

MINUTES  
Wilton Parks & Recreation Commission  
November 10, 2021 / 7:30 PM  
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Attendees:

- A) Commissioners: Bilella, Guglielmo, Macken, Ring, Kendra
- B) Director of P&R: Pierce
- C) Ex Officio: None
- D) Public: Dominic Rauccio, Jason Partenza, Nicholas Prior, Nick Gemelli, Christopher Rosado, Mariana McLaughlin, Tom Viggiano, Jen Baumhold, Chandra Ring, Mandy Dugan, Rick Tomasetti

I. Call to Order - Bilella called the meeting to order at 7:32 PM.

II. Approval of Minutes for October 20, 2021 - Ring made a motion to approve Special Meeting minutes, Macken seconded. **Approved 4-0-1** (Kendra abstained.)

III. Correspondence – discussion and/or action

- Correspondence received from Wilton Youth Sports Coalition (discussed below in VII.)

IV. Mitigation Plan Update – discussion and/or action

- Pierce reported that Stantec's report is expected on 12/3/21 and that a meeting is being scheduled with the Board of Selectmen to discuss the plan in early December.

V. Indoor Field House Project Concept Exploration Update – discussion and/or action

- Pierce shared that a meeting was held on 11/9/21 with First Selectwoman Vanderslice, representatives from Stantec, Pierce, and Bilella in attendance to get a progress update. Pierce reported that Stantec's report is expected on 11/23/21 which will include an estimated cost range and scale options. Pierce further reported that once the Stantec report is received, a meeting will be set up with the Board of Selectmen.

VI. Youth Sports Associations Meeting Update – discussion and/or action

- Pierce advised that a meeting was held with Pierce, Chris McDougal (WHS AD), Bilella and the members of the newly formed Wilton Youth Sports Coalition to discuss field space, field scheduling, and enhancing communication with WHS Sports Program. The Coalition is made up of representatives from each of the Wilton youth sports programs – including Wilton Little League, Wilton Youth Football/Cheer, Wilton Youth Soccer, Wilton Youth Basketball, Wilton Youth Baseball, Wilton Youth Softball, Wilton Youth Field Hockey, and Wilton Youth Lacrosse. Pierce also reported that stemming from the meeting, additional discussions are being had regarding Tandem for Schools, which is an online calendaring application.

VII. P&R Project Priority Planning – discussion and/or action

- Bilella led a project priority planning discussion with the Commissioners around potential P&R projects, which will then be recommended by the Commission to the Board of Selectmen for review and its consideration in future planning. A summary document capturing the feedback received from P&R Dept., each Commissioner, and the Wilton Youth

Sports Coalition recommending key projects for the Commission's consideration was discussed. Pierce reported that one of the projects listed, the lighting of the pathway between the Cider Mill parking lot to Memorial Stadium, was already in progress and would be funded from existing budget resources. After a productive discussion, the Commission identified, in order of priority, a list of seven potential projects to recommend to the Board of Selectmen for its consideration:

- 1) Mitigation Plan of Stadium Complex including Comstock
- 2) Improve Drainage and Address Irrigation Across All Fields with Potential Issues
- 3) New Turf Field(s) with Lights (but Not Be Limited Because of the Lighting Aspect)
- 4) Upgrades to Merwin Meadows Complex
- 5) Dome/Indoor Fieldhouse at Comstock
- 6) Enhancing/Upgrading Existing Fields
- 7) Dog Park

Kendra made a motion to approve the Commission's above list of potential projects for further consideration by the Board of Selectmen, Guglielmo seconded the motion. **Approved 5-0-0.**

#### VIII. Staff Reports – discussion and/or action

Pierce reported:

- Parks & Grounds Report:
  - Working on preparing for winter - removing wind screens, fall clean up and trail repair work.
  - In the process of repairing footbridge at Merwin Meadows stemming from last storm.
  - Blowing leaves off tennis courts.
- Recreation Report:
  - Rec basketball enrollment is lower than normal.
  - Successful Halloween event at Comstock - over 300 bags of candy handed out.
  - Hayride with Santa is next event being planned for December.
  - Beginning to put together its budget for next fiscal year.
  - Middlebrook tennis courts resurfacing - temporary lines due to the weather. Painting of lines will be done this spring.

#### XI. Member Comment - None.

#### XII. Public Comment

- Nick Gemelli spoke on behalf of Wilton Youth Sports Coalition and read a written statement from the group. A copy was sent to Pierce and Bilella and includes an excel document listing of all enhancements and projects that the group would like P&R to take into consideration with its short- and long-term planning efforts.

