

City of Cambridge

MEETING

ROUNDTABLE MEETING ON PLAYING FIELDS IN THE CITY

Monday, April 30, 2001

TIME

5:55 p. m.

PRESIDING OFFICER

Mayor Anthony D. Galluccio

PRESENT:

Mayor Galluccio, Councillors Born, Braude, Davis, Decker, Vice Mayor Maher, Councillors Reeves, Sullivan and Toomey.

Also present were:

Robert W. Healy, City Manager,
Richard Rossi, Deputy City Manager,
Lisa Peterson, Assistant to the City
Manager,
Jill Herold, Assistant City Manager for
Human Services,
Paul Ryder, Director of Recreation,
Greg Garber, Superintendent of Parks and
Forestry,
Donald Down District Park Supervisor -
District 1,
Shawn Headley, District Park Supervisor -
District 2,
Vincent Falcione, District Park Supervisor -
District 3 and
Joe Kovalyan, Turf and landscape Manager.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION POINTS ATTACHED

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at seven o'clock and
eighteen minutes p. m. on motion of
Councillor Born

SUMMARY OF ISSUES AND REQUESTS

1. In-depth analysis of the state of the fields is a four-year process due to all of the variables. This is year two.
2. The biggest problem for Cambridge playing fields is compaction because of the high level of use.
3. The only park for which non-residents can obtain playing field permits is Danehy Park, but since priority goes to youth sports, City-sponsored leagues, resident requests and Cambridge company requests, in that order, there is little or no time available for non resident use.
4. A question was raised as to whether some of the softball fields, which are not scheduled up to capacity, could be converted to other use for other sports, where demand exceeds capacity.
5. The need to create and appoint members to a permanent Green Ribbon Open Space Committee was noted.
6. Residents can obtain permits for field use, but the fact that a resident signs the application does not guarantee that the team is all residents.
7. There was a request for information as to how other land-poor cities deal with their open space needs. (Vice Mayor Maher).
8. Wider distribution of the Green Ribbon Report was urged.
9. There was a request to rethink the Lusitania Field issue. (Councillor Toomey).

ATHLETIC FIELDS

General Notes, Maintenance Practices & Site-Specific Characterization

General Notes on City Athletic Fields

The comprehensive approach to turf care and athletic field preparation over the last two-plus seasons, as outlined below, has resulted in enhanced playing surfaces, particularly with respect to participant safety, and more uniform quality control among all sites City-wide.

The primary challenges facing those who manage athletic fields in a dense, urban, cool-season environment are:

- Soil compaction, due to the near-constant use of most fields during the active growing season, and the evolving expansion of use during periods of turf dormancy;
- The limited effectiveness of certain cultural practices as outlined below without significant periods of program inactivity;
- Damage and contamination linked to the presence of dogs and their sometimes-insensitive owners; and,
- Winter kill and disease as a result of extended snow and ice cover.

The addition of a staff Turf and Landscape Manager in mid-1999 has proven invaluable in inculcating prudent maintenance methodologies among the Division staff, as well as ensuring adequate monitoring of similar tasks performed by service contractors.

Maintenance Practices (effective April 2000)

<i>Task</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Target Period</i>
Soil test	once annually	April 15-May 15
Dethatching	once annually	first 3 weeks of April
Infield preparation	once annually	April
Mowing	once weekly	mid April to early November
Infield maintenance	3x weekly	in season, April to August
Fertilization	3x annually	early May (with seeding) July mid-September (with seeding)
Slice seeding	twice annually	early May (with fertilizer) mid-September (with fertilizer)

<i>Task</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Target Period</i>
Core aeration	3x annually (soccer) 2x annually (baseball)	active growing season
Deep-tine aeration	as needed per conditions	as determined by staff
Liming	as needed per soil test	late November
Infield reconditioning	once annually	fall season per conditions

