

Mosle Athletic Field & Preserve Community Meeting

February 20, 2022

3:00 PM at Brookside Community Club

Mosle History

Source: 2011 Facilities Committee Property Evaluation Report

- The Mosle mansion was built in 1906 by sugar baron George Mosle
- Purchased in 1926 by Roman Catholic Sister of St. John the Baptist
- In 2008, the Mosle Preserve and Recreation Area (total of 111.678 acres) was purchased for open space preservation and to provide Mendham Township much-needed recreation ball fields
- At the time of purchase, it was made known to neighbors that a portion of the property would be used for sports and recreation. The town agreed to closely monitor the intensity of traffic.
 - Use was known at the time to be the Stronghold Soccer Club, West Morris Soccer Club and Mendham Little League during the spring, summer and fall

As a part of the Purchase Agreement, Mendham Township entered a Maintenance and Management Agreement

- Recreation and conservation purposes are permitted uses of the property and mean the use of the land for parks, playgrounds, athletic fields are pursuant to Green Acres Law.
- Mendham shall be permitted to make such improvements and construct such, or utilize existing structures that are appropriate to support such activities as determined by Mendham in its sole discretion.

Conservation Agreements – Part of Purchase

- NJ Department of Environmental Protection – Green Acres (Recreation Open Space Inventory - ROSI)
 - Uses complimentary to recreation are not restricted. Buildings used in support of these activities are not restricted.
- Deed of Conservation Restriction (DOCR) – Non-Profits
 - The Active Recreation Area – area of proposed lights – is exempt from the Deed of Conservation Restrictions
- Deed of Conservation Restriction – NJ Water Supply
 - It was agreed to not disturb the woodlands located on the western edge of the property so as to not impact water quality with respect to the Raritan Watershed
- Morris County Open Space and Farm Land Preservation Trust Fund
 - In the application to the County in 2006, it was stated that “The Township has a growing need for active recreation facilities. The Mosle property contains existing facilities that would offer and immediate remedy to this”

2014 Five Year Vision for Mosle Field

Field Use – Multiple Groups annually express interest in utilizing the bass fields. The use of fields should be reviewed to ensure that they receive appropriate consideration by all users. Resting the fields in necessary.

Parking – An alternative layout and expansion was completed.

Coaches Parking and Storage – Storage needs should be reviewed to determine if additional areas or locations should be provided.

Security Lighting – It should be determined if any additional security lighting is required. If it is determined that additional security lighting should be installed, then low wattage, downward type lighting should be utilized.

2010 Four Towns Recreation Plan by Kinsey Associates

Availability of these (Mosle) field areas enables consideration of a number of reassignments of field space and significant departure from the accustomed allocations within the recreation system. This space alone could conceivably accommodate the entire recreation football training programs in the fall and the entire girl's lacrosse program in the spring, relieving pressure on other fields.

We would not be looking to add lacrosse as the field needs to be rested, but this was a consideration as a part of the four towns plan

The plan recognized that lighting would be a repetitive topic

“As it is capable of enabling opportunities for recreation opportunities more consistent with the realities of contemporary suburban life”

Historical Field Usage

- Used for camps and retreats by St. John's the Baptist and for recreational activities for the special needs school that was once there.
- As of 2011, the two regulation soccer fields were used in three seasons by SSC and WMSC and the baseball field was used by MCBBS.
- As was outlined in the Four Towns Plan, Field Usage by different user groups was examined.
- In 2011, the West Morris Soccer Club was permitted to use temporary lights
- In 2012, temporary lighting was not allowed for use following a request by the Twin Boro Bears and West Morris Soccer Club.
- In 2014, the fields remained in use by the WMSC and Baseball/Softball as outlined in the Five Year Vision.
- In 2016, following a presentation to the Recreation Committee, the use of lights was approved by the Recreation Committee allowing for the Twin Boro Bear's use of light towers from August 15 through November 15 until 9:00 PM. The field began usage by the Twin Boro Bears and Ralston became home base for WMSC.
- Since 2019, the fields have been used consistently for baseball/softball and football

February 8 Meeting to Hear Neighbor Concerns

- Examine different Mendham Township and Mendham Township School District properties that could be used as alternative locations for lights
- Sports Leagues schedules if the lights are approved – will there be increased usage and traffic to the neighborhood
 - Major concerns surrounding increased traffic and safety
 - Increased patrol of the neighborhood if it is used more
- Ongoing conversations with the developer
- Limitations for future site improvements
 - Is this a conduit to having artificial turf on the field?