XIII. Adjourn - Bilella made a motion to adjourn, Ring seconded. **Approved 5-0-0.** Meeting adjourned at 9:05 PM.

**High Immediate Priority**

- Middlebrook Softball fields
- Middlebrook Madaras
- Middlebrook Lower
- Allen's Meadows 4
- Huriburt fields
- Landmark
- JV Softball
- Varsity Softball
- Lily North field

**Medium Future Priority**

- Comstock
- Allens Baseball
- Allens 1
- Allens 2
- Allens 3
- Allen's Meadows 5
- Allen's Meadows 6
- Merwin Meadows

**General - All Fields**

Field Lines	Every organization pays for some measure of field lines, many of us contract with the same party, a Town based approach could be considered
Restrooms	Town fields and facilities should afford all residents a restroom -- each organization contracting independently is inefficient and not acceptable
Trash & sanitation	Carry In/out policy is incompatible with reality of the traffic we have on the fields, trash service must be provided
Storage	There is limited to no storage space at the fields for essential equipment
Lights	Every organization could utilize more lighting, either temporary or permanent at certain times of year

**Sunday Morning Reservations**

Priority	Field	Issue	Request	Safety	Maintenance
High Immediate Priority	Allen's Meadows Field 4	Significant ruts, divots/depressions that make the field unsafe play	Level and fill in the playing surface, repair divots/depressions	x	x
			Invest in seed, fertilize and grass improvements to endure year round play		x
High Immediate Priority	Middlebrook Softball Fields	Poor and dangerous infield condition (rocks, pebbles, weeds, wasp nests, broken glass). Safety issue and impacts quality of play.	backfilled with clay on a regularly scheduled basis	x	x
		Overhanging trees at MB1 softball field, safety issue and impacts play.	Trim trees off the field	x	x
		Dugouts at MB1 in need of upgrade and repair	fresh paint, and repair of loose benches, broken bat hangers and storage bins. survey neighboring towns (Ridgefield, Fairfield, Westport, Darien and New Canaan) to draw a comparison. JV field lacks dugouts altogether and should have them installed.		x
		Fences at MB1 in need of repair	Analyze the fence at MB 1 and make repairs, as needed.		x
		Regular maintenance of infields and grass, lining	Too often keeping the field playable requires significant volunteer labor		x
High Immediate Priority	Middlebrook Madaras	Very wet and fragile field, limited sunlight	Trim, top or remove trees along the Middlebrook side of the field to increase daily hours of sunlight, dry out field more quickly and make more safe for play	x	x
			Level and fill in the playing surface, repair divots/depressions	x	x
High Immediate Priority	Middlebrook Lower	Significant ruts, divots/depressions that make the field unsafe play	Remove goalposts to increase playing surface area to support more sports throughout the year		x
			Level and fill in the playing surface, repair divots/depressions	x	x
High Immediate Priority	Hurlbutt Fields	Divots and depressions in portion of field	Fill in and repair divots/depressions in the field	x	x
		Overhanging trees create shade and less strong turf	Prune overhanging tree limbs and all weeds from the fence that runs along the golf course		x
		Puddles in certain areas from depressions and irrigation	Check irrigation system around the sprinkler heads and/or in the large divots and depressions noted as some puddles or mud spots emerge		x
		Incident over winter with car driving onto field and tearing up turf	Repair and close the gaps in / tighten wire rope that separates the parking area from field	x	x
High Immediate Priority	Landmark Fields	Significant ruts, divots/depressions that make the field unsafe play	Level the fields, fill in ruts, divots/depressions	x	x
			Improve the playing surface ... re seed, fertilize, weed prevention as crabgrass is issue here	x	x
			Ensure grass is cut to proper length prior to all weekend play		x
High Immediate Priority	Softball Fields (Varsity & JV)	Poor and dangerous infield condition (rocks, pebbles, weeds, wasp nests, broken glass). Safety issue and impacts quality of play.	backfilled with clay on a regularly scheduled basis	x	x
		Regular maintenance of infields and grass, lining	Too often keeping the field playable requires significant volunteer labor		x
High Immediate Priority	Lilly North Field	Grass too long, cut irregularly	Grass on North cut lower regularly and/or the cutting coordinated with our practice schedule	x	x
		Goals damaged by unnecessary movement throughout year	Goals secured to reduce damage in the off season.	x	x
Medium Future Priority	Allen's Meadows Field 5 and 6	Significant ruts, divots/depressions that make the field unsafe play	Level and fill in the playing surface, repair divots/depressions	x	x
			Invest in seed, fertilize and grass improvements to endure year round play		x
Medium Future Priority	Allen's Meadows Field Baseball, 1, 2 and 3	Inconsistent surfaces depending on weather and utilization	Level and fill in the field with new soil to eliminate divots/depression areas	x	x
			Maintain annual seed, fertilizer and weed control programs		x
Medium Future Priority	Softball Fields (Lions, Comstock)	Poor and dangerous infield condition (rocks, pebbles, weeds, wasp nests, broken glass). Safety issue and impacts quality of play.	back filled with clay on a regularly scheduled basis	x	x
		Regular maintenance of infields and grass, lining	Too often keeping the field playable requires significant volunteer labor		x
Medium Future Priority	Merwin Meadows	Unplayable field due to unlevel surface, depressions and inadequate drainage	Level and fill in the field with new soil to eliminate divots/depression areas that accumulate standing water	x	x
		Heavy weeds and poor playing surface	Maintain annual fertilizer and weed control program (crabgrass has historically been a major problem which is unsafe to play on)	x	x

