gallentine opened the meeting and introduced herself. This meeting is the first of 4 public meetings to discuss options, costs, benefits, impacts and feasibility for ice skating in Brookline. E. Gallentine reviewed the agenda.</li> </ul>	
History and Background of the Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>E. Gallentine gave background information on the three-month seasonal outdoor skating rink at Larz Anderson Park. The rink has been in operation since 1958. The article 97, Federal Land Conservation Fund Act and preservation restrictions at Larz Anderson were discussed. She stated that as we think about the future of ice skating in Brookline and at Larz Anderson Park in particular we will need to consider the various protections and design that is appropriate and sensitive to the historic context. The study will start at Larz Anderson Park, but the Commission may contemplate other sites.</li> <li>Why a feasibility study now? She stated that we are doing it now because of the condition of the rink. The refrigeration system at Larz Anderson has suffered a series of system failures and increasing emergency response repairs over the last several years. The major failure in April 2020 was detailed. The Park and Recreation Commission formed an Ice Rink Task Force to gain community input, evaluate options and work together on the future of ice skating in Brookline. She stated that the role of the task force is to review, research, prepare, present and recommend short and long term approaches,</li> </ul>	

	<p>alternatives and funding back to the full Park and Recreation Commission. The Task Force held a series of public meetings and reported their recommendations back to the Park and Recreation Commission. A summary of the task force meeting discussions were detailed. The Task Force specifically recommended that the town temporarily convert the existing rink to accommodate leased refrigeration units as an interim measure to keep the rink open in the winter. It was important for 20-21 season during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Task Force also recommended that the Town embark on a feasibility study. The intent of the study is to develop recommendations and cost estimates to plan for a safe, efficient, and reliable refrigeration system and ice skating facility in Brookline with specific guidance to assess: 1. Renovation of the existing rink with improvements, 2. Look at building a covered rink and 3. Create an indoor rink. There have been requests and discussions for over 40 years. The group recommended Larz Anderson Park (the location of the current rink) and Putterham Woods as locations to be studied. However, the proposal only specifies the current site of the ice rink at Larz Anderson Park for consideration of these directions, leaving alternate locations up to the Park and Recreation Commission to discuss further.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The study will start at Larz Anderson Park. The team has been asked to assess other year-round uses.</li><li>• A high-level explanation of what a feasibility study is was shared by E. Gallentine. The report and public process will help the Task Force, community staff and the Park and Recreation Commission to assess the viability of various options and to establish an order of magnitude of cost estimates that will help everyone charter paths for next steps. The Park and Recreation Commission is committed to a clear, transparent and thorough review, working with a professional team that specializes in land use, scaffold design and ice rinks. The Task Force will work on the feasibility study through this process and it will then be presented to the full</li></ul>	
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	<p>Park and Recreation Commission. The end goal is to prepare an informed, fiscally-responsible report to the Town with guidance on next steps.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductions of Brookline Town staff were given.</li> <li>• Introductions of the Task Force Members and Park and Recreation Commission was given.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>KMDG Team Introductions and Project Goals</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M. Klopfer made team introductions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ KMDG</li> <li>➢ MCMAHON</li> <li>➢ GEI</li> <li>➢ JLG</li> <li>➢ SULLIVAN</li> <li>➢ SPORTS FACILITES COMPANIES</li> <li>➢ PM&amp;C</li> </ul> </li> <li>• A background of the KMDG firm was given</li> </ul> <p>The approach will be grounded in these shared goals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The feasibility study will support ongoing planning efforts, existing investments, and Climate Action initiatives.</li> <li>2. The ice rink and future recreation programming will serve as a neighborhood and town-wide destination.</li> <li>3. The project needs to serve a wide spectrum of use from the occasional weekend visitor to the hockey families.</li> <li>4. The feasibility project should look to expand the ice rink’s current spring season. The project should look for opportunities to integrate with summer camps, and existing events and programming.</li> <li>5. Create an engaging and inclusive process an engaging and inclusive process for the community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project timeline was detailed</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	
<p><b>Existing Conditions &amp; Community Polling</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing conditions of Larz Anderson were shared.</li> <li>• Site photos of the winter and winter at Larz Anderson Park were shared.</li> <li>• Existing conditions of the facility/experience were shared and discussed.</li> <li>• The deficiencies in the current facility were detailed.</li> </ul> <p>The following questions were presented to have participants answer via online or QR Code:  What is your primary reason for attending this evening?  What is your zip code?  How often do you use the ice rink?</p>	

