

Park & Recreation Commission Larz Anderson Skating Rink Task Force Meeting Minutes  
8/10/21

Park and Recreation Commission	<b>Meeting Minutes</b>
--------------------------------	------------------------

**Date:** August 10, 2021, 4:00 PM

**Place:** Zoom Webinar

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

**Commissioners Absent:**

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

**Task Force Members Absent:**

**Staff:** Erin Gallentine: Commissioner of Public Works, Alexandra Vecchio: Parks and Open Space Director, Jessica White: Parks and Open Space Assistant

TOPIC	KEY POINTS/DISCUSSION	
<b>Welcome and Introductions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>W. Sheridan opened the meeting and thanked everyone for coming. She thanked everyone for continuing to be here through the process. She stated that everyone’s thoughts and opinions are valued. She encourages the public to stay involved through the whole process.</li> </ul>	
<b>Review Task Force Role</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Task Force Members and staff introductions were made.</li> <li>W. Sheridan reviewed the role of the Task Force. She encouraged everyone to speak freely and to ask questions.</li> </ul>	
<b>Review Goal of this Working Session &amp; Future Public Meeting Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Vecchio stated that this is a working session for the task force, she is hopeful that by the end of this session the task force will have a recommendation to the Park and Recreation Commission on what other sites the consultant team should be looking at for the feasibility study. She stated Larz Anderson is the first site, but we are looking for a second site recommendation that will come from this task force, and then will go before the Park and Recreation Commission September 14, 2021. A. Vecchio stated that we are not focusing on components/programming of the rink, but looking at best alternative site for a feasibility study to be considered. The next Public Meeting is August 19, 2021. She stated that we want both the public and task force to attend, and the Consultant team is being asked to present some early design ideas for the potential layout of the rink at Larz. This would be based off the comments from the public forums, previous work and information this task force and Park</li> </ul>	

	<p>and Recreation Commission has presented to the consultant. She is hopeful that after tonight’s meeting there will be a vote from the task force that will go before the September 14<sup>th</sup> Park and Recreation Commission Meeting. She stated that we will then have another public meeting on Sept 27<sup>th</sup> looking at the second site, looking at the design components and how it would fit overall. October 20<sup>th</sup> will be the 4<sup>th</sup> public meeting, which would include the preferred scheme/layout for the ice rink for each site. At this point there will be a little more detail on parking and traffic as well.</p>	
<p><b>Review and Discuss Alternative Sites</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Task force Working Group at their last meeting went through the full list of possible options for a location given the space needed for a rink footprint, and narrowed that list down to 4 sites for consideration being talked about here tonight.</li> <li>• W. Sheridan presented the Task Force with satellite images of 4 sites and talked through the high level descriptions of each site.</li> </ul> <p><b>Newbury College</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 3.14 acres and is newly acquired by the Town</li> <li>2. Directly adjacent to Fisher Hill parking lot</li> <li>3. This lot contains two buildings, one of which is currently occupied by the Building Department. The Town soon will start a master planning process managed by the Planning and Community Development Department for this site for the Town.</li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E. Gallentine stated that it will be a large stakeholder Committee that will involve multiple boards and commissions. She sees it as being as an extended process as they think about all of the Town needs and likely to be an intensive process. This site is on the list, but another group is discussing possible other alternatives for this site.</li> </ul> <p><b>Putterham Woods</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 15.38 Acres</li> <li>2. It is part of the golf course, it is under the jurisdiction of the Recreation Department and is adjacent to the fire department, golf course and the current parking lot golf course.</li> <li>3. Putterham Woods is used for passive recreation right</li> </ol>	

now.

4. It is article 97 protect and has wetlands protection acts and regulations
5. The 18 hole golf course is the largest town old green space with over 120 acres. The makeup of the golf course was detailed.
6. The significant tree damage/ microburst in this area was discussed. It is in poor condition. There is a need for significant tree removal due to the results of that storm damage. It is an area in need of a significant investment of capital dollars for tree removal to make it safe.

