

January 12, 2007 Questions submitted by Trish Weber

1. An article in the Bristol Press dated 11/16/2006, titled "Property plan downgraded", stated that slicing out the synthetic field, stadium seating and sound system would eliminate major sporting events and tournaments. Why then, are lights still part of the conceptual plan? What will the curfew be for the sports complex, and will it follow the same regulations as the park department, close at dusk?

Lighting is an element that the Committee feels is necessary for games and practices that happen both outside of daylight savings time as well as through early evening hours, as well as for safety purposes on the site in general. The Park Board will create the regulations for the site and this Committee has confidence in the Park Board's ability to balance demands for use with the related neighborhood impact. Please also note that the downsizing referred to the actual plan, not synthetic per se. Some of the smaller fields in the downsized plan may be synthetic.

2. What teams, leagues and schools will be using the sports complex?

It is our impression that Park & Rec League sponsored teams would use the fields, and that field permits would also be able to be issued in the same way they are now to groups such as the Bristol Soccer Club, the Lacrosse league, Little Leagues, and others. The list of groups currently seeking practice and play fields within the city, from both the Park Dept. and the BOE include those listed above as well as additional entities such as parochial schools, softball, J.C. Courant leagues, American Legion, Twilight League, AAU Leagues, the fledgling lacrosse league, midget football, and others.

3. Clarify the rationale for the number of parking spaces in the latest sport complex plan (325 spaces). Where will the overflow cars park?

Our consultants, who are experts in the field of recreation, devised the number that is based on a formula used by planners and developers to develop adequate parking in relation to the anticipated level of use. It has been discussed at previous meetings that it is not expected that all fields would be in use all the time, at the same time. That being said, 325 parking spaces will accommodate all activities, at peak time, and not cause any overflow parking issues onto Perkins, James P. Casey, or at the cemetery.

4. Who of authority said we need more fields? How many fields citywide are currently unusable?

The City of Bristol bought the Roberts property on November 28, 2001 for \$1,265,000 from the Clinton Roberts Foundation. The purpose, from the onset, was to develop the site for active recreation. A study committee consisting of Council members Couture Ward and Wilson, Ken Cockayne, a citizen rep, and John Novakowski, a BOE rep, worked for three years on developing an understanding of the city-wide field inventory and identifying needs. The committee was expanded in 2003 and conducted dozens of public meetings, community meetings, website and outreach to user groups to gather community needs.

Mayor Couture and the City Council convened a Task Force to oversee a parks improvement plan in 2004. A RFP was issued for a landscape architecture/master plan. The Roberts Property and Hoppers-Birge Pond Nature Preserve were included in the RFP for this park master plan. In conducting the master plan, Milone & MacBroom relied upon data supplied by information gathered from the public meetings and the city's Plan of Development, as well as the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreations Plan (SCORP) assessment. SCORP provides guidance with respect to the number and types of facilities based on population. For the master plan, the data studied was a summary of outdoor recreations facilities, including school facilities although not all are available to support the general recreational needs of the city. The data was then compared to the SCORP recommendations for a city having a 60,000 population. When analyzing this data and removing the school facilities that are not available to the public, the result shows that the number of soccer fields in the city is barely adequate and the number of ballfields is less than what is recommended by SCORP.

The existing lack of fields during peak periods is likely to become worse in the future as population increases, the number of existing programs expands, and new programs develop. Baseball, once a spring-summer sport, is now played in the fall as well. Soccer is also year-round and sports such as lacrosse are emerging with great popularity locally, placing an even greater demand for space in the critical spring season.

The purpose of the master plan was also to make recommendations for improvements to meet the unmet demands and serve as a long-term guide for city officials in determining how and where to distribute its capital investment funds. Two paths have emerged – the first being to work toward greater cooperation with the BOE for the use of their facilities provided that the additional use does not adversely affect the quality of the field. The second proposal is to develop additional facilities at existing parks or new site, and is considered the preferred option that has been explored as part of the park revitalization effort as

well as in conjunction with the mission and work of the Roberts Property Committee.

