

October 24, 2021

To all parties concerned,

My name is Hannah Flannery and I am the current Chair of the Readfield Recreation Association. Covid has shown a profound need for a recreation facility in the town of Readfield free and accessible for everyone. This past spring 2021, the Readfield Rec Association reached out to Main Land to look into how the plan they had developed in 2009 could be revived. Our Fairgrounds Complex was established and approved for the current baseball field by the Planning Board in 2013. At that time the broader plan completed by Main-Land Development included a softball field, parking lot, playground and volleyball court. In the end the baseball field was all that was built. Taxpayers approved funding to start the second ballfield project this past June 2021-there is support and a demonstrated need.

Currently, having the fields available we need to support the teams we field in a spring season is a challenge. This past season this “lack of fields” challenge sent more than a couple teams to Mount Vernon to use a less than desirable field to just be able to practice.

Our vision of this development would forgo the playground and volleyball court as included on the first plan. We feel the beach property is a more suitable location for these amenities. Our vision would keep the softball field in the back as per the original sketched plan and also add a basketball court in the front closer to the parking lot. A snack shack is also on the plan although not the first priority. Looking not only from the Recreation Association needs but in regards to Readfield Heritage Days events, having all these amenities at this central location would fuel so much more activity and involvement for the town and community as a whole.

The Village Center location of this development has a multitude of benefits. The convenience of one central location for parents of not only our town, but those in the leagues we compete against, is ideal. Multiple towns in our league not only have all fields in one complex but a snack shack- a relief for busy parents when you are running from practices to games for multiple children. The “snack shack” towns are lifesavers. The central location of this complex provides a connection to the school trails, the trail to the beach, the library, central access to go everywhere. We feel there is no other logical place to put this field we so desperately need. Another part of our vision is to develop a summer/day camp to provide affordable day care for the parents in town. Part of this “day camp” is also having the facilities/amenities to offer focused, weekly camps for baseball/softball/soccer/field hockey/lacrosse/basketball and more to our community. This past June our kids had to travel to Augusta Y for a basketball camp that could have easily been hosted at an outdoor court if it existed. The convenience in access from the Beach to the complex will also benefit the day camp. This is why we need this full development with field and basketball court.

Long term we can see use of this complex all year round. While Readfield Rec already does 3 seasons of sports with soccer, basketball and baseball/softball. In the spring we host an Easter Egg Hunt- the large field area would be ideal for this event as well. Looking at future events for Readfield Heritage days, having more field capacity would only allow for more events, a complete kickball tournament with multiple games going for one! A 5k event and more! We are happy to look at how we can do more to benefit the health and well being of our community.

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Working with the Trails Committee, I believe having this complex more developed would aid in snowshoeing and cross country ski accessibility in the winter months as well. Rec also hosts a winter fun day which turned into an ice fishing derby on the lake last year but could easily include events at the field complex. In the end having a healthy community, from the youngest preschoolers kicking around a soccer ball to the older folks that walk the trails, is what is most important to us in developing this complex to be used by many more folks!

Our evaluation completed by Main-Land indicates that the total Non-Revegetated area in the end including the ball field, trails and parking lot that already exist will total 1.1 acres. If we are just looking at the land in the Fairgrounds Complex, that is 1.1 of 36 total acres. When we look at the total acres compared to all municipally owned property we are talking a total of 1.1 acres of hundreds of acres. The benefit of providing recreational fields and amenities at the Fairgrounds can easily be balanced with the need to maintain conservation lands, which make up the bulk of publicly owned and publicly accessible lands in Readfield.

Thank you,
Hannah Flannery