#### **Soule Recreation Center ( Upper)**

1. 4.24 Acres
2. Accessed off of Hammond street, but has a back entrance off of Heath Street.
3. W. Sheridan detailed the layout of Soule.
4. Brookline Recreation programs it. J. Lewitus, W. Sheridan and P. Karnovsky discussed the Beaver Country Day agreement.
5. It is natural grass athletic field and is in the future CIP. It has been discussed as a possible space to expand the footprint and the width of the field to turn it into a full size athletic field that could be programmed for High School usage.

#### **Dane Park**

1. 17.23 Acres
2. Adjacent to the MSC along Hammond Street and the golf course. It has two separate areas but is contiguous along a narrow stretch of the golf course/
3. It is the only passive woodland park in the town with unique formation.
4. This space has no current parking on it.
5. It is article 97 and has wetland protection act regulations.
6. The 2008 renovation details at Dane were detailed.
  - J. Jette and E. Gallentine discussed the private property and property further beyond that abuts what was Pine Manor.
  - P. Karnovksy wanted some clarification, she feels that Putterham Woods was described from being separate from the golf course, similar to Dane Park. W. Sheridan stated that Putterham Woods is part of the overall golf course,

	<p>although it's not part of the 18-hole course. She stated that the land is under jurisdiction of the Recreation Department as part of the Golf Course.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• J. Bain wondered if someone could speak to what is underneath Putterham Woods. He wonders if it's all ledge and rock, and would be expensive to remove if that site was a chosen. E. Gallentine stated that both Dane Park and Putterham Woods have a good amount of ledge. It would all be ultimately part of the feasibility considerations. She stated that the consultant team felt that that isn't something that should inhibit your conversation, because a rink would be built on a concrete slab. She feels like there isn't too much we can say or know without it being studied. L. Jackson would second what E. Gallentine said and there is not a lot we do know about Putterham Woods. L. Jackson will say that there is quite a bit of ledge, a small stream does flow through and there is passive recreation there. There is a lot of tree damage in that area. There is a Friends Group that is working on how to develop more passive Recreation in that area.</li><li>• A. Bellalta asked that when KMDG looked at Putterham, if they felt one site/area was better than the other. E. Gallentine stated that they haven't gotten that far.</li><li>• E. Gallentine stated that Dane Park is identified as a Park and is accessible, while Putterham Woods is an informal, passive, programmed natural space not designated as a park or conservation land.</li><li>• J. Bain asked if any part of Putterham Woods is actually flat for construction of a facility. W. Sheridan thinks what is considered flat would be confirmed by the consultant team.</li><li>• W. Sheridan stated that we have a deficit of field space, so with the possibility of losing another field like Upper Soule would be very difficult to replace.</li><li>• J. Carroll agrees with W. Sheridan regarding Soule.</li><li>• J. Jette thinks that it would be helpful when a consultant puts down an outline of what the</li></ul>	
--	---	--

	<p>footprint of something would look like. She stated that as far as Soule goes is the only location that we would consider workable the field? She is asking because if this continues to be an outdoor facility the rink would be accessed during times are less intensive for the field, and wondered if that was a possibility. E. Gallentine stated that given the layout of Soule and current programming that has been discussed, the only place where a facility would fit would be redesigning the upper field and parking lot together. That is the only locations given the configuration of the site that would fit a rink.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A. Bellalta stated that when that site was looked at for the school weren't the homes adjacent to the upper parking lot purchased. J. Jette stated that the Select Board has approved their sale.</li><li>• N. O'Connor stated that the upper field seems like a wonderful location. However, to lose all the programming would be a huge problem. She stated that we don't have enough fields as is. She stated that all the little streets around there are narrow and not great for a lot of traffic as is. She stated that the houses on Heath Street side abut school property, so now you are getting into school property. She thinks we lose too much in programming to consider Soule.</li><li>• N. O'Connor stated that Newbury would be shoehorned in and would have shared parking with the Reservoir. She thinks for that space in her mind, she thinks there are too many unknowns for what the Town in general wants to do with that area.</li><li>• J. Jette thinks that there has been some consideration for recreational uses for the Newbury site, but she thinks from town meeting perspective there is a lot of discussion about affordable housing in particular there.</li><li>• P. Karnovksy is confused on Putterham and is wondering if the only space at the 120+ acres of the Putterham is where the Putterham woods is. She wonders if it could be accommodated somewhere else on that site. N. O'Connor stated that we are undertaking a golf course master plan and golf course club house master plan. Her sense of the space is that we would have to</li></ul>	
--	---	--

