



RECREATION COMMISSION INFORMATIONAL PLANNING MEETING
Via Zoom and In Person
Town House Meeting Room, 22 Monument Sq, Concord, MA 01742

Topic: Rideout Informational Planning Meeting
Time: Mar 30, 2022 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Meeting ID: 206 866 5867

Present:

Casey Atkins (In Person)
Paul Boehm (In Person)
James Howard (In Person)
Pete Funkhouser (Via Zoom)
Kate Hodges (In Person)
Anna McKeown (In Person)
Adam Lapointe (In Person)

Absent:

Jenn Lutz

1. Open Meeting

- a. Meeting opened at 7:00 PM by Ms. Atkins. Ms. Atkins thanked Anna McKeown, Recreation Director and CCYB/S, and collecting public input. Ms. Atkins provided some background on the overall operation and organizational structure of the Recreation Department, and that is separate from the Department of Public Works (DPW). The two departments work collectively to make sure facilities are top notch. Ms. Atkins also discussed the Administrative Code (located on the town's website) and the role of the Recreation department in these projects, stating that the commission just provides recommendation for the Select Board to adopt these projects. Ms. Atkins also thanked the DPW and Facilities team for their collaboration. Proposed Field Number 2 temporary homerun fencing and turf surfacing the batting cage. Ms. Atkins mentioned that there is 2 hours scheduled for this meeting, and that all comments should be focused and as brief as possible. Additional comments to the improvements can be sent directly to Anna McKeown, Rec Director at AMcKeown@concordma.gov. Ms. Atkins reminded the meeting members that this is just a meeting for residents to provide feedback, not for a commission vote to make these improvements to Rideout.
- b. Ms. Hodges reminded everyone to include their full name and address when commenting.

2. CCYB Presentation

- a. Dan Healey and John O'Neill, CCYB representatives, presented their proposal for Rideout. Mr. O'Neill mentioned that CCYBS has gotten a boom in registrations (500+) in the spring. Mr. O'Neill mentioned some of the benefits of the fencing included players learning proper positioning and clearly defines field boundaries. It will include 185 feet of 4-foot black vinyl coated chain link. It would be installed in April and removed in late



June. The field remains open on the sides for unrestricted accesses when not in use. This project will be paid for in full by CCYB including all materials and yearly labor.

- b. Mr. O'Neill mentioned that they are committed to the process. They have partnered with the town for numerous facility upgrades in the past, including improvements to Ripley and Rideout. Mr. O'Neill did mention that CC Youth Soccer supports this, as they share space with CCYB at Rideout. He also mentioned that they are committed to following proper channels for approvals and permits.
 - c. Mr. O'Neill mentioned that there were 2 other projects, including adding backstop padding to Rideout #2 and #3 and adding batting carpet to the two batting cages adjacent to the tennis courts at Rideout. Both projects mentioned safety and aesthetics when it comes to benefits to these projects. He then showed picture of the locations of these proposed projects at Rideout.
3. Commission Member Questions
- a. Ms. Atkins thanked the CCYB for their presentation and partnership over the years. She then asked the commission for questions.
 - b. Mr. Boehm asked about the fields' usage for softball for this temporary fencing. Mr. O'Neill mentioned that Fields 1 and 2 were dedicated to baseball only. Mr. Boehm asked about usage. Mr. O'Neill mentioned most weeknights and Saturday afternoons, and all day Sunday. Mr. Boehm asked about the private usage of the fields. Mr. O'Neill mentioned that all use of fields are permitted through the Rec Dept. Mr. Healey confirmed that this is public lands and all of this work will benefit all. Mr. Boehm asked about the distances. Mr. O'Neill mentioned that it is 185 feet away from the Homeplate and goes foul pole to foul pole. Mr. Boehm asked about other types of temporary fencing options. Mr. O'Neill said that they looked at all options from cost to safety and functionality, and this option was the best option out of the one. Mr. O'Neill mentioned that he could present the other options if the residents wanted. Mr. Boehm asked next if there could be breaks in fencing, like a gated one, for the field. Mr. O'Neill mentioned that safety could come into play, but most likely that the solid fencing would be best. Mr. Boehm asked about the potential conflict with the soccer field. Mr. O'Neill mentioned that CCYS were in an agreement that they could make it work. Mr. Boehm asked about safety and protocols for wayward balls. Mr. O'Neill said that there are no formal protocols and was hopeful that parents/ coaches would keep an eye on a wayward ball. Mr. Boehm asked about maintenance asked about maintenance of the fields. Mr. O'Neill mentioned that a lot of it is done by DPW, but they help when they can. Mr. Boehm then asked about the fencing impact on maintenance. Mr. Shaw, Assistant Superintendent of Facilities and Grounds, mentioned that impact to maintenance would be very minimal. Mr. Boehm asked about the difference between having and not having a fence. Mr. O'Neill mentioned a comparison to tennis not having a fence around the court.
 - c. Ms. Atkins asked how many feet off the infield to the fence. Mr. O'Neill mentioned it could be 90-100 feet farther. Ms. Atkins asked about people getting hit by balls in the past. Mr. O'Neill mentioned mostly dogs and toddlers getting in the way. Ms. Hodges corrected the number to be 89.1 feet. Ms. Atkins mentioned to reiterate the ages used of the fields. Mr. O'Neill mentioned it was for up to age 12. Ms. Atkins asked what the difference was between the fencing in the presentation and the temporary fencing. Mr.