Conversation with Mendham Middle School

Why Mosle - Parking

- Ralston – Four rows of 23 parking spots
- Mosle – One row of 29, 28, 26 and 24 parking spots in addition to the lower lot that can be used by coaches
- India Brook – Under 30 spots total
- At Mosle, if there is an need for spill over parking, there is the hill leading down to the field that can also be utilized to avoid use of Carriage Hill and Hunters Glen
- At Ralston, the road leads directly to Route 24 – a county road where no parking is permitted.

Why Mosle – Neighborhood Access

- At the last meeting it was incorrectly stated that there are more neighbors in the Ralston area.
- There are 15 homes within 200' of the Block and Lot at Ralston.
- There are currently 30 homes withing 200' of the Block and Lot at Mosle. There will be 44 additional homes with the town home development.
- Currently, at Ralston, there are more neighbors with direct access to the field. At least four homes can be seen from the field.
- Currently, at Mosle there is only one home that can seasonally be seen at a very far distance.

Conversation with Developer

- The field will improve in the long term
- Looking at a nice field v. bad field
- Knowledge at time of move in
- Some studies show that living within walking distance from good parks can increase property values
- Idea of needing to drive to field from development is flawed, while access will be restricted, they can walk to the field

Why Mosle – Current Amenities

1. Lights are already used here. This is an attempt at upgrading what is already being used.
2. Safety is a huge concern. Lights are being used on the fields, but then there are no lights in the parking lot. This creates an unsafe environment.
3. Environmentally, the diesel powered lights are not good. We are looking into the feasibility of using solar powered lights.

Why Mosle – Current Usage

Right now, Mosle is already used for Baseball/Softball and Football/Cheerleading.

Baseball/Softball is **predominantly** in the spring season

Football/Cheerleading is **predominantly** in the fall season

These seasons do not conflict. We are not looking to add any additional sports groups to the usage schedule.

- **We would look into guaranteeing that at no time would a baseball/softball and a football/cheerleading practice be occurring at the same time.**

Why Mosle – Current Usage

India Brook is a Soccer Field ONLY

- A baseball field was considered when the field was constructed, but voted down.
- The Four Year plan acknowledges that this site is not well suited for the creation of active recreation spaces

Ralston houses 3 multi-purpose/soccer fields and a baseball field

- If one of the soccer fields was converted to a football field, we are looking to have possibly three sports competing for facility at a time. There would be no way to manage the schedules with no conflicts. Currently, baseball and soccer happen at the same time in both the fall and spring.
- It is noted in the Four Town plan that the Ralston Fields were created in response for a need for soccer fields, also noting them to be vitally important to the West Morris Soccer Club

Projected Field Use Schedule - Baseball

- We would be a sporadic use. Mainly in the Fall and Spring (no conflict with football) and occasional use in the Summer, as daylight is not a big issue for us then.
- This would be limited to travel teams mainly, where we only have a max of maybe 4 teams with half games not even be played at home.
- Fall - Friday/Saturday/Sunday nights 4pm-10pm - sporadic, not every evening of every weekend. Could only be 1 game per weekend.
- Spring - Friday/Saturday/Sunday nights 6pm-10pm (football doesn't use this area in the spring at all)
- Summer - Could be any day of the week, but only 8pm-10pm as we have daylight, again no conflicts with football in summer.

Projected Field Use Schedule - Football

- Mon-Fri 5-30pm - 8pm.
 - Same as it has been for my 3 past years.
 - Only 4 of our 6 teams practice there.
 - Other 2 teams at High School. They occasionally practice there when we get shut out at high school.
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- No change from current numbers.
 - Kids or cars in and out.
 - Not every team practices every day.
 - Wednesday is the only day all 4 teams practice.

Traffic and Safety Concerns

Based on this data, we are not looking at an increase in traffic to the area.

Chief of Police will work to increase area patrols, especially at dusk, should the permanent lights be installed.

Proposed Recreation Capital Plan does not include a proposal for turf

[illegible]

- Turf is something that we may be limited by due to environmental impacts with the DOCR with New Jersey American Water

Questions?