Site-Specific Characterization of City Athletic Fields

<i>Site</i>	<i>Field Type</i>	<i>Examples of Recent Work (18 months)</i>	<i>Examples of Planned Work (2001)</i>
Donnelly	Little League (2), softball (1), soccer	Additional slice seed above norm, infield renovation April 2001	Modification of infield irrigation
Sennott	Soccer (2), softball (1)	Sod replacement of soccer area Fall 1999	Infield renovation by May 2001, above-norm slice seeding
Gold Star Mothers' (Gore Street)	Softball, soccer	Additional slice seed above norm, infield renovation April 2001	New irrigation system installation underway
Ahern	Softball, soccer (2)	Sod replacement of soccer area Fall 1999	Infield renovation by May 2001, above-norm slice seeding
Pacific	Soccer (2)	Sod replacement Summer 1999	Above-norm aeration & slice-seeding
Hoyt	Softball, soccer	Sod replacement Fall 1999	Infield renovation by May 2001
Lindstrom	Little League	Infield renovation April 2001	Increased fertility program
Sacramento	Soccer	Regrading & sod replacement Fall 1999	Continue normal program
Glacken	Softball, soccer	Major topdressing, seeding & aeration Fall 1999	New irrigation installation nearly complete, sod replacement in early May 2001
Rafferty	Soccer	Sod replacement Fall 1999	New irrigation installation Summer 2001
Comeau	Little League	Infield renovation April 2001	Continue normal program

Rindge	High school baseball	Infield renovation twice (April 2000-01)	New irrigation installation nearly complete
Cambridge Common	Softball, soccer	Major topdressing, seeding & aeration Fall 1999	Infield renovation in May 2001
Raymond	Softball, soccer	Regrading & sod replacement Fall 1999	New irrigation installation Summer 2001
Tobin	Little League (3)	Remedial drainage and sod replacement (one field) Fall 2000, infield renovation (all three) April 2001	Modification of infield irrigation
Samp	Little League	Infield renovation April 2001	Continue normal program
Russell	Football, soccer	Major bleacher repair Spring 2000, above norm slice seeding	Sod replacement (football), scoreboard replacement Summer 2001

*Department of Public Works
Parks & Forestry Division
Spring 2001*

ATHLETIC FIELD PERMIT OVER-VIEW

Priority for the athletic use of City fields is given to Cambridge youth leagues, Cambridge Rindge and Latin athletic teams and DHSP sponsored adult leagues. Typically, these specific programs will submit season long schedule requests after the first of the calendar year. The permit schedule is then established for the spring, summer and fall season. After that process has been completed and the youth needs are met, the Recreation Division attempts to meet the requests of various non-city sponsored adult programs such as softball, baseball, soccer and ultimate frisbee. These adult requests are filled on a first come/first serve basis and the limited availability of field space.

In regard to residency, all non-city sponsored adult programs requesting use of city fields must have a 50% Cambridge residents or be a Cambridge business or organization. The one exception to this rule is the use of Mayor Thomas W. Danehy Park. Because this site was constructed with state funding, it must be considered a regional facility open to surrounding communities.

A large percentage (75%) of Cambridge fields are scheduled for Cambridge youth. The specific fields scheduled this season per program are as follows:

A. YOUTH PROGRAMS

1. Cambridge Youth Soccer – Cambridge Common, Raymond Street, Sennott Park, Sacramento Field, Tobin School, Ahern Field, Rafferty Park, Pacific Street, Gold Star Mother's Park (Gore Street) and Danehy Park.
2. Little League Baseball – Comeau Field, Samp Field, Lindstrom Field, Donnelly Field and Tobin School Fields.
3. Babe Ruth Baseball – Rindge and St. Peter's Baseball Fields.
4. Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School – Danehy Park, Russell Field, St. Peter's Field and Rindge Field.
5. Cambridge Girls Softball – Danehy Park, St. Peter's Field, Hoyt Field, Gold Star Mother's (Gore Street), Ahern, Donnelly Field and Glacken Field.
6. Cambridge Elementary School Intramural Program – Hoyt Field, Donnelly Field, Sennott Park, Danehy Park, Rafferty Park and the Tobin School.
7. DHSP Flag Football League – Sennott Park, Rindge Field, Ahern Field, Donnelly Field and Glacken Field.