	Field	Issue	Request	Safety	Infrastructure - current	Infrastructure - new
1	Stadium - Tom F. field	Flooding, field out of service	Stadium infrastructure improvement in draining, etc. to prevent closures	x	x	
2	Lilly	Flooding, field out of service	Lilly infrastructure improvement in draining, etc. to prevent closures	x	x	
3	Guy Whitten A	No lighting limits utilization	Add lights, nearly the entire rest of complex is lit	x		x
4	Softball Fields - Middlebrook	No lighting limits utilization	Add lights			x
		One sport utilization	Replace existing fence with temporary fence (e.g. Ridgefield) to extend utilization of grass to other sports		x	
5	Allen's Meadows Fields 4	Not enough playable area for full size fields, most valuable would be fix and expansion of Allens 4	Level the field and expand playable area towards the gardens where there is old gravel / hardpan surface that is wasted space	x	x	
6	Hire more staff	Field maintenance capacity	Hire more staff to update fields more routinely, to reduce the efforts of volunteers maintaining the fields	x		x
Remainder of the list to be prioritized over the next few weeks						
	Lilly North		Blackboards replaced on goals at North Field Upgrade surface North Field surface to Turf.		x	x
	Comstock	Wet field, limited useability and reliability	Evaluate additional drainage options to make it more reliable / useable more frequently Upgrade surface North Field surface to Turf.	x	x	x
	Middlebrook Madaras	Wet field, limited useability and reliability Balls and kids into woods Spectators too close to playing field	Evaluate additional drainage options Add a fence at the School Rd end of field Add more space (5-10 feet) for spectators to sit back from the sideline closest to the parking lot	x x x	 x x	 x x
	Hurlbutt Fields	Balls and kids into woods	Add fence along Hurlbutt St side of field Purchase and install signs to indicate "no parking" in the driveway and to inform people of overflow parking availability	x x		x x
	Merwin Meadows	Wet field, limited useability and reliability Uneven and inconsistent playing surface Balls and kids into woods	Field requires some drainage analysis and work Level the field Add fence along the Rt 33 side of the field	x x x	x x	x x
	Landmark Fields	Dry, hard, bumpy and often sparse grass surface	Level field, add proper soil and re-seed/upgrade grass Consider irrigation	x x	x	 x
	Allen's Meadows (all fields)		Field requires some drainage analysis and work Consider a <u>pavilion and permanent storage structure</u> at Allen's Meadows for use of youth sports for concessions, gatherings, lightning protection when storms hit during practices or games; on storage front, all youth sports lack a place to store essential equipment	x x	x	x x
	Softball Fields (Varsity, JV, Middlebrook, Lions, Comstock)	Low quality infield Drainage Lack of irrigation makes field unsafe and less playable Insufficient infrastructure around field Backstops old and damaged Equipment storage	Skin and redo infield, improve mounds and batter's boxes... appropriate amount of fill, re-level, use proper materials and maintain Ensure proper drainage such that investments in infield do not wash away and can be maintained Install irrigation system to maintain consistency of field quality year round New larger bleachers, proper dugouts, batting cages and pitching bullpens In need of repair or replacement to improve safety and function New facilities or storage containers or sheds to replace current which are end of life, or otherwise non existent	x x x x x x	x x x	 x x x

