

Fairfield Parks and Recreation Master Plan – Community Discussions

Group: RTM Districts 1 and 2 2/17/22 6 – 8 pm

In Attendance:

- Cynthia Pelham – District 2
- Hal Schwartz – District 2
- Melissa Longo – District 1
- Amy Ruggiero – District 1
- Karen McCormack – District 2

Input:

Programming

- Community Sailing? Not through Parks and Recreation.
- Boating lessons would be nice, boating safety...

Facilities

- Scoreboard is a consistent issue at the FL high school.
- Food needs an upgrade at Jennings (concessions).
- Skate Park...teenagers smoking marijuana, harassing other users (kids). Is 'skate at your own risk'.
- Turf is an issue...football mom. I know there are plans for several fields.
- Gould Manor...park that has been closed for several years...get it open, supposed to be ready for baseball season.
- Greenfield residents have to travel to other parts for a lot of activities.
- Dog park...open space, off-leash.
- Owen Fish playground is ADA-accessible?
- Look at facilities kids are using...fields are a mess. Also need to be able to see kids all the time at different fields. Baseball fields should be a priority.
- Lights are needed.
- Summer Camps...are great.
- No rules for pet owners at Lake Mohegan.

Information

- Website/social media is great.

Connectivity/Mobility

- Parking lot at Jennings is bad...but may be intentional for storm surge overwash.

General Comments

- ...

Fairfield Parks and Recreation Master Plan – Community Discussions
Group: RTM Districts 3, 4 and 5 2/9/22 6 – 8 pm (Virtual)

In Attendance:

- Marcy Spolyar – RTM District 4
- Alice Kelly – RTM District 4
- Laura Karson - RTM District 4
- Elizabeth Zezima – RTM District 4
- John Garskof – RTM District 5
- Jay Wolk – District 5
- Tom Lambert - RTM District 3
- Sharon Pistilli – RTM District 3
- Alex Durrell –RTM District 3
- Gaylen Brown – Assist. Director Parks and Recreation

Programming

- More outdoor activities (in winter) should be a priority for the town, esp. given covid...perhaps snow-shoeing/cross country skiing up at the golf course, with trail maps?
- Why not consider alternative program offerings? Solicit folks for ‘specialized talents’ who would be interested in volunteering to teach a new skill. I had a friend who was not interested in organized sports but enjoyed juggling. They participated in training, and found their niche as a professional juggler...maybe cooking and/or other non-traditional hobbies?

Facilities

- Dog park is needed with pet-waste stations...although need to be consistent here as not every park allows dogs.
- Town needs a pool that is also ADA-accessible.
- Ice skating rink is needed, perhaps up by H. Smith Richardson. This could even be informal, like a tarp in a depression filled with several inches of water.
- Drew Park...internal paths need improvement (drainage issues) and not ADA-accessible.
- ADA-accessibility could be improved/expanded, particularly at the beaches. Decking and pathways could be expanded to get residents to these sites more easily, still with some assistance (Penfield, Jennings, South Pine Creek). This also includes expansion of existing mobility-assisted equipment (plastic mats and all-terrain wheelchairs for beach access).
- High Ridge Park needs improvements...more permanent restrooms, rather than port-a-pots.
- Dougiello Park/Driving Range has opportunities for higher and better uses. Perhaps lighting, a liquor license and additional improvements could enhance operations/revenue stream?
- Plan should address noise pollution...a lot of residents calling for more pickleball courts...neighbors complain about the noise levels.
- Climate Change (heat/flooding) should be factored into this plan...Flooding along the Rooster River is affecting housing. There are three large-scale flood mitigation projects online located within/adjacent to parks. With projected increases in rain, this will continue to impact parks/fields, and limiting use.
- A camp with cabins would be a nice alternative opportunity.
- Burroughs Park parking lot is terrible.
- Is there anything planned for the Army Base?
- Fairchild Wheeler GC...is that Fairfield or Bridgeport...Bridgeport.
- Giant Steps (new school property) has a lot of acreage but is difficult to get there.

- Lake Mohegan...on the east side to the right of the main parking lot has drainage issues and flood often.
- Boat racks are needed at Jennings Beach, also throughout the town...with security (locks/cameras) to deter destructive behavior.
- Trash cans should be left year-round rather than seasonally and include pet-waste stations.
- Owen Fish...the pond empties into Lincoln Brook where a lot of natural debris collects...who is responsible for cleanup?
- Town should consider opening up vacant, town-owned properties for community gardening/farming (where appropriate)...provision of water, maybe some fencing needs. Could be under P/R or a community service project.
- Artificial turf for fields should be part of this project.
- Lake Mohegan...needs better access for beach and walking. Needs restrooms, access to pet waste stations and trash cans should be left out year-round.
- Catania Park includes the stream-side trail...perhaps civic groups could do some work there, pet waste stations needed.
- Soccer field conditions and maintenance (uneven surface of the grass) kids can get injured.
- District 5 has limited amenities within the district.
- Melville Park fields are always wet.
- Rooster River trail area is always beat-up, does include pet waste stations.
- Behind McKinley there is a walking path...other locations are suitable for this such as Fairfield Woods, Howland Hill.
- There is an affordable housing development going in near the old Kohl's where a portion of parkland is being taken for the housing (part of Tunxis Hill), there is barren land behind that where constituents are complaining about the litter

Information

- Is there a master list of facilities across the community available? Yes, on P/R webpage, About Us, Rules and Regulations...also offers additional information (restrooms, provided, etc.).

Connectivity/Mobility

- More trails and connections between sites. There is a great example behind Stepping Stones in Norwalk, should replicate.
- Parks need to be more walkable/bikeable. Provide amenities (bike racks, bike repair stations, water filling stations, restrooms).