B. ADULT PROGRAMS

1. DHSP Recreation Division – Municipal Softball League – Danehy Park, St. Peter's Field, Hoyt Field and Donnelly Field.
2. Company, organization or resident softball – Donnelly Field, Cambridge Common, Ahern Field, Danehy Park and Raymond Street Park.
3. Adult soccer and ultimate frisbee – Danehy Park and Glacken Field.

ATHLETIC FIELD USAGE

I. TOTAL FIELD USAGE

- A. ADULT USE - 24.3 %
- B. YOUTH USE - 75.7 %

II. FIELD USAGE BY PROGRAM

- A. TOTAL NUMBER OF PERMITTED HOURS - 18,340 HOURS
- B. YOUTH PROGRAMS
 - 1. YOUTH SOCCER - 5,390 HOURS OF PERMITS = 29.3% OF TOTAL.
 - 2. LITTLE LEAGUE BASEBALL - 4,004 HOURS OF PERMITS = 21.8% of total.
 - 3. BABE RUTH BASEBALL - 1,716 HOURS OF PERMITS = 9.3% OF TOTAL.
 - 4. CAMBRIDGE RINDGE AND LATIN HIGH SCHOOL - 1,452 HOURS OF PERMITS = 7.9%
 - 5. GIRL'S YOUTH SOFTBALL - 512 HOURS OF PERMITS = 2.7%
 - 6. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL INTRAMURAL PROGRAM - 368 HOURS OF PERMITS = 2%
 - 7. POP WARNER FOOTBALL - 258 HOURS OF PERMITS = 1.4%
 - 8. YOUTH CENTERS FLAG FOOTBALL - 160 HOURS OF PERMITS = .87%
- C. ADULT PROGRAMS
 - 1. ADULT SOFTBALL - 3040 HOURS OF PERMITS = 16.5%
 - 2. ADULT SOCCER/FRISBEE - 1440 HOURS OF PERMITS = 7.8%

Athletic Fields and Programs

Park Name (w/Neighborhood Number)	Park Size (Acres)	Football	Soccer (Adult)	Soccer (Youth)	Field Hockey	LL Baseball	Softball	Field Hockey/ Lacrosse	Babe Ruth CRLS Baseball
1 Gold Star Mothers Park (Gore Street Park)	3.6			1			1		
1 Kennedy School/Ahern Field	2.6			2		1	1		
3 Harrington School/Donnelly Field	7.2			1		2	1		
4 Sennott Park	2.7			2			1		
5 Lindstrom Field/Morse School	1.3					1			
7 Hoyt Field	4.5			1			1		
8 Sacramento Field	1.2			1			1		
9 Cambridge Common	8.6			2			1		
9 Danehy Park, St. Peters Field	57.2		3	1			4		1
10 Tobin School/Father Callahan Park	3.3			1		1			
11 Rindge Field	6.5								1
11 Russell Field, Comeau Field	10.3	1	1	1		2			
13 Glacken Field	3.3		1				1		

Note:

*Field Hockey and Lacrosse Programs will be utilizing the Danehy Park full-size soccer fields.

*Full size (Adult) Soccer Fields are also used by Cambridge Youth Soccer.

*Magazine Beach Field (MDC) is proposed to add one full-size soccer field, one youth soccer field and a little league field.

ATHLETIC FIELDS

Planned Capital Improvements

Danehy Park

Improvements to this facility include: the installation of a full-size, lighted multi-purpose artificial surface fields; a four hundred meter running track; resodding of soccer field number one, and the replacement of the existing irrigation system; renovation to existing three totlots; lighting and pathway improvements; and installation of a new sand volleyball court. The construction will be completed this summer.

Glacken Field

Irrigation and sodding to be completed this spring. The total renovation of the field is anticipated to be funded in FY03.

Fresh Pond at Neville Manor

We are currently contracting with a landscape architect for portions of Fresh Pond Reservation. A youth soccer field will be constructed at Neville Manor in 2002.

Donnelly Field

The two (2) existing little league fields and one (1) existing softball field will be reconstructed with improved drainage and irrigation systems, in 2002. Community meetings on this reconstruction will take place this fall.

