



NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Town Hall, 525 Washington Street, Wellesley, Massachusetts 02482-5992

Regina LaRocque, Chair
Raina McManus, Vice Chair
Lise Olney, Secretary
Laura Robert
Katie Griffith

Brandon Schmitt, Director
Telephone: 781.431.1019, Ext. 2298
Website: www.wellesleyma.gov/NRC

Girls' Softball Fields Advancing to Home Plate

Major funding towards construction receives Community Preservation Committee approval

February 14, 2019 (Wellesley, MA) - The Wellesley girls' softball field took another big step forward after the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) voted unanimously to fund \$500,000 toward construction costs from Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds. This appropriation follows the 2018 CPC funding of \$100,000 for feasibility and engineering design plans. The \$500,000 appropriation will be used for the rehabilitation of two softball fields: the Hunnewell 2 or "multi-purpose field" which currently serves both softball and soccer, and the girls' varsity softball Lee Field.

"I'm really proud of the CPC for moving this project forward, and the residents of Wellesley should be really proud that we are a CPA town," said CPC Chair Barbara McMahon.

The project is spearheaded by Wellesley resident and girls' softball coach Jill Creevy, along with the girls' softball players who make up the Wellesley Softball Field Improvement Committee - recently [nominated as one of the "Townsman 10"](#) for their work on the project. The project has broad support among many in town who believe the improvements are overdue. The design plans include the addition of dugouts, fencing, seating, scoreboards, storage; and improved accessibility, drainage, infield and turf conditions. Lee Field will be expanded to create a Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) regulation-sized playing field. The proposal does not include provisions for additional lights or a sound system, but will include electricity for equipment such as a pitching machine.

"The Natural Resources Commission has been very pleased with the design plans presented to our board at two recent meetings and we are thrilled this project is one big step closer to completion," said Raina McManus, NRC Vice Chair and voting member of the CPC. McManus added that the entire board is incredibly supportive of this project, and lauded fellow NRC Commissioner and Playing Fields Task Force (PFTF) member Katie Griffith for her liaison work and the town staff who have worked so many hours on this project. "The designer's respect for the natural features of the park and their creative solutions such as culverting the stream gave the field more breathing space, allowing room for the amenities the girls need and deserve," McManus said. The plans, which will still require review and permitting by the Wetlands Protection Committee, Design Review Board, and the Zoning Board of Appeals, also call for the creation of a wetlands resource area and the addition of native plantings of shrubs and trees throughout the entire site.

At the NRC's request, the Request for Proposal to bidders for the project included conducting an overall assessment of the entire Hunnewell field complex to ensure the location of Lee Field was the best field for the girls' varsity team, given its constraints on four sides: an intermittent stream, aqueduct, abutters' property lines, and Washington Street. The winning design team of Weston and Sampson conducted the assessment, and

once all stakeholders determined Lee Field was the correct location, plans quickly moved forward.

Town Engineer Dave Hickey of the Department of Public Works is leading the entire process which includes the DPW, Wellesley Public Schools Athletic Director John Brown, maintenance staff, Recreation Commission and department staff, members of the Playing Fields Task Force, neighbors, and the NRC. General comments from the public were also received throughout the process. Town Meeting will ultimately need to approve funding for the project. Pending Town Meeting approval and permitting, construction may begin this summer.

The \$500,000 CPC appropriation covers half of the approximately \$1,000,000 price tag for the project. Three hundred thousand dollars is slated to be paid from the town's capital budget, and \$200,000 will be privately raised to fully fund the project.

Related: [Play Ball! Wellesley Girls' Softball Headed for Improved Fields](#)

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