O'Neill mentioned that they just wouldn't drive the permanent poles in the ground. Ms. Atkins asked Ms. McKeown about events and how they would impact. Mr. O'Neill said that it wouldn't impact based on the schedule. Ms. Atkins then asked about timeline. Mr. O'Neill said he could have more firm dates if needed from April-June. Ms. Atkins asked about carpeting and how much it covers. Mr. O'Neill said it would cover the whole batting cages.

- d. Mr. Howard asked about the height of the foul poles. Mr. O'Neill mentioned they would be 8 feet. Mr. Howard asked about padding. Mr. O'Neill mentioned there would be caps on the poles but no formal padding.
 - e. Ms. McKeown asked about the concept of vandalism. Mr. O'Neill stated that they are trusting the installer that it will be safe and sturdy, and that it plays like a permanent fence. Ms. McKeown asked about the backstop padding and shelf life. Mr. O'Neill mentioned that based on the current backstop, they could last 10 years. Ms. McKeown asked about the material in the batting cages proposed. Mr. O'Neill stated that the material is rubbery latex material with a carpet-like material on top. Ms. McKeown asked about potentially storing it after the season and shelf life. Mr. O'Neill said it lasts about 10 years, and that storing isn't reasonable.
4. Public Input
- a. Ben Clyne- 245 Central St- Ben supports the improvements and appreciates safety with padding and fencing.
 - b. Michelle Tow-111 Laws Brook Road- Michelle thanked them for a lot of work put into proposal. Batting cage and backstops are good ideas and has questions. If there was no fence and a line on the grass, would it count as a homerun? Asked about orientation and how the fence impacts that. Mr. O'Neill stated that not a standard practice but could be done. Painted lines only work for in town events, but not for regional events. It is also tough to see where the ball lands for an umpire. Michelle also mentioned that the soccer field in the image would be impacted. Mr. O'Neill said that CCYS doesn't use that size. She then asked about the safety points of the presentation and some injuries from other people running into fence and liability. Ms. Hodges mentioned the Recreation Use Act and that we wouldn't be liable unless negligence on our part.
 - c. Kim Drake- 452 Laws Brook Road- Kim had a question for the recreation department- who wants to use the spaces outside of baseball. Ms. McKeown mentioned its usually just CCYB, sometimes CCYS. There are some one-off events every now and then, less than 10. Kim asked a question for CCYB- are there other alternatives to fencing? Would they help with safety issues and orientation of players? Mr. O'Neill said yes, he prefers something over nothing. Question about Ripley and Rideout 1- would the fencing in those fields help them learn for when they go to field 2? Mr. O'Neill said that that was a good point.
 - d. Ms. Atkins asked about travel teams and need for fencing. Mr. O'Neill said that it was required for the travel teams.
 - e. Chris Scarzi- 33 Maple Street- Thanked CCYB for presentation. Discouraged about the note and concerned that the temporary fence may become permanent and eventually for field 3. He loves the work that has been done to date. A fence in the middle of the field adds a safety and maintenance concern, more than addresses this. He was also



curious about growth of baseball regarding numbers. Mr. O'Neill said that 25-30% increase in 2019-2020 and have stayed at that level.