	<p>reconfigure things over there if at all possible. W. Sheridan would suggest putting language into our vote or motion to study the Brookline Golf Course at Putterham Woods, which would incorporate the whole parcel and would not interfere with the golf course. She thinks we need to be clear in our language. L. Jackson wanted to reinforce what N. O'Connor had said. She stated that we are embarking on an RFP Master plan for the golf course/club house and surrounding areas; it is being drafted for right now but does not include an ice rink study. L. Jackson thinks we could vote that way, but it would be separate and articulate language as long as it doesn't interfere. L. Jackson stated that right now the vote was just written as studying golf course area to see if you can minimize the size of the golf course area. She wonders if we were to add specific language to say that we want to study the area that does not interfere with an 18 hole golf course, but will also not interfere with the current RFP Master plan for both the golf course and club house.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• E. Gallentine discussed what Article 97 is. She stated that if the Town decided to build an indoor ice rink, even though it is a recreational use, there would be a process with the Commonwealth to replace the loss of square footage and put it into a protective status. An example of this was given with Fisher Hill Reservoir Park. N. O'Connor wondered if it is different if a roof with open sides was built in terms of Article 97. E. Gallentine stated that is definitely something that the Commonwealth is open to talking about.</li><li>• A. Urbas stated that in hearing the feedback, it seems to him the golf area is an enormous site and would be the most accommodating with the most minimal loss. He would support something there and is fine with special language. He wonders if that course has to be an 18 hole course. He stated that we have our RFP that could do the work on the needs for the skating facility that could go hand and hand with the RFP happening separately. He thinks it could be complementary. L. Jackson stated if the community wants to look at that, the</li></ul>	
--	--	--

	<p>community/group can certainly do that. She thinks anything is possible. L. Jackson wonders if Soule is Article 97 protected. She loves the idea of rink combined with field. E. Gallentine stated that Soule is Article 97 as well. She stated that there is an additional protected status on Larz Anderson Park under the Land and Water Conservation Fund that follows the same guidelines, but has the process that is prescribed through the Department of Interior at the federal government level. The protection is associated with various properties that receive federal grants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• J. Carroll stated in terms of golf Course, there was a large discussion around putting a 9<sup>th</sup> school at that location. One issue is the golf course is mostly wetlands, and you cannot build there. He thinks turning this golf course into a 9 hole course seriously diminishes the golf course. It won't do as well as it does now. He stated that there is a parcel of land where a maintenance shed was removed and a new one was built. He thinks that the specific location would be a decent location to look at. He thinks depending on the facility there needs to be thought around increasing parking and looking at other areas to expand for that. W. Sheridan stated that whatever design the consultants come back with, there will be time to look, consider, reflect and comment on positive and negative. She stated that today's goal is just to select the second site.</li> <li>• L. Jackson wanted to support what J. Carroll said. L. Jackson stated that the soil has been studied and it seems to be a place where large mechanic equipment sinks into the ground and doesn't come out.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Public Comment</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• R. Nangle, Town Meeting member addressed the Commission. He is very disappointed that 3 alternate sites are from his precinct, when it is well known the Town Meeting Members in his precinct are heavily engaged in this issue. He stated that they are all very supportive of this rink at Larz Anderson and to not contact anyone of them is just very disappointing to him. He stated that Dane Park is a disgraceful idea. He stated that any of these sites is going to create</li> </ul>	

