

Haverford State Hospital Recommendations
Haverford Township Department of Parks and Recreation
11 /15 / 04

Brief History - Overview

Ever since Haverford State Hospital closed in 1998, the community has engaged in ongoing, sometimes passionate discussion about future uses for the property.

In a survey of township residents conducted by the Haverford State Authority in 1998, over 70% of the respondents favored preserving Open Space and providing Recreation opportunities at the site, financed through a combination of public funds and monies from development of the property. At numerous public meetings held over the past 5 years, residents have reinforced that sentiment. Throughout its history, the elected leaders of Haverford Township have understood the value their constituents place on Parks and Recreation, in creating a healthier, safer, stronger community.

Recently the Recreation Department was asked to submit our recommendations regarding the community recreation amenities which should be included at the site. These recommendations combine; feedback on the needs of many community organizations; the Recreation Departments experience based on marketing programs in Haverford Township for over 20 years and coordinating facility use; the Haverford State Authority resident survey and input from the Park and Recreation Board. In addition we have studied successful operations in other communities and have researched trends and demographics (i.e. the % of people over 50 in 5 years. (**See Appendix A**) We also considered the unique possibilities this location provides because of Darby Creek and the 120 acres of open space.

We recognize that our expertise is in understanding the recreation needs of the residents of Haverford Township, not in land development or building construction. Although we have knowledge of facility design we strongly recommend engaging the services of a land development consultant at the appropriate time.

Significant Variables

Several significant variables which are not clarified as of this date are;

- 1.) Funding - What percentage of the proceeds from the sale of the property will be allocated to developing the community recreation facilities? (i.e. 70%, 50%, 30%)
- 2.) Traffic - What is an acceptable level of traffic at the site? (i.e. peak hours, off-peak hour)
- 3.) Operation - What type of Cost Recovery Model will be established for operating the facilities? (i.e. 50%, 80%, 100%)
- 4.) Dimensions – How much space and what are the dimensions? (i.e. 1 acre x 15 acres is different than 3 acres x 5 acres)

Because these variables have a direct impact on the type of amenities included and how they are marketed and utilized, we have incorporated several options into our recommendations. Specifically these options revolve around what type of aquatic facility, if any, should be included.

Although we realize there is wide support for some type of pool, we are also aware that a pool would significantly increase the cost and amount of indoor and outdoor space needed. A pool could also generate revenue, but this would be achieved through increased traffic which would require greater parking space. Therefore we included several aquatic options which will be explained in more detail. **(See appendix E)**

Space/Possibilities

As of this date the Active Recreation area is defined as 15 acres (with an additional 6 acres possible), and the Passive Recreation area is defined as no less than 120 acres. This unique location combination affords residents a range of opportunities for walking, sports, nature, environmental education, hiking, biking, bird watching, and fishing, as well as picnic areas, festivals and tournaments.

However, because the active area is limited to 15 acres, those uses need to be considered carefully. For example, a regulation baseball field for 13-15 year olds, with a 315 foot center field fence requires between 3-4 acres. **(See appendix B)**

Categories

Our recommendations are divided into the following categories:

- Indoor Areas
- Outdoor Sports Facilities
- Other Active Outdoor Areas
- Passive Areas

Guiding Philosophy

The guiding philosophy behind our recommendations is;

- 1.) To maximize the benefits of the facility for people of all age segments of the population including youth, young adults, families and those over 55, and people from all areas of the township.
- 2.) To fill current recreation needs and create the unique opportunities this site provides because of Darby Creek and the open space.
- 3.) To integrate the outdoor/indoor and active/passive aspects of the facility, and incorporate this site as part of the township wide system of Parks and Recreation facilities.
- 4.) To partner with community organizations (i.e. Boy Scouts, Darby Creek Valley Association, Haverford Township Baseball, Haverford Soccer, Haverford Youth Rugby, etc.) in using the facilities to fulfill the mission of providing the benefits of active and passive recreation to township residents.

Priorities

Based on current needs and residents' response, the top 3 priorities are

- 1.) Indoor Gym Space
- 2.) Outdoor Ball Fields
- 3.) Indoor and Outdoor Walking Paths

Indoor Area

Recreation and Environmental Building – 40,000 square feet

We recommend this building be a “Green Building” which will be environmentally friendly, enhance the quality of the neighborhood, and increase the possibility of obtaining funding through grants. (See appendix C&D). We also recommend two stories with underground parking, if possible, to save space.

Included would be (with approx areas);

Full size gymnasium – 16,000 square feet a double full court with dividers and a walking track. Would accommodate basketball, indoor soccer and volleyball. could be used for community open play, adult and youth leagues, camps, clinics and contests.

Indoor Walking Track – especially for women and those over 55.

Locker rooms – 3000 sq feet – to accommodate Recreation leagues and Sports Camps

Small Fitness Room – 2000 sq ft – featuring several bikes and wellness machines - Primarily to be used by Senior Citizens and those using the Walking track.

Aerobics/Dance Room – 3000 sq ft –Used for dance classes, aerobics, tumbling, youth Sports, etc.

Arts & Crafts Room – 1000 sq ft- designed for storage supply and easy clean up

Pre-School room – 1000 sq ft - designed for pre-school activities

Game Room – 1000 sq ft - equipped with ping-pong tables, air-hockey etc. Primarily used by youth age 10-17

Kitchen Area – 400 sq ft - Area with access to outside concession – would allow for cooking for rentals, family parties, scout banquets, civic groups, etc.