5. What exactly will the maintenance cost be to bring the fields we already own up to par? (High schools, parks, Muzzy)

The high schools fields were renovated as part of the high school renovations. They are primarily maintained by a contracted landscaper and routine maintenance is handled by the school custodial staff as part of their duties, with occasional assistance from the Park crews when necessary or ~~requested~~ requested. Each year one of the fields at one of the high schools is taken off line to “rest,” which then shifts and increases the demand on other fields. This is actually how the Park Dept should operate as well but because of demands, they are unable to do so. Each year, Park Dept. fields are groomed but due to demand and overuse they appear to be in a constant state of disrepair. Muzzy alone costs tens of thousands of dollars each fall to convert from baseball to football/soccer use and in the spring, it costs more money to convert it back again.

6. What department will be responsible for managing traffic before, during and after the games? Is this department funded for this activity? How will traffic be managed at the ingress and egress to Maple Street / James P. Casey Road?

There will not be a person assigned specifically to traffic issues associated with this site since it is not likely that there will be an influx or exit of 325 cars at any one time. It might also be noted that rarely is the Police Department deployed at Muzzy Field for traffic purposes other than Thanksgiving Day. The proposed parking should be sufficient and the existing road infrastructure will be either validated or changes mandated by State Traffic Commission. For day-to-day enforcement of traffic the Police Department will have jurisdiction.

7. What is the traffic zone for the roadways in this area and is the town planning on widening James P. Casey Road or Perkins Street? What zone is the Roberts Property? According to Bristol Land Use Guidelines, it is our understanding the residential areas surrounding the Roberts Property pretty much fall into the low-density residential zone of R25, which promotes the preservation of open space. Can you please elaborate on that?

There is no such thing as a traffic zone. There may have been traffic counts done which would count the number of cars that travel James P. Casey, which is a minor arterial road and was designed for a high traffic

count and load based on the former GM factory that operated on Chippens Hill. A minor arterial road is defined as one that provides options for alternate traffic movement and may also connect major arterials. Both Matthews and Perkins are classified as collector roads, which provide for traffic movement between neighborhoods and also to give access to adjacent properties.

The proposed Roberts Property plan will be submitted to the State Traffic Commission. Their function has always been to regulate traffic on state roads. The closest state road is Route 69. In recent years they have also looked at projects that lead to or from state roads. If the facility will have 200 or more parking spaces OR if a building is planned that will be over 100,000 SF in area, an application for "Determination" must be submitted to the STC. This application for determination will require that the plans are taken to a preliminary level (usually the same level required for submission to the local regulatory boards), and a Traffic Impact Study be performed by a licensed traffic engineer. The traffic engineer would work with us to analyze entering/exiting traffic to determine whether improvements such as widening, addition of dedicated turn lanes or a signal is justified or required. If so, then we would add this to our plan prior to submitting. If after review, the STC believes that the impact is minimal to not justify a STC permit, then no further action is required. If it is determined that a permit will be required, then the STC will also identify any off-site road improvements that will be required. The total process takes 120 days.

The majority of the northwest corner of the city is zoned R-25, as is the Roberts parcel, which means that residential lots must have a minimal dimension of 25,000 square feet. R-40 has the lowest density, requiring 40,000 square feet per lot. There is a reference to low density in the future land use plan that is included in the Plan of Development that gives recommendations as to how land should be utilized.

8. Do you consider noise, light and traffic pollution a concern for the abutting properties? (Hoppers Birge Pond Nature Preserve, residential neighborhood, folks visiting Peacedale Cemetery)

Yes, these are legitimate concerns and the committee has worked hard to ensure that none of these above issues will be problems. With the concerns of the neighbors being brought to the committee in October of 2006, the Committee subsequently went a step further and downsized the plan and eliminated the centerpiece of the proposal which was the premier field and accompanying building structure, sound system, stadium seating, etc. Other modifications included shifting the landscaping to provide additional tree buffer on the Perkins Street side to discourage parking in that area by limiting access to the site from

that direction, and a reduction in fields that would decrease users and level of play. These will be primarily game and practice fields for leagues as well include playground equipment, basketball courts, trails, a free play area that has the potential of also being a dog park area, and a linkage to the Hoppers. This is in keeping with the recommendations of the city's Plan of Development that identified the northwest corner as lacking formal neighborhood parks and recreational areas, and further recommended the acquisition of land for these purposes.