



## **City of Biddeford**

### **JFK-Re-Use**

November 6, 2024 at 5:00 PM  
City Hall Council Chambers & Zoom

[Click to Join Zoom Meeting Online](#)

Or call in by phone: +1 312 626 6799

Meeting ID: 936 3843 8948

Passcode: 040197

1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Approval of Minutes
  - 2.a Approval of August 28, 2024 Minutes
3. New Business
  - 3.a Review of Draft Recommendation Summary
4. Old Business
5. Adjourn

# *City of Biddeford, Maine*

## John F. Kennedy School Building Re-Use Committee

August 28, 2024

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Councilor Marc Lessard at 6:02 PM. The following committee members were in attendance: Councilor Norman Belanger, Paulette Bonneau, Rebecca Henry and Max Zakian. Carolyn Schmidtke was unable to attend.
2. With a number of guests in attendance, Chairperson Marc Lessard opened up the meeting to public comment.

A total of nine different individuals spoke in favor of keeping the Little League facility at the present location on the JFK land. Those that spoke in favor articulated the following reasons for their support:

- Youth baseball and softball programs encourage children to be active and reduces the amount of screen time they participate in.
- The team aspect of the sport develops the necessary social skills, such as team work, compromise, learning to both win and lose properly and practicing to achieve high results, all of which are necessary to be community members as adults.
- The canteen facility that exists was built and paid for by the Little League Association. It provides funding for the programming and would not be able to be moved, essentially causing the Little League to lose that investment.
- The program is well recognized among the state as a premiere program and contributes to the love of the community and the sense of belonging by all those involved, including the adult relatives of the participants.

Two members of the public encouraged the site to be developed for mixed housing with a heavy influence on affordable housing. They supported their position by stating the site was close to schools, the athletic facilities, on public transportation and easily connected to commonly used bike corridors.

One member encouraged the committee to also consider creating more indoor basketball space for the youth and public.

Committee members offered the following comments following the closing of the public comments.

Rebecca Henry agreed that the recreational field should be included in the recommendation. She stated that she would also like to see passive space, such as a picnic area, included in the design.

Chairperson Marc Lessard stated that he believes offering daycare on the site, with priority for school and city employees as another recruitment and retention tool that could be valuable instead of trying to compete on wages.

Paulette Bonneau asked if it was possible for the committee to consider whether the school land that was mentioned as a possible relocation for the little league field might be used for housing needs.

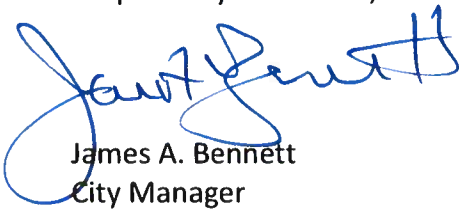
Max Zakian stated that he was struggling between the two leading uses for the site. While he understands and is generally supportive of the recreational recommendations being discussed, he feels compelled to look at the absolute pressing needs for more housing, especially affordable housing. As noted, the proximity to the schools and public transportation is compelling for housing as a significant component of the recommendation.

Councilor Norm Belanger stated that he would not recommend that the Little League field be relocated. That he wants it to continue on the site. He is very supportive of seeing how daycare can be included in the site. He would like to take a global look at the needs, with emphasis on the community center in making the recommendations. He would like to hear from the Recreation Director as well.

City Manager Jim Bennett stated he would try to get a landscape architect on board to assist with the concepts that could be laid out on the site as the committee works on the final recommendation.

3. On motion by Norman Belanger, seconded by Max Zakian, the committee vote unanimously to adjourn at 6:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "James A. Bennett". The signature is stylized and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "B".

James A. Bennett  
City Manager

# *City of Biddeford, Maine*

## John F. Kennedy School Building Re-Use Committee

*Draft Final Recommendations (Nov 6, 2024)*

1. The site should be considered as part of the recreational space along the West Street corridor. It also should be considered the link to the educational complex on Hill Street.
2. Maintain parking that will be available to support the athletic fields on West Street (Waterhouse field and St. Louis fields I & II). Approximately 85 spaces are currently available during non-school hours.
3. Move the Community Center operations to JFK by constructing a building (estimated size of 45,000 square feet) designed for those purposes. While demolition of the existing building is anticipated, no work has been done to see if any of the existing building could be rehabbed and incorporated into the new construction. Using a rough estimate of \$325 to \$375 per sq. ft. construction cost, the estimate for the building alone would be \$14,625,000 to \$16,875,000.
  - a. All existing services/uses of the community center would be incorporated into the new design.
4. Redevelop the existing Community Center into housing with a strong recommendation of affordable housing, if obtainable.
5. Beyond the relocation of the Community Center operations to the site, the balance of the site should be developed as outdoor active recreational area. Some of the recommended improvements are (*the committee has not discussed making any formal recommendations, should you?*):
  - a. Featured splash pad
  - b. Destination playground
  - c. Pickle ball courts
  - d. Destination skate park (*the committee has not discussed this; do you want to consider this given the most recent developments with the Rotary Park skate park?*)
  - e. Others?
6. Depending on the available land on the site, the community may want to consider some limited housing that focuses on lower wage earners with the school and city workforce, with some focusing on starting teachers.

### *New Items Since Last Meeting*

- a. Continue the use of the Little League facility as it exists today.
- b. Incorporate a daycare facility into the building with a potential to serve school/city employees as a priority to assist in recruitment.
- c. Move only the core recreational programs from the community center to JFK (reduces footprint needed). The rough estimate of the core recreational programs square foot space needed would be 22,500. It would reduce the estimated construction cost in half (\$7,312,500 to \$8,437,500).

- d. Keep the community group services at the newly reimagined community center that would also include conversion of space into housing.