

Land Use/Planning/Public Works committee,

My name is Brian Love and I live at 1 Little John Court Gales Ferry, CT. I write today to provide a discussion on potential future uses of town land for our youth. We have multiple non-profit youth sports leagues that utilize town fields. We have many fields and locations however, almost all are multi-use, lack amenities, and are spread throughout the town.

I propose we create a dedicated baseball/softball complex with three little league fields, one full-size baseball field, three softball fields, indoor batting cages, lights, scoreboards, a playground, ample parking, a concession stand, press boxes, and equipment buildings. This complex will provide the following benefits:

1. Fewer ball fields would be maintained which reduces long-term maintenance costs. We would go from 9 baseball and 3 softball fields to 4 baseball and 3 softball fields.
2. Operating costs would be reduced by centrally locating fields thus allowing the town to stow field and maintenance equipment in one location and not transportation costs. The number of locations requiring garbage pickup and porta-potty services would be reduced.
3. Parks and Rec would not have to spend time and money converting fields that are dual-use every season.
4. Dedicated paths and safely accessible walkways could be created so people of all abilities can come to watch the games. Some of our fields are not easily accessible to people with disabilities.
5. No more BOE v. P&R when it comes to field maintenance issues for our leagues. Some of our fields fall under the jurisdiction of both organizations.
6. Our youth sports leagues would no longer have to share accounts for league operations.
7. With a central location comes the league's ability to have the presence of its board members at all games to aid in any situation that might come up in youth sports.
8. The leagues would be able to store their equipment on-site where the kids play. This helps with training equipment that can be shared and reduce the cost of equipment for the league.
9. Lights would allow for more field use. We currently need the number of fields we have because we cannot play at night and are limited especially during the fall seasons. We cannot host tournaments because of this; reducing revenue for the leagues.
10. Tournaments would bring in additional revenue for our small businesses from the increased number of visitors.
11. Complex could be built with solar power in mind; keeping electrical operating costs lower for the leagues and town.
12. Fundraising opportunities would go up exponentially due to having the ability to run concessions in one location directly at the field at every event.
13. Most of our families and coaches have multiple kids in different age levels and being able to centrally locate all games and practices would make it easier to make all of the events.
14. Our current fields do not provide spectators with protected seating with good vantage points to watch the game. New fields would be built with that in consideration.

15. Batting cages could be built in a manner that allows indoor year-round use. Our leagues currently pay private companies in neighboring towns to utilize their spaces for wintertime.
16. We lose hundreds of dollars every year to lost balls in the wetlands behind the Pfizer fields. Purpose-built fields could consider this and help lower registration fees based on annual equipment replacement.
17. Old baseball fields could be converted into dedicated complexes for Football at LMS/Crandall field and Soccer could have all of colonel Ledyard Park. A large indoor rec center built for all sports to share year-round; or converted to dog parks.

We had over 300 of our Ledyard youth play baseball and softball last year. We owe it to them as the taxpayers in this town to provide a field they can be proud to call home.

Thank you,
Brian Love
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