Area 4: Broadway/Harvard Street Park

The Master Planning process for the Area 4 parks, including the park at 238 Broadway/Harvard Street, is underway. The next meeting will be held on May 17th at 6:30 p.m. at the Pisani center at Washington Elms. A multipurpose field may be constructed at this site. Construction is anticipated in 2003.

Magazine Beach

The Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) has contracted with a landscape architect for the redevelopment of this parcel. Our hope is that the renovation will be completed in 2002.

Russell Field

A landscape architect is under contract for the complete renovation of Russell Field. A football field, two (2) little league fields, and a full-size soccer field will be constructed/reconstructed. Current plans have the construction taking place in 2002.

The Shortage of Athletic Fields Issues and Solutions - A Synopsis

As a member of the above Association I am writing this on my own in an attempt to acquaint you with this issue.

We would like to see if there might be a way we could work together to find solutions to the problem of the lack of enough athletic fields.

We realize that we are a special interest group, the "Jocks" if you will, and we are competing for uses of land with other groups with different objectives. We realize other groups have legitimate desires and we would hope to be able to find solutions that represent all. However the problem is serious.

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The Problem:

For the athletic fields interests the real problem is the severe lack of enough "large fields" for everyone in every field sport - Baseball, football, soccer, lacrosse, field hockey, track and field, ultimate Frisbee, softball etc.

What makes us say there are not enough fields?

It is evidenced by deteriorating fields, sports that cannot find playing time at all, sports in which the schools alone overfill prime time so that some schools cannot run programs, never mind the adult or private youth organizations that need time. Furthermore other communities that have 3 times as many fields as Cambridge per capita are still fully booked. Leaders in every sport are unanimous in needing more fields.

How did this happen? After all Cambridge added the huge Danehy complex in 1980 adding 4 large fields and 3 baseball fields.!

The reason is simple-

1. The demand for fields has increased amazingly in the last 20 years.
2. The actual supply of fields has not increased that much because other fields were eliminated.

The following things have happened:

1. Demand increase - there has been a demand increase of over 600% since 1980.

A. **Women's Sports** - The growth of Women's sports is in the process of doubling the number of school, youth and adult programs in every sport - even football.

B. **Multi Season Sports** - Soccer is now played in the spring competing with baseball instead of only in the fall so that multipurpose fields used for one sport in the spring and another in the fall are no longer a solution.

C. **Over use creates need for more maintenance.** Because fields are used so often they deteriorate quicker requiring more expensive replacement and maintenance. It is necessary to take some fields out of circulation for at least a season in order to repair them.

E. **New coed sports** - New Coed field sports are being formed - ultimate frisbee and soccer are two examples.

What was the situation 20 years ago?

FALL- football and soccer

SPRING- Baseball and Softball

Now what do you have?

FALL- Rugby, Soccer, Frisbee, Lacrosse, Field Hockey

SPRING- Baseball, Softball, Soccer, Frisbee

What has happened to the supply? Although Danehy added area, Portland Street was eliminated (and maybe Lusitania) and the rest of the area was used to separate baseball from the other sports. - a goal that we support. **In terms of number of fields there are 3 more baseball fields and 1 less rectangular field than there was in 1980.**

The fact is that the demand has overwhelmed the supply. Prime time (weekdays after school and weekends) is booked solid by schools alone, never mind other groups.

How Many Fields Do We Need?

How many fields do we need given that in a dense city you are probably not going to have enough for everyone anyway?

First Let us ask how many field would be enough if we had unlimited land.

There are two ways to try to get a handle on this. One is to try to find out how many groups need fields and when. The other is to see what towns that do have close to enough do.

The first way - and if you want the details I can provide them but the details are too complicated to go into here - yields a need for 6 to 27! more large fields (rectangular fields

that can be used for soccer, lacrosse, field hockey, ultimate frisbee, football, rugby etc.) I do not have the figures for baseball but I believe they are similar.