	<p>Why do you come to the ice rink? Do you come to Larz Anderson when the rink is closed for the season? What activities do you and your family enjoy at Larz Anderson when the rink is closed?</p>	
<p><b>Facility Use Parameters &amp; Community Polling</b></p>	<p>Rink Footprint Comparisons Existing Uncovered Rink</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The existing Jack Kirrane Rink at Larz Anderson Park.</li> <li>• It is nearly NHL rink size with smaller corner radii</li> </ul> <p>An example of a typical covered outdoor rink with seating, lockers, minor support space was shown.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A typical outdoor covered rink footprint overlaid on the Jack Kirrane Rink for comparison was shown.</li> <li>• A typical outdoor covered rink footprint overlaid on the shed location for comparison was shown.</li> </ul> <p>An example of an enclosed indoor rink with seating, lockers, minor support space was shown</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A typical indoor enclosed rink footprint overlaid on the Jack Kirrane Rink for comparison was shown.</li> <li>• A typical indoor enclosed covered rink footprint overlaid on the shed location for comparison was shown.</li> </ul> <p>Facility Support Uses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examples of typical support spaces in a skating facility other than the rink itself was shared.</li> </ul> <p>Energy and Sustainability- Ice 101: Keys to Success Constant truths in Ice Rinks</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Expensive to Build</li> <li>2. Expensive to Operate</li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both outdoor and indoor keys to success as were detailed.</li> <li>• Ice systems operations are typically 45% or more of total facility cost annually.</li> <li>• If previous methods save 50% or more of that cost, it can add up to tens of thousands of dollars in savings annually.</li> </ul> <p>An example of an open outdoor community rink in Winthrop, WA was shared.</p> <p><b>Pros:</b> Can have very nice facility with excellent amenities.</p>	

	<p>Can fit within architectural context of park and neighborhood. Maintains traditional connection to nature. Maintains views. More cost effective for initial construction</p> <p><b>Cons:</b> Even if refrigerated, still at mercy of elements. Brookline misses average of 12 days per year due to weather. Increased maintenance costs for snow removal. Ice quality much harder to maintain consistency. Less comfortable for users. Higher energy costs than semi-enclosed or indoors</p> <p>An example of a semi-closed community rink in Toronto, ON was shared.</p> <p><b>Pros</b> Virtually no loss of use days due to elements. No added maintenance cost for snow removal. More consistent ice quality. Can have attractive architectural feel. More consistent ice quality than open rink. Ability to protect spectators from elements.</p> <p><b>Cons</b> Harder to maintain ice quality than indoors. Higher energy costs than indoors. Still susceptible to outside temperatures. Only slightly less initial construction cost than indoors - roof construction tends to be more complicated and therefore, more costly.</p> <p>An indoor example of a community rink in West Fargo, ND was shared.</p> <p><b>Pros</b> No loss of use days due to elements. No added maintenance cost for snow removal. Highest ice quality. Can have attractive architectural feel. More consistent ice quality than open rink. Maximum spectator protection from elements. Highest value of investment compared to other rink types. Maximum comfort for users</p> <p><b>Cons</b></p>	
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	<p>Highest initial cost More likely to impact natural setting of park Larger footprint Separation from nature due to enclosure</p> <p>Importance of Natural light Examples from a rink in Fairfield, CT Sacred Heart University, Greenwich, CT Dorothy Hamill Rink Design Competition were shared.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reduces energy requirements.</li> <li>2. More enjoyable atmosphere.</li> <li>3. Controllable with technology.</li> <li>4. Unique feature in ice arenas.</li> </ol> <p>FACILITY DESIGN PARAMETERS COMMUNITY POLLING What element of the existing rink is most successful? What element of the existing rink needs the most improvement?</p>	
<p><b>Activity Programming &amp; Community Polling</b></p>	<p>Year Round Activation- examples of what year round activation might look like was shared. They looked at ways to get multi-use space if possible. The demand and revenue of ice during the summer has been great enough, but would require a plan to handle it if chosen to be part of their operations. Sport Field Scale Comparison was shared</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examples of existing events/activities at Larz Anderson Park was shared.</li> <li>• A scale comparison of the existing rink at Larz to several other facilities was shared.</li> <li>• A picture of the Providence Rink and both its cold season and warm season programs was shared.</li> <li>• A picture of the Rec Center in St. Luis Park, MN and both its cold season and warm season programs was shared.</li> <li>• A picture of the Ledbury Park Rink in Toronto, Canada and both its cold season and warm season programs was shared.</li> <li>• A picture of the Lefrak Center Rink in Brooklyn, NY and both its cold season and warm season programs was shared.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Programming Options Matrix was presented.</li> </ul> <p>PROGRAMMING PARAMETERS COMMUNITY POLLING What additional activities would you and your family like to experience in addition to the ice rink? What are you most looking forward to with this project?</p>	
<p><b>Next Steps</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The next steps were discussed.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Q&amp;A</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E. Gallentine had a quick question for R. Lieberg. She stated that the team showed Lafrak Ice rink, which is in an historic Park, but their summer use of covered rink is roller skating/ inline skating and she was wondering if there are any restrictions in terms of the quality of the concrete on what year-round programming would look like. She wonders if there are some activities that they would be concerned to support in order to maintain the slab in high quality conditions. R. Lieberg stated that by the nature of the engineering of those slabs, they are engineered to not crack. He stated that they would treat it as if it would be used for a boat show or concert, they would make the slab thicker. He stated that if it were to always have ice on it, then it would be a 5 inch thick concrete slab. However, for summer use or an unknown use they would go thicker. R. Lieberg stated that we talk a lot about hockey; he wants to make sure that hockey is one use of the ice. Unfortunately, hockey has size and space requirements, so usually rinks are designed around hockey and the other uses can work around it.</li> <li>• J. Bain asked if on the off season of the outdoor rinks, he wondered if there is certain carpet that can put over the rink for other sports. He wonders if it's expensive. R. Lieberg stated that there are examples of using turf type product on rink surfaces either indoor or outdoor, but the sun does not play well with a lot of those products. However, he thinks that on a semi closed/covered rink there would be a lot of choices.</li> <li>• Racheal Calmas asked if the indoor rink can be</li> </ul>	

