

**COMMUNITY INPUT SESSION
COMPREHENSIVE RECREATION NEEDS STUDY
JUNE 16, 2009**

Following are the meeting notes, arranged by topic, taken during the June 16, 2009 Community Meeting:

INDOOR ACTIVITIES

- Speaker represented Judo Club– An existing program, looking to grow, require more space (+/- 1,200sf)
- Speaker suggested investigation of renovating and improving the Connie Bean Facility
- Speaker suggested review of Ice hockey – Portsmouth is the largest city in NH without a facility
- Representative of Aerobics Program – Currently operating in a poor quality facility (no heat/energy inefficient)
- Speaker thought Greenleaf Center was in a poor location & Spinnaker Pt. suffered for a lack of parking
- Speaker strongly suggested a need exists for a comprehensive Comm. Rec. facility with both wet and dry activities on a regional size and scale.
- Speaker suggested the team look to consolidate the existing facilities
- Speaker looking for fitness equipment, gym, track, child care, indoor play, community meeting space, good parking at consolidated facility.
- Speaker represented Squash group – looking for Squash courts – nearest court at Exeter Academy
- Speaker suggested new facility be located as close to downtown as possible, shared-use parking available – make the most of what Portsmouth already has.
- Speaker representing Basketball League – Court access is very limited for practice
- Speaker noted Connie Bean is well loved and used
- Speaker noted Downtown location is important
- Speaker stated a need for indoor skating / hockey, at least 1 rink
- Noted if Hockey Rink were centrally located it would be good for tournaments
- Speaker suggested building vertically – over parking – fields over parking decks
- Speaker urged community to build anything very well, durable and sustainable construction
- Speaker reiterated need for a downtown location – improve transportation to overcome parking challenge
- Suggestion to assess existing facilities and focus on renovation
- Speaker suggested construction of a world class field house over parking and indoor pool at the high school
- Speaker noted recreation facilities have a value as a community asset – attract new residents, wellness is important
- Speaker suggested a conversion of the middle school for replacement of Connie Bean and combine City Hall and sell City Hall land to help pay for new facilities

AQUATICS

- Speaker noted that the indoor pool is important for the community
- Pool is used for all ages and seniors currently
- Speaker requested both a competition pool and a recreation pool with different temperature waters
- Suggestion to consolidate city's pools – more efficient cost
- Kittery Town Council representative would like to promote a combined facility – Kittery interested in regional facility
- Speaker suggested a multi-purpose facility – team use with weight training – promote competition
- Speaker advocated for multi-purpose pool – recreation water and competition lanes

FIELDS/OUTDOOR

- Recreational Soccer League – Additional fields required
- Lacrosse - noted lack of fields and programs are growing, high turnout, but not all are able to participate
- Marching Band – make sure space is available for their use
- Baseball - Need at least 1 additional field
- Speaker requested the effort preserve open space / passive use of our natural spaces. Do not develop ball field on the open spaces.
- Seacoast Lacrosse – Only one field is available in Portsmouth
- Football – only access after high school is done. Need more fields for youth
- Planning needs to be sustainable – Reserve thought for passive uses in natural areas
- Co-ed Softball – 200 players/50% residency requirement, turned down teams due to lack of field space, due to loss of middle school field will be worse
- Soccer – 50 players over the summer – too many players on only one field. Can't grow the teams
- Speaker advocated for Skateboarding – need to upgrade to a great street course
- Speaker noted lost field at Middle School needs to be replaced – understands that land is an issue
- Advocate for Tennis – 6 public courts, 4 at the high school (need 6 for tournaments), middle school courts are substandard. Think about spectator/coaching friendly – terraced courts.
- Speaker noted current co-ed Softball teams are good for networking – not enough fields.
- Speaker recommended a new Skateboard park – use area at middle school fields that is not being used
- Speaker advocated for use of artificial turf on fields
- Speaker noted more bike lanes in the city needed for safety
- Speaker discussed Softball needs – Only one field in Portsmouth and fields around the state are much better. Requested that middle school field not be taken away.
- Speaker suggested consultants perform a survey of sports groups and get growth information
- Speaker noted Lacrosse is the fastest growing sport in the nation – no fields available
- Speaker for Fall baseball – no facilities – don't build near wetlands

- Speaker suggested new artificial turf fields – as many as possible – multi-use – open space at Pease
- Speaker suggested that recreation programs generally lose money but provide valuable service – health benefits – utilize what we have
- Advocate for a new or better Skate park – need better facility
- Speaker for Football/Lacrosse – Practice fields are inadequate/competition with other sports
 - Football – 220 to 260 players, 70-90 varsity players
- Speaker stated Portsmouth needs a public/private partnerships to acquire and develop new fields
- Speaker advocated for assessment of existing fields for utilization. Renovate them in the short term as a top priority.