- f. Pat Cross- 18 Edmont Road- Lived in W. Concord for 25 years. Appreciated the programs but putting a fence in middle of the field is unsafe for all park goers, and also the kids. Rideout is the only public park in West Concord, and you change the dynamic of the land there.
- g. Ms. Atkins mentioned Gerow Park is opening soon, and Cousins is considered a public park.
- h. Robin Valliente- 212 Hespers Ave, Magnolia, MA- Thanked John and Dan. He thinks that the fence is a great idea but without a warning track, it could be dangerous. He uses Rideout for Ultimate Frisbee, but the frisbee can go far and they're not looking at fences, so it could be a dangerous situation. He asked about the yellow protective barrier on the top of the fence.
- i. Carolyn Ploy- 137 Central Street- She has lived in Concord for 38 years and coached baseball for years. She appreciated the work CCYB has done and walks through Rideout all the time. She believes Rideout is the "Field of Dreams" ad would hate to see a fence there.
- j. John Simmons- 17 Central Street- Thanked CCYB. He was a coach for CCYB for 10 years. Backstop is a great idea, but the fence is a bad idea. Rideout is a jewel of open space. Fence is less safe because fence is in the middle of the field.
- k. Matt Johnson- 21 Winthrop St- Select Board Liaison- Commended the commission and CCYB for this meeting. This proposal was a great bright spot for the collaboration. Are there any other example of this fence used somewhere else in the middle of a field? Mentioned the Citizen Petition Article on Town Meeting. Ms. Hodges mentioned the batting cage material would not apply.
- l. Daniel Stapleton- 20 Connant St- Supportive of CCYB, but not fence. Rideout is a multiuse park with a lot of open spaces. Parking may be issue with size of program.
- m. Bill Satherwait- 297 Laws Brook Road- Talked about safety of fence and danger and suggested padding on both sides.
- n. Pauli Stat- 17 Pond Street- Thanked CCYB for presentation. Use the park every single day, does not support fencing. Mentioned the Rideout family and what the deed says.
- o. Anne Sgarzi- 33 Maple Street- She asked if there was a requirement for large equipment to ruin field on installation, and if advertising on fence would be a possibility. Mr. O'Neill stated that the company said no mention of damage to grass, only where poles go in. He mentioned that there was no discussion of ads on the fence. Ms. Hodges mentioned there's a bylaw about advertisement on fields, so there would be a lot of steps to make it happen.
- p. Chris Muller- 29 Muller street- Mentioned he had a hard time figuring out if the fence was safer.
- q. Lisa McKinney- 293 Haywood Mill Road- Lisa mentioned that it would create less safe open space. There was no indication for need when her kids were in the program about the need for a fence. She mentioned drawing white lines for homerun fence or could also use the 4 foot driveway markers as an option. She was also concerned that this temporary fence may extend into summer months. Ms. Atkins mentioned the other properties in W. Concord. Lisa mentioned that it's not the same.



- r. Vijay Ragmunathan- 1750 Wedgewood Commons- Vijay has 2 kids. He plays cricket, and used an example how he was hurt on one the fence. He is concerned that the fence will be dangerous for young children. Supports the program, not the fence.
- 5. Date for meeting next meeting
 - a. April 5 at 7 PM via Zoom, agenda will be posted on the town website. Further public comment can be emailed to Anna McKeown. Collecting public comment until 5 PM, April 1.
- 6. Close Meeting
 - a. Ms. Atkins thanked CCYB and mentioned that the resounding theme that the Rideout Park is a gem. She thanked Facilities, DPW, and Recreation to offer these fields. Ms. Atkins mentioned that the next steps are that the Recreation Commission would vote for support for these projects. Ms. Hodges mentioned that the Select Board would have to approve the gift of CCYB doing the project. Ms. Atkins mentioned that the commission is working on a strategic plan to address these issues in the future.
 - b. Motion to close meeting at 8:58 by Ms. Atkins. Second by Mr. Boehm. All in favor.

Minutes Taken By Adam Lapointe