

**Active Recreation Assets Working Group**  
**DRAFT Recommendations for Public Comment**  
**March 28, 2023**

The [Active Recreation Assets Working Group](#) held a public hearing on February 6, 2023 to learn from Needham community members about their unmet active recreation needs. After additional discussion, the Working Group has voted the following draft recommendations. **These recommendations are open for public comment at a hearing on Monday, April 3, 6:30 pm (Rosemary Recreation Complex and Zoom) or via email at [otm@needhamma.gov](mailto:otm@needhamma.gov).**

**Action Sports Park & Pickleball Courts**

As part of the Town of Needham's Fiscal Year 2024 capital budget, the Park & Recreation Department has requested \$35,000 to study the feasibility of siting an action sports park and dedicated pickleball courts in Needham. This funding request will go to the May 2023 Town Meeting for their consideration. The Working Group recommends to the Park & Recreation Commission to:

**Recommendation 1:** focus the feasibility study of an action sports park on Cricket Field as the primary site, with Mills Field and Hillside Field as alternate sites.

*Note: At the April 3 meeting, the Working Group will consider a proposal to revisit this recommendation and name the Claxton Quarry as a preferred site. Public comments on this proposal are welcomed at or before the hearing.*

**Recommendation 2:** focus the feasibility study of pickleball courts on Claxton Field as the primary site, with Mills Field as an alternate site.

**Off-Leash Dog Areas**

The Working Group also identified off-leash dog areas as an unmet recreational activity in Needham. Under Section 3.7.8 of the Town's General By-Laws, the Select Board "may authorize an area or areas to be used as off-leash areas for dogs licensed in the Town of Needham for which a separate fee will be assessed and for which the Select Board may, from time to time, establish regulations for use." The Active Recreation Assets Working Group recommends that:

**Recommendation 3:** The Select Board, in coordination with the Boards that own each property in question, should consider establishing a pilot program for off-leash dog areas at (1) Hillside Field as the primary large field option with Mills Field as an alternate site, (2) Rosemary Trail and 0 Harris Avenue as primary trails/wooded areas, and (3) to further explore the need for offering a pocket park option.

The Working Group recommends that prior to starting any pilot, the Boards with jurisdiction undertake broad community engagement of dog owners, non-dog owners, and abutters around the details of the pilot (including location, hours, fencing, etc.) and evaluate the operational impacts on relevant Town departments including the Clerk's Office, Conservation, Department of Public Works Parks & Forestry Division, Park & Recreation, and the Police Department.