

Hello Roxanne,

Could you forward this letter to Town Council, Land Use/Planning/Public Works Committee, Conservation Committee, Parks & Recreation Committee and Bruce Gartska so that they may also read. I think that should cover everyone that would have an interest in this letter.

Thank you for your help.

Respectfully,

Naomi Rodriguez

From: Jessica Cobb <jessilynn.p.cobb@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, March 10, 2023 5:10 PM

To: Naomi Rodriguez <NaomiR@ledyardct.org>

Subject: Designation of open space

You don't often get email from jessilynn.p.cobb@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Ms Rodriguez,

On Thursday, March 9, 2023 the Ledyard Planning and Zoning Commission, of which I am an alternate member, reviewed and approved amendments to the Subdivision Regulations which included edits to the Open Space Subdivision and Conservation Subdivision regulations. As part of the discussion, I wondered how the parcels that are dedicated to open space get allocated and what the decision process is to set aside a parcel as conservation or as active recreation, and it is my understanding that that process is not well defined.

This topic interests me because I am also a member of the Parks and Recreation Commission, and am increasingly concerned that we are outgrowing our recreational facilities. I am also concerned about this as a parent of two kids who actively participate in sports. My middle schooler's basketball practices this past season were held from 8-9pm, which in my opinion is pretty late to be holding a practice, but was necessitated by the amount of gym space available for the town leagues and the school leagues to share with other town programs. There have also been comments from parents involved in other leagues that space to hold activities can sometimes be challenging, whether it is the amount of space available or the necessity to sprawl the league across several different locations throughout the town. This will be a growing concern as there is more development in town and the possible population increase that those developments may bring.

The amount of space for sports fields is not my only concern. If you locate all town-owned playgrounds on a map, there are large areas of Ledyard that have no playground within any walking distance, and if you only include walking distance that doesn't cross an arterial road, even less of the population has access to a playground. There are very few dedicated places that a person can go to walk or run off-road and off-trail. One is the new all-weather track at the high school which is no doubt a great asset to the town, but it is not widely accessible. There is also a small walking path around Erikson Park in Gales Ferry. Many of our subdivisions were built without an active recreation space for the neighborhood. Besides active participation in sports or a physical activity, parks provide a gathering space for neighbors

which is a social benefit to any community. Participation in outdoor activities should not require a car, but for most people in Ledyard, that is the case.

I think that the amount and condition of the trails in Ledyard managed by the Conservation Commission, the Parks and Rec Department, and Avalonia Land Conservancy are an invaluable resource to the town and we need to make progress in connecting our open spaces to create a network of trails like in the Tri-Town Trail vision. I believe wholeheartedly that we should be good stewards of the land and preserve areas for the non-human habitants of Ledyard, to protect our natural resources and our water supply. But in working toward that objective, we need to avoid "tunnel vision" and also create spaces for active recreation. I think a clear process and a detailed plan can help balance these two things. I hope that you and the Town Council and other agents of the town can facilitate the definition of that process.

Please share this letter with interested parties.

Sincerely,

Jessica Cobb