Indoor Areas Continued

Office Space – 600 sq ft - allows for several offices.

Community Meeting Room – 1000 sq ft (2) - Designed for instruction, meetings, Seminars and training – can be divided or used as one big room.

Rental Rooms – (2) – 1000 sq ft - dances, parties, and meetings – kitchen facilities available – can be divided or one big room.

Maintenance/Storage Area – 2000 sq ft – For storing building and maintenance supplies.

Environmental Education/Nature Room - 2000 sq ft – To be used for environmental and nature programs, Scouts, camps, schools, etc.

Hallways / Bathrooms 4000 sq ft - would use the remaining square feet out of 40,000.

*Aquatics suggestions are listed separately (**See appendix E**)

Outdoor Active Areas – 15 Acres

Sports Facilities – Fields

In order to make efficient use of the limited space available; control traffic and help alleviate overuse at local neighborhood fields we have applied the following guidelines:

- Keep neighborhood youth programs in their neighborhood
- Where possible make the fields multi-use
- Use fields primarily for ‘travel teams’ and Township Programs

The secondary benefits of this approach are;

- Free up space at neighborhood fields
- Alleviate some parking issues in neighborhoods
- Allow for new and future uses
- Create opportunities to restore overused fields throughout the township

The fields should include;

Regulation Baseball Field – minimum 300 ft center field fence to be used by those 13 and over (**3-4 acres**) (**See appendix B**)

Outdoor Active Areas cont.

Regulation Softball Field – minimum 215 ft center field – used by girls 13 and over, adults and could be used for Little League (**2 acres**)
(See appendix B)

2 Multi – Use Fields – for Lacrosse, Rugby, Field Hockey, Soccer, Football, with an adjoining infield for baseball on one and softball on the other. (**approx 2.5 acres each**)

(We recommend at least 1 baseball field and 1 multi-use field be lighted so as to allow more playing time. On limited space we also recommend that the fields be synthetic turf so they can be used year round and require less maintenance.) (See Appendix F)

2 Basketball Courts – approx 10,000 sq. ft

2 Volleyball Courts – approx 8,000 sq. ft

Other Outdoor Areas

Family Picnic Pavilion Area – to be used by families, community groups, township programs (**.5 acre**)

Splash Park Play Area – used primarily by children in township summer programs, camps etc. A safer, more cost-effective, low liability, way to provide water and fun in the summertime than a pool. (**.5 acre**) (See appendix G)

Walking Path – we believe a connecting walking path would be very popular with women and senior citizens. (**.5 acre**)

Bike Path – could be built around the outside area – especially for young children (**.5 acre**)

Enclosed Dog Run Area – (**.5 acre**) – there is a large segment of the population who support the Dog Park. We recommend Off-leash be restricted to the enclosed area. Other sections could be on-leash, and the rest No Dogs.

Recreation and Environmental Building – 40,000 square feet (**1 acre**)

Parking for 90 – 100 cars – (**approx 1 acre**)

Parking for staff / maintenance

Added Acreage

If the additional 6 acres were included, we would separate the second baseball and softball fields from overlapping the multi-use fields (lacrosse etc.), and add an additional multi-use field.

Passive Areas (minimum 120 acres)

We believe this area is what makes this property truly unique. Darby Creek and the trees and wetlands provide wonderful opportunities to appreciate learn from and enjoy the outdoors. This would coincide with indoor environmental education area.

We recommend the township partner with the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, DCVA, fishing organization like DelCo Anglers and other nature and environmental associations.

Amenities should include;

Hiking trails with inter-active nature areas, including a portion that is elevated and handicapped accessible so it can be used by those who have restricted mobility.

Scouting Areas to be used by scouting groups to hold meetings and earn badges while they maintain and improve the area.

Bird watching areas – for those who enjoy this popular activity

Fishing areas – to teach responsible fishing

Mountain Bike paths for those who enjoy riding their bikes in the woods.

* Attached is a supporting document from Dr. Joe Martin detailing the environmental aspects and benefits of the open space as well as environmentally sound ways to construct the facilities relative to storm water management. (See **appendix H**)

Appendix E

Aquatics Options

When people in the field of recreation speak of a pool, there are three basic types; competitive pool, lap pool and leisure pool. The three types are used differently, by different groups of people. They also have different space and costs associated.

Competitive Pool – approx 10-12,000 sq ft area

- Usually maintained at 76-78 degrees
- used primarily by competitive swim teams
- requires extra space because of spectators
- High cost, low revenue

Lap Pool – approx 6-8,000 sq ft

- Usually maintained at 84-88 degrees
- used primarily for community use, senior aerobics, swimming lessons, parties, etc.
- sometimes has whirlpool associated.
- moderate cost, moderate revenue

Leisure Pool – approx 3-4,000 sq ft

- popular in last 10 years; often added to Lap Pool
- Maintained at 84-88 degrees
- used primarily by children under 12
- lower cost, high revenue and maintenance

* If space, funding and traffic are not major considerations, we recommend a Community-use Lap Pool along with a Leisure Pool. These would benefit the greatest number of residents and the widest age segment of the population.