The second way yields some unbelievable results - Needham for example, with a population of 29,000 has more fields than Cambridge and estimates that it still needs 10 to 20% more to accommodate everyone. Natick is the same. Cambridge has a population of 101,000 (latest census). In broad terms Cambridge has *@ 23 baseball fields and 8 Rectangular fields*. If we were to assume that Needham's or Natick's field supply per capita was typical of the population at large we would, by simple multiplication, come to the conclusion that *Cambridge needs 69 baseball fields and 24 rectangular fields!*

Needless to say this would be impossible to achieve but it does illustrate the severity of the problem.

How many fields should we have? - At this point we don't have to make a decision on how many, it is only clear that we need a lot more and that we cannot afford to eliminate any present ones.

Solutions:

Goals

The following is a list of goals that we hope are reasonable:

1. **More fields**
2. **More fields**
3. **More fields**
4. **Keep the separation of fields for baseball and large rectangular fields** - making them multipurpose would not help since they now compete for space in the same season. Separate fields for football with plenty of rebuilding time because of the heavy use.
5. **Restore the neighborhood approach for rectangular fields as well as baseball** - Requiring players of rectangular field sports to travel to the other end of Cambridge has simply not worked and especially in East Cambridge has deprived the poor ethnic population of their native sport (soccer).
6. **Better maintenance** - fields should be removed from service periodically and regularly to let the grass recover and badly damaged heavy use areas should be resodded.
7. **Fields adjacent to schools should be multipurpose.** Baseball fields that require outfield fences should be relocated to other nearby locations without loss of field space.
8. **No Elimination of fields until alternatives are found.** Lusitania - Efforts should be made to find a solution that will not entail the loss of a field - screening or relocation nearby are possibilities. **The field should not be removed from service until an alternative is found.**

Specific Possibilities for enlarging or finding new field areas:

East Cambridge -

1. New fields (baseball and soccer) in MDC area by two towers?
2. Widen Ahearn by contracting parking area or narrowing Side Street, Provide goals.
3. Create one large rectangular field at Donnelly either by eliminating or making multipurpose one softball field.
4. Land take at least one other parcel (Fulkerson Street) for baseball.
5. When Kennedy is renovated. Make it 2 story so that field space is increased?

Cambridgeport

1. Eliminate 1 of two playground lots at Hoyt.
2. Consider Making Magazine Beach Baseball, little league, or tennis instead of Hoyt - any sport in which loss of ball in the water or in traffic is not expensive.
3. Then make Hoyt multipurpose.
4. Land take Rest of Pacific Street block for youth and possibly adult rectangular field
5. Look for another piece of land for little league or softball.
6. Restore Morse school field to multipurpose

Mid-Cambridge - Any ideas? This area basically has no fields.

West and North Cambridge

1. Either keep Lusitania as a field (any sport) or exchange it for another field at Fresh Pond or
2. Screen field from walkers, create meadow adjacent; or create meadow on current Lusitania, create new field in unused swamp area between there and Neville Manor. In any case a dialog should be started between the parties.
3. Investigate using part of state owned land by Arthur D. Little for fields and wildlife preserve (90 acres! - room for both!)
4. End of Mooney Street - Overlooked Parcel could be youth soccer or softball
5. Enlarge Glacken - make Glacken hardball,
6. Remove Fitzgerald fences, find alternative location for hardball.
7. Remove little league fences from Tobin, make multipurpose softball, install little league at Danehy instead.
8. Take part of Armory parking lot to enlarge Tobin.
9. Enlarge small soccer field at Danehy.
10. Take part of land adjacent to Russell for another large rectangular field

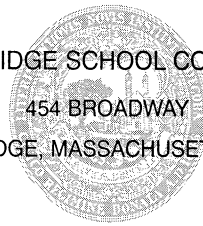
Of the above suggestions only the new fields by the 2 towers in East Cambridge; the Land takings at Fulkerson Street, Pacific Street, Russell, and Tobin; Mooney Street and the Arthur D. Little area actually add new area to the City total. Of these the only substantial ones are the 2 towers in East Cambridge and Arthur D. Little. The rest are small improvements or changes of use to increase neighborhood access to large rectangular fields. If Lusitania is lost without a substitute there will be little gain if any and the problem will simply get worse. A political solution is achievable and required to correct a hasty and ill advised promise made to the Neville Manor Opposition Group. Magazine Beach is not a new field, it was there in 1980 and before. If Cambridge will be able to limit use to Cambridge residents - which is doubtful - it might be a slight improvement to the extent it was not being already used by Cambridge Residents.