	<p>seasonal and for how many months? A. Vecchio stated that it depends on what at we learn through this process. There is a multitude of uses for a fully enclosed rink. R. Lieberg stated that from a purely operational standpoint there is no reason why ice can't remain 24/7 if that is what is chosen. However, there will be enough demands for other uses that that the ice can be covered with an insulated panel and then it can be used for a large variety of uses. It will depend on the feedback form the public and what users want to see out of this. There has to be consideration for storage when you are considering a multiuse rink.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Priscilla Karnovsky stated that she was intrigued by the Dorothy Hamilton rink. It struck her that it is a semi enclosed and has the benefits of what a semi enclosed rink entails. She is trying to understand what a semi enclosed rink would provide more of than, say, the Dorothy Hamilton Rink. R. Lieberg stated that the primary driver for having a fully enclosed rink is having the true protection from elements and also the ability to control the environment for ice quality. He stated that if those things are primary drivers for the project, then the enclosure makes sense. However, if the experience of users and connection to outside are more important divers, than that is a strong argument for just having a semi closed. There could be a hybrid of that. There could be a facility that would have large openings that would open on temperament days, so you would have connections to the elements through openings, but when there is inclement weather it could be closed.</li><li>• Rachel Calmas asked how many months an outdoor rink or outdoor covered rink could be used. R. Lieberg stated that you could reasonably add on a month on each end of the season with an artificial refrigerated rink that is not covered. He stated that that if you were to add a cover you could add a month on each end of that as well.</li><li>• Katherine Marshall asked if it would be possible to use a retractable roof. R. Lieberg replied with a yes, but stated they are notorious for not</li></ul>	
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	<p>working very well. G. Fantauzza stated that it's a heavy structure and a retractable roof is very expensive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A. Vecchio stated that there have been several people asking if there could be a possibility of both an indoor and outdoor facility with shared space for locker rooms/concessions. There have also been people asking why there can't be two rinks since there are two spaces at Larz Anderson Park. R. Lieberg discussed an example of both an indoor/outdoor rink combo with shared amenities. He stated that it's a fantastic solution and one that is used. E. Gallentine thinks that the benefit of the two sheets is having the hockey program and community ice time simultaneously, rather than a push and pull.</li><li>• J. Bain and R. Lieberg discussed operations costs for an enclosed rink vs. an outdoor rink.</li><li>• An attendee asked that due to the lack of public transportation to Larz Anderson Park, how would a more expansive facility be supported? How would the Town avoid tearing up more of the park to accommodate the related demands for parking? Mark stated that we need to understand the exact quantity of parking that is required and what the impact on the existing surrounding infrastructure will be. That is what will all be found out in this study. He stated that we are very sensitive to the existing historic value. They don't want to compromise that and want to work with what they have. He thinks we need to quantify what we need and those variables will be known at future meetings. E. Gallentine stated that there were concerns from residents who live off on Pond Street on any impact on traffic. She stated that it is also something that consultants will be looking at.</li><li>• Sandy Batchleor addressed the Commission. He is the Chair of the Friends of Larz Anderson Park. He is speaking on behalf of several members who could not attend tonight, who have concerns about parking, noise and traffic. He stated that Avon Street is small and he is being told that housing development of 36 units is going up: it will be dumping out onto Avon Street and this will create more problems. He is</li></ul>	
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	<p>glad a traffic study is being done. He thinks a pool is a lousy idea in this area. He is in his 80s and has trouble using iphones; he has seen these exercises and doesn't find them meaningful to answer questions with one word. He hopes in future session you will have more opportunity to raise hands and talk. E. Gallentine thanked Sandy for all his work and for being here tonight to share input. She stated that there is a lot of work that will go into this and Zoom provides some challenges. The polls provide a variety of different ways to interact. She stated that we are trying to communicate in a whole host of different ways. Everything is recorded and written down. He thinks it would be beneficial to have an enclosed rink open all year round for hockey and for other activities depending on the demand.