

## Super Park Narrative

- The original Super Park was built in the 80's. Five years ago, in preparation for building our new High School, the Super Park was removed. At the time it was removed, it was in need of an overhaul, but the children of Grafton still loved it!
- It was a gathering place for both parents and caretakers and children. It was a place that both adults and childhood friendships were formed and developed.
- Parks add value to communities. Parks provide children with opportunities for play, and play is critical in the development of muscle strength, coordination, language and cognitive abilities.
- Parks, playgrounds, greenways, trails and community open spaces help keep Americans and their communities fit and healthy.
- The Center for Disease control and prevention has called for more parks and playgrounds. Studies have shown that by providing access to parks, people exercise more and it helps fight obesity.
- When it was removed, the people of Grafton expected that it would be replaced. Let us bring back to Grafton a wonderful community asset so that future families can gather and let children of all ages and abilities play together.
- The Super Park Committee was charged in December 2010 by the Board of Selectmen to develop a plan to replace & rebuild Super Park.
- Replacing the Super Park remained important to Town residents when in 2014, the Open Space and Recreation Plan Survey results showed that SuperPark & child playground were the highest-ranked recreational facility needed by town residents. Hiking and biking trails were the next highest.
- Conventional data backs up this view. According to the American Planning Association, a town should provide 10 acres of developed park space for every 1,000 residents. Currently, Grafton has 2.3 acres of developed park space for every 1,000 residents. So while it appears that we have a lot of parks, we have significantly less than this standard.
- The new Americans with Disabilities Act standards regarding the accessibility of public playgrounds in the United States changed significantly as of March 15, 2012. These new ADA standards addressed routes, surfacing, ramps, access and transfer spaces, ground level activities and more.

After Spring Town meeting, the Super Park committee and town staff reflected on the questions and concerns raised about the potential future uses of the full parcel.

- Access to the back parcel - the Town staff has been working with Norman Hill Engineering and Land Surveying to plan for the optimal use of the site
- We have allowed for a wider driveway. Added a parking lot, with handicap spaces directly in front of the entrance to the park.
- Added a turnaround spot and
- Ensured adequate access to the rear portion of the parcel
- These site construction related items are significant and have increased the cost of the overall project. A driveway and parking lot which can be utilized for more than just SuperPark have a high cost. The infrastructure developed here could benefit the town by providing safe and convenient parking for any and all events held at the town common like our well attended Farmers Markets, mobbed summer Concerts or festive events like Grafton Celebrates the Holidays. Overflow parking could be utilized for the library both now and in the future even if the town decides to expand the building. These costs are not only just about SuperPark.
- **Drainage-** A drainage plan was developed for both the parking and playground areas to ensure that the area will have proper drainage.
  - A sidewalk was added from the gravel lot.
  - Lights will complement the lights in the library parking lot.
  - A fence and plantings will provide screening and safety from the adjacent railroad property. The train travels at a very slow speed as it approaches and crosses the roads at the common. Most children love to see trains go by!
- This plan will still complement any expansion of the library. There are opportunities to share future parking, restroom facilities and other outdoor space.
- **Maintenance of existing parks-** Jenny Anderson, the new Recreation Director is working on a maintenance plan to ensure that the other play structures in neighborhoods and at ball fields across town receive the attention they need. This is a completely separate item from the rebuilding of the Super Park.
- We are planning to phase this project so that monies used are a reallocation of funds, and no new taxes will be raised. Phasing allows us to pay as we go, spreading out the total cost and allows for reasonable changes along the way.
- Phase 1 funding site construction work which includes items like installing the driveway, installing parking area, installing a fence, installing a sidewalk and installing a drainage system. Once all of the infrastructure work is complete, we would purchase

playground structures and surfacing (the poured in place rubber surfacing is costly but is critical for handicap accessibility and to provide a playground for all abilities

- We will immediately start fundraising and seeking grant opportunities including, state, federal and CPC funding for Phase 2.
- In an attempt to look at one possible long term vision for the site, the committee has discussed the possibility adding a splash pad. We may never get to that. Any future addition or phase will depend on the success of private fund raising, grant opportunities and the wants of the town. Other possibilities for the future include a walking trail around the property, and additional municipal parking.
- A community build, where volunteers build the playground with assistance, will be planned. A community build will bring us together as a community and have the extra benefit of saving 30 -35% project costs This is how the play structure at the North Street School was built.
- The proposed Super Park will be everything that the original park was and more. It will be for children of all ages and abilities, focusing on accessibility. The surface will be a poured in rubber surface. This is an important feature to comply with current Americans with Disabilities Act standards. I believe it is important to point out that adults with mobility issues will be able to actively play with their children or grandchildren.
- The features of the structure will be varied and designed for children of all ages and abilities to play together. Many of the small neighborhood playgrounds have equipment for younger children but lack play equipment for the older children.
- Many of the existing play structures in town are either neighborhood focused or added as an “accessory use” to a ball field and are not standalone full playgrounds. Most people visit these playgrounds when they are using the sport’s facilities. They often cater to one age bracket or another, i.e. 2-5 or 5-12 and not all ages or those with accessibility needs. While we have some great play structures throughout town, we do not have a single play structure in Grafton surrounded by the safe poured in place ground solution. The mulch covered play areas which we have here in town are messy, hard to maintain and not suitable for anyone confined to a wheelchair or with sight limitations.
- This is great, but we are looking to return Super Park as a standalone destination.
- School playgrounds have equipment for older children but they are not available during the school day.
- Park users could visit the library and businesses on the common. It would help with Economic Development both in the immediate area but also with the businesses on route. Families may stop for dinner or a snack, or run errands on their way to or from

the park. A SuperPark would be great to keep people in town instead of leaving town for another town's park .

- It will be a destination for all the families in Grafton.