

OUR 122ND YEAR

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Deyermund Field replacement unveiled 3 diamonds, 1 soccer field, 160 spaces

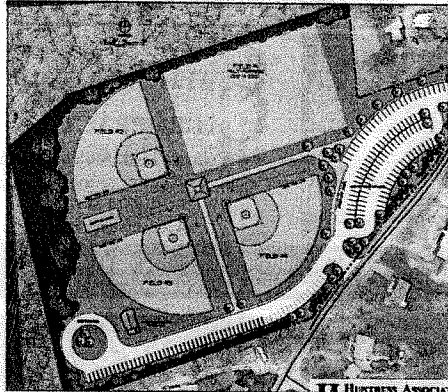
By BETHANY BRAY
STAFF WRITER

What was once a working farm at 15 Blanchard St. will soon be three baseball diamonds and one soccer field.

Designs are nearly finalized to divide the 13 acres into sports fields and parking areas, with construction slated to start in late spring or early summer.

The project, to be built on the site of a former farm the town purchased in 2007, will be a public/private partnership. The Andover Little League and Andover Soccer Association have pledged to pay for more than half of the estimated \$1.9 million complex. The town's portion will be \$425,000.

Carl Grygiel, president of the Andover Soccer Association, said his organization



Please see **FIELD**, Page 2 The plan for 15 Blanchard St., which the town bought in 2007.

Soccer rules

This week, a design for sports fields at town-owned property on Blanchard Street was unveiled. The 13-acre lot will be broken into three baseball diamonds and one soccer field. Last week, we asked you which sport you felt needed field space the most. With 40 responses, soccer was top choice, taking 72.5 percent of the votes.

Second choice, with 7.5 percent, was a tie between "none of the above" and "all of the above."

Little League received 5 percent of the votes and ultimate frisbee received 2.5 percent. Junior football and lacrosse both failed to receive any votes.

FIELD: Bids could be accepted as soon as spring 2010 for new complex

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has money saved and is ready to write a check for \$100,000, their portion of the project -- \$50,000 up front and \$10,000 per year for the next five years.

Len Farris, Andover Little League president, said his organization is 55 or 60 percent of the way with their fundraising, with a silent auction and donor programs planned for the spring.

"There is really a good public/private partnership between organizations in town, and things are coming together. I feel like we're on a good pace and progress is being made," said Farris.

The sports complex design will be finalized over the next few months, said Joe Piantedosi, director of the plant and facilities department, and will have to be

approved by the Conservation Commission.

The town could take bids from contractors in late spring 2010, he said.

The site's grass will take a year to mature, and the playing fields could be ready by summer or fall 2011. Hopefully, the fields will be ready before the town closes the Deyermund Field complex, where many baseball games are now played, he said.

State mandates and environmental concerns will force the closure of the Deyermund Field complex, built on top of the Ledge Road landfill. The site, an open-pit trash burning landfill from the 1920s to 1950s, must be recapped.

"It's a fair design, based upon what the Little League's needs

are, and what the Little League is willing to spend. We have the ability to use other spaces in town," said Grygiel of the three to one field ratio. "I give the town credit. They've been very proactive about telling us what's going on at the Deyermund complex ... The town's been a great partner, helpful in trying to find additional playing spaces."

A public meeting was held Dec. 15 at Temple Emanuel, during which Piantedosi and landscape architect Chris Huntress unveiled the design and answered questions from residents.

Harold Pierce, of 10 Blanchard St. and Robert Wegner, 2 Blanchard St., expressed concern for increased traffic in the area, especially at the property's northernmost exit, which they

said has limited visibility.

Huntress said they will take a second look at the North entrance and get the opinion of the police department's traffic safety officer. The parking lot design has two entrances onto Blanchard Street; the North entrance will be enter only, because of traffic concerns.

Construction will not raise the property's elevation, said Huntress, and drains will be put under the four fields, sending runoff through leeching basins.

"We're going to be very fussy who we let use this. It will be the best fields in town," said Piantedosi.

Piantedosi said he hopes to hold another public forum and bring the finalized design before selectmen before it goes out to bid.

SPORTS FIELD COMPLEX

- Three little league baseball diamonds
- One soccer field
- 160 parking spaces; no parking allowed along Blanchard Street
- Majority of the site's use will be for Andover Little League, Andover Soccer Association and town-sponsored camp and recreation programs
- No lighting or site use will be allowed after 10 p.m.
- No permanent restrooms; port-a-potties will be at property
- No adult sports leagues, football or lacrosse teams will be allowed to use the complex
- Town will be responsible for upkeep costs, including mowing
- Locked gate will close the property during the winter