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• R. Lieberg discussed his best estimates for minimum construction costs for an indoor rink, a covered rink and an outdoor rink</li><li>• P. Karnovsky stated that one of the first things that R. Lieberg said was that a deficiency at Larz Anderson Park now is the scoreboard on top of the shed, but she stated that another major deficiency is there is no glass. However, she thinks that part of the magic about the Larz Anderson Park location is the essence of the Larz Anderson experience. She asked if R. Lieberg would ever build a rink these days that would not have glass. R. Lieberg stated that most of the rinks with no hockey are few and far between: most entities depend on that to service. He stated that most of the pleasure rinks have no glass, but will have a short set of boards along the edge both to sit and stop. It is less of a safety measure and more of a convenience. He would say anyone relying on this rink for a competitive environment youth/adult is going to want to use the rink the way they need to, and it involves glass. There are ways to set it up so you have short glass and then add netting.</li><li>• N. O'Connor was confused about the additional months on either side of what we usually get, she wondered if you were adding a month open on either side for an open air season or a roofed season. R. Lieberg stated that if we use</li></ul>	
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	<p>refrigerated ice, using the mechanical system to refrigerate the ice for an open ice sheet, a normal ice sheet naturally refrigerates the air over a 3 month window. If you artificially refrigerate that with equipment, you could add a few weeks to a month on either end of that season. However, it could get dicey for extensions into a warm spring. Covering that, even if it is open, semi-enclosed rink, would extend it to a 5-month period.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• W. Sheridan stated that we have artificially refrigerated ice at Larz, but it has historically only lasted a short period of time. She stated that what is interesting is adding a month on each end and possibly getting to 5 months with a covered facility with open sides. R. Lieberg stated that with a covered facility you are able to be a lot more predictable about your season.</li><li>• A. Bellalta stated that she did see a comment about this space not just being the focus of ice hockey and skating. She would like to know if a comparison was done on what other sports could go there and make sure that we include that in what the cost of what this facility will be long terms, so it just doesn't serve the ice skating community. She knows that Mark is very concerned about the historic quality and she is thrilled to see that. She wonders what type of cost implications that has with an ice rink and a pool.</li><li>• An anonymous attendee wondered if we could co-share facilities with Dexter. M. Bartlett stated that Dexter has gone to one rink and some of their programming has come to Larz Anderson Park.</li><li>• Martha Davis asked the Commission a question. She wonders if the fact that Larz Anderson Park is unique in the area figures into the calculus at all? There are probably two dozen or more enclosed rinks within a few miles of here, but only one open air rink. How does that figure into the analysis? Mark stated that the decision-making process is all around what the community wants. He thinks is will be a great graphic to capture and show. He thinks that is part of the analysis work. E. Gallentine stated that we need to really balance the need. The</li></ul>	
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	<p>Park and Recreation Commission has been fielding requests for years for improved and expanded access to ice and that it is in the Parks and Open Space Master Plan. She stated that we don't really have an ice rink, it is being held together with a temporary system and some decisions need to be made. There will be tradeoffs but the character of Larz Anderson Park is critical. She stated that just because there is a rink at a certain location does not mean there is available ice time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An Attendee asked if the name will be maintained at the rink. E. Gallentine stated that there has been no discussion on name change.</li> <li>• R. Lieberg and Georgie discussed uses for the waste heat produced from the rink. A pool is a warm moist environment and a rink is a cold dry environment, so when putting those two shelves together you need to have a rock solid wall that is tight.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Adjourn</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• W. Sheridan wanted to reiterate that this is just the start of the process, it's exciting to see so many community members engaged and she encourages everyone to stick with it throughout the duration. She stated that the community input is critical to the success. She thanked the team for a great presentation and a kick off meeting.</li> <li>• W. Sheridan moved to adjourn. Seconded by J. Bain. All in favor.</li> </ul>	

**Next Meeting: Location: Zoom Webinar**

**A true record**

**Attest**     Jessica White    

**Date: 06/24/21**