Field / Complex	Range	Comment
1 North Field Turf	Immediate term	immediately adjacent to Lilly, logical extension of turf, immediate impact to multiple sports
2 Middlebrook Turf	Immediate term	multiple possible near term turf options, lower, Madaras, etc that would add capacity and support higher utilization
3 Varsity Baseball / Softball & Whitten Upgrade	Long term	Upgrade - expansive turf potential with existing lighting in place, significant multi sport useability year round
4 Allen's Meadows 5 & 6 Upgrade	Long term	Upgrade - strategic location, master plan potential including redesign and build of all fields, including possible turf, maybe lights in some locations
5 Middlebrook Upgrade	Long term	Upgrade - strategic location, master plan potential including all fields, multi sport capacity, turf and lighting where possible appropriate

#### Major Investment / Long Term Planning

1 Varsity Baseball / Softball & Whitten	Upgrade - expansive turf potential with existing lighting in place, significant multi sport useability year round
2 Allen's Meadows 5 & 6	Upgrade - strategic location, master plan potential including redesign and build of all fields, including possible turf, maybe lights in some locations
3 Middlebrook	Upgrade - strategic location, master plan potential including all fields, multi sport capacity, turf and lighting where possible appropriate
4 Comstock	Strategic location, turf and lights potential as lights already exist on basketball courts - Dome concept in process/in feasibility

#### Near Term Investment / Immediate Impact

1 North Field	immediately adjacent to Lilly, logical extension of turf, immediate impact to multiple sports
2 Middlebrook	multiple possible near term turf options, lower, Madaras, etc that would add capacity and support higher utilization
3 Comstock	Strategic location, turf potential
4 Lions	Unused field space, with investment could add to net useable space
5 Post	Unused field space, with investment could add to net useable space

## Rochester, Jacqueline

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**Subject:** FW: Document 1 of 2 to Be Included with P&R Commission Minutes For Posting  
**Attachments:** WiltonYouthSports\_ParksRecMaintenance\_Capital\_WishList\_2022\_11.2.21.xlsx  
**Importance:** High

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**From:** Bilella, AnnaMarie  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 11, 2021 5:22 PM  
**To:** minutesandagendas <minutesandagendas@wiltonct.org>  
**Cc:** Ring, Kevin <Kevin.Ring@WILTONCT.ORG>; Kendra, Jennifer <Jennifer.Kendra@WILTONCT.ORG>; Guglielmo, Joseph <Joseph.Guglielmo@WILTONCT.ORG>; Macken, John <john.macken@WILTONCT.ORG>; Pierce, Steve <Steve.Pierce@WILTONCT.ORG>  
**Subject:** Document 1 of 2 to Be Included with P&R Commission Minutes For Posting  
**Importance:** High

Good evening.

Please post this email correspondence with its attachment along with the P&R Commission meeting minutes.

Thank you for the support.

Anna Marie

**From:** Nicholas Gemelli <[nickgem@icloud.com](mailto:nickgem@icloud.com)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 4, 2021 8:41 AM  
**To:** Bilella, AnnaMarie <[AnnaMarie.Bilella@WILTONCT.ORG](mailto:AnnaMarie.Bilella@WILTONCT.ORG)>; Pierce, Steve <[Steve.Pierce@WILTONCT.ORG](mailto:Steve.Pierce@WILTONCT.ORG)>  
**Cc:** Chandra Ring <[cring226@hotmail.com](mailto:cring226@hotmail.com)>  
**Subject:** Follow Up: Youth Sports Coalition - Priority Projects for Consideration

**CAUTION:** This email came from outside the Town network. Is it authentic? Don't click until you are sure.

Hi Steve and AnnaMarie,

We met as a Coalition last night, and have pulled together a priority list as requested. The summary list is below. The overall list with details can be found attached. We see this as our master list and will continue to update it and prioritize ongoing.

There was a lot of thought and meaningful discussion amongst our members in creating this document; as such meeting to discuss the Coalition thinking would prove valuable in creating shared understanding of the Youth Sport needs.

Additionally, while we have prioritized items with great intention, it is important to discuss the comprehensive long-term list at our November 18 meeting. At that time, we'd like to discuss the complete list of facility needs and work collaboratively to formulate a timeline for meeting these goals.

We look forward to meeting soon to shed light on the attached priority list and to garner a greater understanding of the budget process so that if there are additional steps we can take to facilitate meeting the needs of our youth athletes and community we can take action. We understand our community uses these facilities in addition to the youth organizations.

