

## REPORT OF THE 900 WORCESTER STREET RECREATION USE COMMITTEE

The 900 Worcester Street Recreation Use Committee (“Committee”) was created pursuant to Article 3 of the June 2012 Special Town Meeting (“STM”). The Committee’s mission is to continue to analyze the feasibility of developing recreational uses, (specifically a pool, rink, and turf field) at 900 Worcester Street, also known as the Saint James the Great property (“Premises”). The Committee consists of sixteen members from various Boards, abutters and interested parties. The Committee has formed three subcommittees: “Field”, “Rink” and “Aquatic Facility.” The subcommittees have welcomed all interested parties and now have over 30 active members.

The Committee has participated in limited site investigation of the Premises. The subcommittees have worked to identify the Town’s use requirements for each use, and to define the multi-year development process that will support the public/private partnerships required for this project. Below we will summarize the analysis completed to date, list our recommendations and describe the resulting development process model we aim to follow through to the completion of the project. The agendas, minutes, and documents discussed in the Committee’s bi-weekly meetings can be found in the 900 Worcester Street Committee section of the Town of Wellesley website.

**Due Diligence (to date):** Due diligence for the Premises is incomplete. The Commission has tried to balance minimal investment pending the results of the appeal with its appetite for site-specific information. The Committee (specifically its DPW members and the Town’s Executive Director) have sought permission from the Church to conduct the on-site due diligence while awaiting the results of the vigilers’ final appeal. The Church granted site access for the site to be surveyed and elevations to be recorded. In addition, a wetlands specialist was able to inspect the property and confirm the approximate location of the wetlands on site.

**The Subcommittees:** Each of the subcommittees has investigated the issues specific to its use, including: user requirements, operating models and estimated construction costs. The “Rink” and “Aquatic Facility” subcommittees have also visited similar facilities and held discussions with industry experts and potential partners. Agendas, minutes and supporting documents for each of these subcommittees can be found in the designated subfolders on the Committee pages of the Town’s website.

**Aquatic Facility:** This subcommittee is co-chaired by Jim Conlin from the Recreation Commission and Suzy Littlefield from the School Committee. It consists of ten members with different interests ranging from seniors fitness and wellness to youth competitive swimming. Subcommittee members have visited various facilities throughout the Commonwealth, Connecticut and Vermont to view a wide spectrum of facilities. The Aquatic Facility Subcommittee distributed a Town-wide survey to get direct input from residents in order to learn the uses and features most valued by our residents. (The result of the survey are available in the Aquatic Facility subfolder). More than 2500 residents responded to the survey and provided a wide range of insights into their preferences. The results of the survey will be the primary input for developing the use requirements. This subcommittee now needs funds to hire a consultant to help convert the survey results into use requirements.

**Rink:** This subcommittee is chaired by David Perry from the Wellesley Youth Hockey League. It consists of eight members with interests ranging from youth hockey to competitive figure skating. Subcommittee members visited various sites in Massachusetts including the new rink in Falmouth that was recently constructed by the Falmouth Youth Hockey Group. By meeting with various specialists involved in the various newer developments, the subcommittee has a better

understanding of the characteristics that result in a good rink. Through their discussions, the Rink subcommittee has been able to develop a detailed operating pro forma with confirmed revenue and expense assumptions/drivers, anticipated construction costs, financing considerations, capital requirements, and identify key individuals/firms that will help review components/phases of the project. This subcommittee believes it understands the economics a private developer will face and the features and qualities that improve the likelihood of a developer's success. The next step is to draft an RFP for the rink and send it to rink developers.

**Field:** This subcommittee is chaired by Tom Harrington. Tom also chairs the Recreation Commission and the Playing Fields Task Force. He is a past president of the Wellesley United Soccer Club (WUSC). This subcommittee consists of five members. It has confirmed the financial support of WUSC for spotlighting the field, contingent upon a use agreement between WUSC and the Town. In addition, the subcommittee confirmed anticipated users for the field. Of note, Wellesley Youth Football does not intend to play games on this field, but may use it for practice. By eliminating football games, the subcommittee was able to reduce the length of the field by 20 feet to 340 ft x 210 ft. This twenty-foot reduction allows the other uses, or parking areas, to be larger. This subcommittee's next step is to draft an RFP for the design and construction of the field.