	<p>tremendous opposition and doesn't understand why you would even think of even putting it at Soule with all the field issues he hears about year after year. He stated that Dane Park is a beloved conservation site with a Friends group. He stated that none of these people were contacted. He stated that Putterham woods is just a ridiculous location, next to the most heavily trafficked/ accident prone intersection in town. He stated that you need to be looking at a site that people can get to. He stated that when he voted for Newbury he was thinking in terms of Recreation, he thinks that a lot of people were. He thinks the Town should have done a better job putting together a list of alternative sites.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• J. Flanagan addressed the Commission. She is a Town meeting member, Co-Chair of Friends of Putterham Woods, Friend of the Soule and Dane park. She has been in Contact with the friends of Larz, many of who are in support of the outdoor rink. She wanted to express her extreme disappointment in this committee for coming up with 4 sites in one precinct. It seems like an assault on this precinct, Green Space Alliance and all the Friends Groups. She stated that to J. Bain's' point the entirety of Hammond street is ledge. She doesn't understand how you plan on building a skating rink on that amount of ledge. She stated that these sites are appalling and the neighborhood is extremely opposed to anything mentioned in this plan. She is unsure what sites were looked at, because to her, this committee was not looking at accessibility. She is extremely disappointed. She wanted to mention that Town meeting never voted on a golf course master plan that talked about reducing the golf course.</li><li>• N. O'Connor stated that in terms of this indoor rink we are in discussion. She stated that one idea is to repair or completely redo what is up there now at Larz Anderson. She stated that with climate change, she thinks we will lose days and weeks every year if you don't have a roof. She stated that with a roof you would get more time each season. Personally, she doesn't envision this as an indoor rink somewhere. She</li></ul>	
--	--	--



	<p>stated that we discussed having an alternative site to at least consider, so that the work could be done at Larz Anderson with some ideas and taking that concise footprint and putting it somewhere else. She knows it's a beloved place. She knows that Putterham Woods keeps popping up. She stated that we are looking at the size and what could fit. She stated that we were tasked to pick an alternate location. She doesn't think we are going to end up with an absolute indoor rink, she doesn't think that it is realistic. She would love to see it somewhere in this Town, but she doesn't think it is realistic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A. Bellalta wanted to acknowledge Richard and Jane's input, she knows a lot of people would feel that way. She thinks that we have been tasked with a difficult job to look at an alternative site. She would like to agree on somehow looking at Putterham Golf Course, she thinks in her eyes the golf course has underutilized lands. She stated that for the longest time we have been trying to make the golf course attractive to more of the community. She stated that it is a huge open space and we are deficient in land. She is not suggesting a reduction to a 9 hole, but with all sources we have maybe there is a way of reconfiguring a hole or two. It might just end up being at Larz, but she thinks we need to take a look, and take into consideration that this is a huge open space. She think that we don't just say Putterham Woods, but look at the perimeter of the golf course and see what we come up with.</li><li>• W. Sheridan stated that if we were to take a vote now it would be a vote to pick your top choice, and if there was a majority we would then talk about that space to come up with a motion to then move forward to the Park and Recreation Commission. She stated that it would then go the Park and Recreation Commission Public Meeting in September where there would an opportunity for public Comment and then the Commission would vote to accept or not accept the recommendation of the task force.</li><li>• P. Karnovsky wanted to be clear to Richard, Jane and John, that she never was thinking the golf course goes from 18 holes to 9 holes.</li></ul>	
--	--	--