We hope this will help you.

Sincerely yours

John A. Kernochan
34 ½ Shepard Street

CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL COMMITTEE
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April 30, 2001

Mayor Anthony D. Galluccio
Cambridge City Hall
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Mayor Galluccio:

I am writing to bring some issues to your attention concerning playing fields in the City of Cambridge. This is an exciting time for Cambridge as the City looks at improving playing fields including a new track at Daney Park, a new football stadium at Russell Field, renovations and program expansion at Magazine Beach, and the acquisition of land in Area 4 for a new park. Thank you for your commitment to open space and quality playing fields.

I wanted this opportunity to address some exciting opportunities for playing fields in eastern Cambridge. The three issues I want to address are renovations to Donnelly Field, the expansion of Ahern Field and the design and proposed uses of the planned open space at the Department of Transportation.

Donnelly Field is in need of a major renovation. This is the only field east of Harvard Square and north of Massachusetts Avenue that can accommodate multiple uses at the same time. The field is used extensively and is seldom vacant. It continues to flood during and after heavy rains. The fields are not designed for high school programs and are not up to the quality of standards for high school athletes. This project is long overdue.

I ask that you keep several thoughts in mind as the City moves ahead with the expansion of Ahern Field and the rezoning of the area immediately around the field. I truly believe that it is imperative that housing be zoned around the perimeter of this park. Residents who reside in housing around parks become the vanguards of our parks and are a natural set of eyes watching activities and thus watching our children. The design of Ahern Park has the dire potential to be isolated from residents. I am concerned about the safety issue and implore you to support housing in and around this site. This will ensure its success.

The expansion of Ahern Field can work in conjunction with Donnelly Field. I would like to suggest an at-grade pedestrian crossing to connect these two fields and neighborhoods. It will also bring additional foot traffic to this area of the neighborhood that will have a concentration of telecom hotels. Two pedestrian crossings exist on Vassar Street serving MIT students. High school athletics consists of three teams including a varsity, junior varsity and freshmen. These teams need to be located at the same site or very close to each other at two or three practice locations. These teams require two fields for game days for the varsity and junior varsity. Ahern and Donnelly could be utilized to support each other and give flexibility to the youth sports organizations to utilize both fields interchangeably.

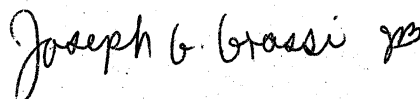
I also want to express my excitement and concerns over the field planned for the land occupied by the Department of Transportation. The City Council passed an order on October 2nd 2000 supporting the development of housing and open space and further that a full size soccer field be developed. It is my hope that if any open space is created, it will be created as a multipurpose field to also accommodate the sports of field hockey and lacrosse. The exclusive right to a field for a particular group does not serve the needs of all the residents.

Please take note that page 37 of the Green Ribbon Open Space Report specifically states that a recommended top priority is, *"The creation of 3 to 4 multipurpose fields that would accommodate soccer, field hockey and lacrosse equally is a priority. If possible, these fields should be located in the eastern half of Cambridge."* The City Council also passed an order supporting the recommendations outlined in the report including multipurpose fields. The multipurpose field at DOT will also work in conjunction with Ahern and Donnelly to create a complex of fields in one area.

I have enclosed a copy of a report on athletic participation at CRLS. The sections that I highlighted clearly state that children east of Harvard Square are participating at lower rates than children in 02138 and 02140 zip codes. The participation of children correlates to the location of athletic fields. Your careful attention to the design, use and scheduling of Donnelly, Ahern and the field at DOT, will work collectively to address the low level of participation in fall and spring sports.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Feel free to call me at 491-5240 if you have any questions or concerns.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Joseph G. Grassi" with a stylized flourish at the end.

Joseph G. Grassi

1725

Roundtable meeting
on playing fields
in the city.

April 30, 2001