**Refined Site Plan:** As part of the due diligence process, the Town surveyed the premises. This survey allows the Committee to develop a site plan. This site plan maximizes the use of the "buildable" space on the Premises. It maintains the needed parking capacity while allowing additional space to be added to the pool and rink to improve the likelihood of success for these uses. Specifically, the new site plan has added almost 20% more footprint to the pool and added an extra half sheet of ice to the rink. This extra building space improves the appeal of these facilities to private developers as well as improving the resulting amenities for the Town. This survey also confirms that the Town has met the 5/8 conservation and recreation land requirement for CPC funding approved in STM Article 2. This revised layout is available in the Committee's folder on the Town website. The next step is to develop a Master Site Plan.

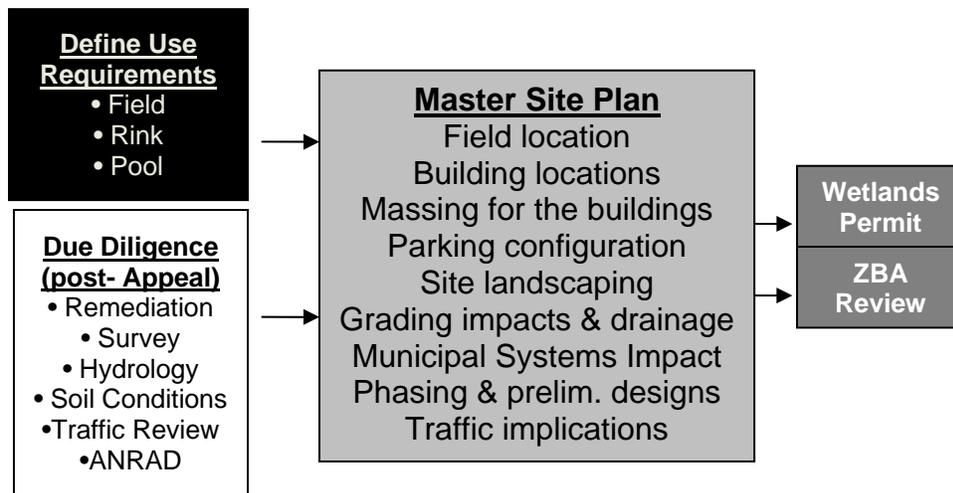
**Project Permitting Approach:** The Committee anticipates this project will be developed by multiple developers on different timelines. Therefore, the Committee selected the permitting approach that allows the site's uses to be developed independently and should result in the shortest development time possible while allowing the most flexibility for each use's developer. The Committee realizes it would be difficult to permit the whole project as one development because it would delay building any use until all of the uses were ready. The Committee believes that the flexibility of permitting each use when it is ready to proceed is highly desirable to the Town, potential partners and neighbors.

**Procurement Approach:** The Town must use a public procurement process to develop the Premises. There are two options available: 1. *M.G.L. c. 149* "public construction"; and 2. *M.G.L. c. 30B*.

Under the "public construction" process, projects are defined in precise terms through an RFP. Bidders submit bids to construct the specified work. The Town is required to award the project to the lowest responsible bidder. Under chapter 30B, a project may be defined less specifically using goals and objectives to define the project. Bidders submit bids that include costs as well as features, functions, and operating guidelines. The winning bidder would be selected by looking not only at the lowest cost but also responses to the Town's other specified criteria. The Committee would include a scoring matrix that highlights priorities and gives the Town flexibility when selecting the winning bid.