General Comments

- ...

Fairfield Parks and Recreation Master Plan – Community Discussions
Group: RTM Districts 6 and 7 2/8/22 4 – 6 pm

In Attendance:

- Karen Wackerman – RTM District 7
- Matt McDermott – RTM District 7
- John Kuhn – RTM District 7
- Jill Vergara – RTM District 7
- Steve Bevecz – RTM District 6
- Dru Georgiadis – District 9
- Lisa Havey - RTM District 6

Programming

- Water sports programming? Used to have sailing, now have community sailing where folks pay a fee to use. Any partnerships potential?
- Skate parks and insurance...Jennings underutilized and good place for outdoor rink/salt pool, restaurant.
- Rec. Camp sign up is difficult, esp. with siblings, pickups are different...siblings attending the same camp would be helpful for families...should be neighborhood and convenient.
- Outdoor activities should be a priority for the town, esp. given covid.
- Retention for rec. soccer is a problem...maybe playing FUSA too early.
- Non-traditional offerings as kids get older, moving away from 'clubs'...frisbee golf.
- Geo-cacheing...exists, not well-known.

Facilities

- Water taps...replaced for water bottles (airports)
- Sherman school...middle school soccer...parents drop off, now with smaller kids, parents stay, and traffic is an issue. Match parking with parents/sport...safety concern.
- Burroughs parking is bad...does have restrooms. Rec. soccer here, when just opened with gravel parking, now paved, needs parking lines.
- Inventory sites and map out connections to address safety on off-road travel. Data to support this?
- Waterfront restaurant could be a great draw.
- Dog park is needed badly.
- Oldfield...constituent working on public access of street side (Charles Garden playground) to residential use and take more back from childcare/private daycare....look into this maybe when lease runs out...move chain link fence.
- Veres Park...toilets, not port-a-pots.
- Expansion of fields as 'hubs' for specific sports...could generate revenue. It's an infrastructure facility...being able to host at one site (Trumbull does this). Sturgis park has a deed restriction limiting activities. Can we coordinate with Fairfield U./Sacred Heart? Sacred Heart has potential opportunity for resource sharing. Definitely a bigger picture item for discussion.
- Don't take park space for ice-rinks/pools, should be taking underutilized/marginal lands.
- Lake Mohegan...inflatable waterfront park...a supervisory nightmare? Right to the existing beach might work.
- There is a pool under Old Navy...private swim instructions for kids.
- Kayak/Paddle board racks are needed...still a vandalism issue at Penfield.

- Jacky Durrell is underutilized and should consider pop-up restaurants. P/R Commission would need to change their rules.
- Covered field house is missing/needed (similar to tennis)...residents travelling to Trumbull a lot.
- Town needs a pool

Information

- ...

Connectivity/Mobility

- Marina, Ash Creek, South Pine Creek are all connected...reinforce, visit businesses
- Trumbull...has off-road trail...In Fairfield, there is excess land along the rails from one end of the town to the other. Large apron along both sides, won't necessarily impact residential areas...grant opportunities.
- Near Metro station, sidewalks only on one-side, with multiple cross-walks.
- Trolley for circulation around town, ease congestion.

General Comments

- 'Brownfields to Townfields' ...bring it back (District 9).
- Armory is an eye-sore in town...buy building next store to solve the issue... 9 acres, deeded for recreation use only.
- Incorporate historic plaques in parks...utilize PTA.
- Sensitivity to light consideration...'Dark Sky' ordinance only for commercial.
- Close down streets (several) a couple of times a year and allow restaurants to expand to the streets.
- King's Highway and New England...parcel of land (across from Ganos). Home Depot owns it...could hold 4-5 pickleball courts, or one basketball court.

Fairfield Parks and Recreation Master Plan – Community Discussions

Group: RTM Districts 8, 9 and 10 2/17/22 2 – 4 pm

In Attendance:

- Peter Tallman – District 8
- Kelly Scinto – District 9
- Christine Brown – District 9
- Peter Britton – District 10
- Ken Astarita – District 8

Input:

Programming

- Programming is great.
- How about a Fairfield Town Party w music and food, similar to Greenwich’s town party. It could act as a fundraiser to subset some of the projects.

Facilities

- Turf...is an issue in town. Grass fields get beat up and end up getting closed to recover. Fairfield Athletic Foundation is in town, working on fields.
- Trumbull has Unity Park...does Fairfield have anything like this? Is there an opportunity for state funding (Berlin got their fields paid for)?
- Fairfield and Sacred Heart...what are they providing? Before going to turf, consider amenities first (comfort stations, water fountains).
- We need the data in order to provide information. A lot of letters coming out about turf fields...we need more information.
- Jennings needs to be spruced up like Penfield.
- Dogs parks where dogs can run or fenced in as well.
- Mill Hill has an acre-8 area perfect for a dog park.
- Restaurant on the waterfront...no where to eat on the water...maybe near Jennings Beach/Marina.
- Existing parks...only 25% of residents have kids, and a percentage of those use parks.
- Penfield and Jennings aren’t being fully utilized (Westport as an example). Restaurants...get more people on the beach. No public walkways onto the beach. Perhaps an elevated walkway, offering views. Program the beaches more.
- Penfield Pavilion would make more money as a restaurant, rather than event space.

Information

- Social media is great...constant input on what’s happening.

Connectivity/Mobility

- Getting from place to place is not safe...limited sidewalks.
- Shuttlebus would be a good idea to move people.
- Bike lanes along Fairfield Beach Road.

General Comments

- Master plan needs to look at the town comprehensively.
- Does Parks/Rec ever have surplus to put towards improvements? Is the budget year to year consistent.