#### **Our top 5 - operating capital**

Stadium - Tom F. field upgrade drainage to prevent closures

Lilly upgrade drainage to prevent closures

Guy Whitten A lights to increase utilization

Softball Fields - Middlebrook

lights & temporary fence to increase utilization

Allen's Meadows Fields 4 expansion/upgrade to increase utilization

#### **Our top 5 - bonded capital**

##### ***Field / Complex***

##### ***Range***

North Field Turf Immediate term

Middlebrook Turf Immediate term

Varsity Baseball / Softball & Whitten Upgrade

Long term

Allen's Meadows 5 & 6 Upgrade

Long term

Middlebrook Upgrade Long term

Best,  
Chandra & Nick



## Rochester, Jacqueline

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**Subject:** FW: Document 2 of 2 to Be Included with P&R Commission Minutes For Posting  
**Attachments:** WiltonYouthSports\_ParksRecMaintenance\_Capital\_RequestList\_2022\_11.2.21.xlsx  
**Importance:** High

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**From:** Bilella, AnnaMarie  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 11, 2021 5:23 PM  
**To:** minutesandagendas <minutesandagendas@wiltonct.org>  
**Cc:** Ring, Kevin <Kevin.Ring@WILTONCT.ORG>; Kendra, Jennifer <Jennifer.Kendra@WILTONCT.ORG>; Guglielmo, Joseph <Joseph.Guglielmo@WILTONCT.ORG>; Macken, John <john.macken@WILTONCT.ORG>; Pierce, Steve <Steve.Pierce@WILTONCT.ORG>  
**Subject:** Document 2 of 2 to Be Included with P&R Commission Minutes For Posting  
**Importance:** High

Hello, All.

Please post this Public comment with its attachment along with the P&R Commission meeting minutes.

Thank you for the support.

Anna Marie

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**From:** Nicholas Gemelli <[nickgem@icloud.com](mailto:nickgem@icloud.com)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 10, 2021 1:58 PM  
**To:** Bilella, AnnaMarie; Pierce, Steve  
**Cc:** Chandra Ring; Jason Partenza; Chris Skillin; Viggiano, Thomas; Rauccio, Domenic; Dave Drew; Tyler Ratcliffe  
**Subject:** Parks & Rec Meeting 11/10 : Public Comment - Wilton Youth Sports Coalition

**CAUTION:** This email came from outside the Town network. Is it authentic? Don't click until you are sure.

Hi Steve and AnnaMarie,

Good afternoon. Below is our note for public comment for tonight's meeting. Drafted jointly by the Youth Sports coalition. Additionally we are providing again our overall project request list with details. This as our master list and we will continue to update it and prioritize ongoing. We look forward to tonight's session. Please let Chandra or me know if questions.

Thanks,  
Nick Gemelli

Good evening members of Wilton's Parks & Recreation Commission,

First, thank you for your volunteer time and efforts on behalf of Wilton's residents. In recent weeks, the volunteer Presidents of Wilton's not-for-profit youth sports organizations came together with an eye on near and long-term improvements in offerings for our youngest residents and the community overall.

The unfortunate closure of Fujitani Stadium for 6 weeks this fall, coupled with the impaired usage of Lilly Field, created severe impediments to multiple Wilton High School and town Youth athletic programs. The challenges our town's athletic programs faced with field access and availability this fall was not seen or experienced in any neighboring town, and highlights a need for enhancements to our town's existing Parks & Recreation field infrastructure and utilizable capacity.

In the past few weeks, our group benefited from several meetings with Steve Pierce and AnnaMarie Bilella, who have given freely of their time and knowledge in a collaborative manner towards beginning near and long-range planning to make impactful improvements in the fields and facilities that support offerings for Wilton Youth Sports and the community overall. That collaboration helped in the creation of a list of both immediate and longer-term recommendations for improvements to town fields and facilities to address the key areas of safety, scheduling/utilization and infrastructure, which is attached)

We want to create a regular and mutually beneficial dialogue with Parks & Recreation as a coalition to continue expanding the discussion and action plans. We also would like to engage in a discussion with respect to the policy for utilization of fields by third parties. We look forward to continued regular collaboration as a coalition with the Parks & Recreation Department in creating a project plan to fund and achieve our short and long-term goals.

Best,  
Dom Rauccio, Wilton Baseball and Softball  
Dave Drew, Wilton Little League Baseball  
Tyler Ratcliffe, Wilton Basketball Association  
Chandra Ring, Wilton Youth Field Hockey  
Nick Gemelli, Wilton Youth Football/Cheer  
Chris Skillin, Wilton Lacrosse Association  
Jason Partenza, Wilton Soccer Association  
Tom Viggiano, Wilton Youth Softball