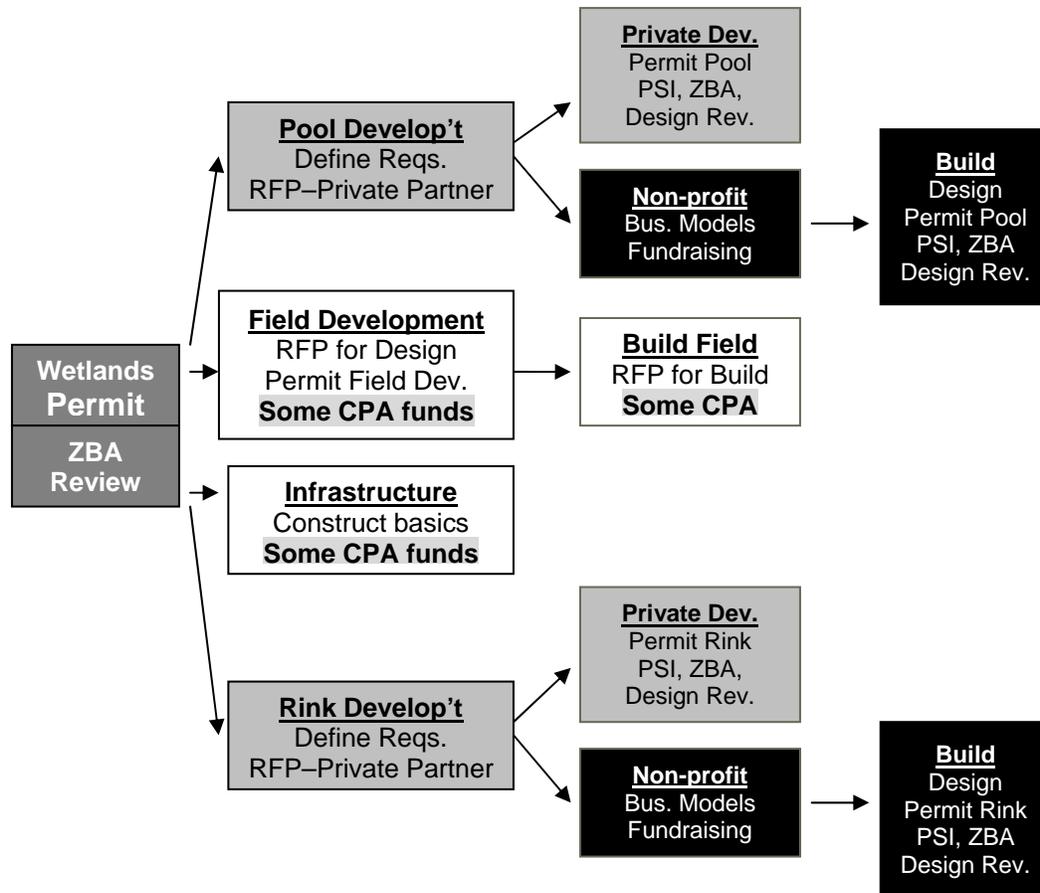
The Committee believes the chapter 30B procurement approach will help Wellesley to be able to find the best design, best operator, the best developer and the best long-term partner for the project, as opposed to choosing the lowest bid price.

**Development Process:** Under Article 2 of the June 2012 STM, Town Meeting voted for the Town to fund the purchase of the land and removal of the existing buildings anticipating paying for the development of the field, and general preparation of the site in the future. Article 2 also showed private funds should be used for the lighting of the field, design and construction of the pool, and design and construction of the rink in the future. The Committee believes that it has been able to define and document a development process that will provide a path to the successful construction of the site consistent with the Town's plan under Article 2. (See flow chart 1)