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• J. Bain stated that we want to bring the community into the golf course and not just for golf. He thinks we need to have a vision of what can actually take place there to bring in the entire community. He thinks the golf course should stay 18 holes.</li> <li>• J. Carroll is very confused. He stated that we are talking about the golf course, which was not a suggested location from the previous meeting. He thinks we're going off on this tangent. He doesn't see the purpose of discussing the golf course in context of this meeting.</li> <li>• L. Jackson wanted to ask politely if this group wanted to hear staff recommendations. E. Gallentine stated that conversation has been open, she will defer to the task force. She thinks that we have provided information as it relates to the context, status and activities on site. She feels that she has provided the information that her and her staff had. A. Vecchio will second that, and say that the 4 presented here came from the narrowed down list discussed at the last Task Force meeting.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Task Force Vote on Recommendation of Alternative Study Site</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• W. Sheridan stated she will now be asking each task force member to vote on their top choice for alternative site locations to be studied as part of the feasibility work by the consultant team. If there is a majority, then it will move to a motion with specific language. There are 4 sites, Newbury college site, Upper Soule site, Dane park site and the Putterham Woods. She stated that many people here tonight asked in regards to the Putterham Woods site to respectfully consider surrounding underutilized perimeter</li> <li>• P. Karnovsky- voted for the Putterham Woods site with language that would include perimeter</li> <li>• Urbas- voted for the Putterham Woods site. It is his understanding that the RFP includes things like traffic studies and respects that whatever site is picked is adjacent to someone in Brookline, so he is glad the study will include</li> </ul>	

	<p>things that will incorporate how it will impact the area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• J Carroll- voted for the Newbury College site</li><li>• A. Bellalta- voted for the Putterham woods site that included the surrounding underutilized perimeter area</li><li>• J. Thibaut- voted or the Putterham woods Site.</li><li>• J. Jette- She wanted to say for the record she has some PTSD from the ninth school discussion. There are the same few spots in Town for the for same many uses and it's very difficult. She would state Larz is her favorite site. She agrees with J. Bain about bringing more people to the golf course; she doesn't like the idea of using the woods itself. She thinks Dane is a nonstarter. She would love to see more people get use out of the golf course itself. She would vote Putterham Woods site while respectfully considering surrounding underutilized perimeter.</li><li>• N. O'Connor agrees with J. Jette. There is no space and she understands Jane and Richards feelings about these available sizes of land on that side of town. She stated that Larz is her first choice, but she thinks we need a second site and she would vote for Putterham with the additional language.</li><li>• D. Driscoll- stated that all comments are great to hear. He thinks there could be some underutilized land at Putterham and he would vote Putterham Woods as his first choice.</li><li>• J. Bain voted for Newbury College as his is alternative site location, but wanted to state that Larz is his first.</li><li>• W. Sheridan would vote for Putterham Woods and consider surrounding underutilized perimeter spaces.</li><li>• W. Sheridan stated that we have a vote of 8-2 in favor of Putterham woods with respectfully considering underutilized perimeter property.</li><li>• W. Sheridan moved that the task force recommend the alternative site locations for the ice skating feasibility study be conducted at the Putterham Woods location while considering surrounding underutilized perimeter spaces. Seconded by A. Urbas. A roll call vote was</li></ul>	
--	--	--

Park & Recreation Commission Larz Anderson Skating Rink Task Force Meeting Minutes  
8/10/21

	<p>taken. All in favor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A. Urbas wanted to would love to see the woods maintained as much as possible. He doesn't want anyone to think he is in favor of getting rid of the woods. He stated that we have the great fortune of having two studies happening at the same time, anything we can do to have those work in some capacity would ultimately benefit the community. J. Carroll supports the effort to make any property in Brookline all-inclusive and welcoming. A. Bellalta agrees.</li> </ul>	
<b>Discuss Next Steps</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The next steps were discussed.</li> </ul>	
<b>Adjourn</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• W. Sheridan thanked everyone for their feedback and opinion. She encourages robust participation from the public.</li> <li>• N. O'Connor moved to adjourn. Seconded by J. Bain. All in favor.</li> </ul>	

**Next Meeting: Location: Zoom Webinar**

**A true record**

**Attest**     Jessica White    

**Date: 08/10/21**