Phase 1: This process begins with completing the Due Diligence (required before purchasing the property) including examining: the soil types, the water table level, basic traffic impacts, etc. It also begins with defining the features and requirements for each use, as well as the amenities identified by the Board of Selectman. These amenities include a kayak drop in, a library book drop off and a reflection area. Next, the Committee will create a **Master Site Plan (MSP)**. The MSP will include, but is not limited to: the massing and locations of the structures; the vehicular ingress and egress, parking, pedestrian flow; site run-off mitigation; wetlands protection structures and buffer zones; and municipal services impact. The MSP will become part of the applications submitted to the ZBA and the Wetlands Committee. The MSP will be the structural blueprint for the final layout of the site and will provide 90% or more of the information required for the PSI. It will not include the design and architectural components for the buildings. These design components will be provided by developers chosen by the Town. The critical takeaway is that the MSP will provide developers with site limitations their design must meet and give them confidence that their facility will be able to be permitted on the site. This MSP will also provide a definitive view of the end state of the site for the Board of Selectmen and Town Meeting to review.

With the MSP complete and ZBA and Wetlands review complete, RFPs for the development (and operation) of the field, rink, and pool can be developed and distributed in parallel. (See flow chart 2)



Phase 2: The field design and construction will be able to begin while the more complicated rink and pool review process is conducted. The field RFP will be awarded to the lowest responsible bidder. Alternatively, the rink and pool RFPs will follow the chapter 30B procurement process. There will be 3 RFPs distributed for the rink and pool:

1. Build and operate both the pool and rink
2. Build and operate the pool
3. Build and operate the rink

One developer / operator running both the pool and rink is preferred because it will allow the most design coordination and operating efficiencies. Respondents' proposals will be scored on multiple criteria to provide the Town with the best facility and operator. Should a satisfactory response not be received, the Committee may reject all of the responses. The Committee expects, in light of a recent, similar process in Braintree, that we will receive responses. Our hope is that we will have multiple responses from which to choose. The Committee's

recommendation will be reviewed by the Board of Selectmen and Town Meeting, as appropriate.

Should a successful private developer not be found, a fund raising based solution is possible (the black boxes in the flow chart). This process would likely take many more years and likely would leave the Town responsible for any operating surpluses/deficits encountered by the uses (e.g., the Concord Beede Center). This outcome is seen by most of the Committee as a less desirable solution although it would allow the Town to define the facilities in more detail.

**Timing Expectations:** We estimate the MSP will require 4-7 months to complete. The field design and construction could then be completed within the next 12 months. The RFPs for the pool and rink will take 2-3 months to develop, 2-3 months to receive responses and 2-4 months to review the responses and award the bid. The final design, permitting, and construction of these facilities will likely require 12-24 more months. In short, the field could be up and running 18-24 months after the close of the purchase of the property with CPC and Town Meeting funding support. The rink and pool are more likely three or more years from opening with a private partner and much longer if fund raising is necessary (Beede Center fund raised for over seven years).

**Next Steps:** The Committee is working to complete the user requirements for the pool, develop the Master Site Plan, and begin writing the RFPs for the use developments, all while awaiting the successful resolution of the appeal and due diligence review and close on the sale of the property. We continue to work on multiple components in parallel, where possible, to allow the successful opening of the uses as soon as possible while allowing the appropriate time for analysis, review and feedback.

Respectfully submitted,

900 Worcester Street Recreation Use Committee

<u>Member</u>	<u>Representation</u>
Andy Wrobel, Chair	Recreation Commission
Don McCauley	Board of Selectmen
Mark Synnott	Planning Board
Joan Gaughan	Natural Resources Commission
Suzy Littlefield	School Committee
Barbara MacMahon	Community Preservation Committee
Miguel Lessing	Council on Aging
Tim Barrett	Neighborhood Representative
Rose Mary Donohue	Emeritus
Tom Harrington	Playing Fields Task Force
David Perry	Recreation Commission Rink Appointee
Jim Conlin	Recreation Commission Pool Appointee
Hans Larsen	Executive Director, General Government Services
Mike Pakstis	Director, Department of Public Works
Dave Hickey	Town Engineer
Meghan Jop	Director, Planning Board
Marjorie Freiman	Advisory Committee

There are more than 16 additional Wellesley Residents active on subcommittees; many have specific expertise in relevant areas, and many are new town volunteers.