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ALLSTON BRIGHTON, NEWTON

State to hold meeting on proposal to lease Daly Field in Brighton to private entity

Posted by Matt Rocheleau May 28, 2013 02:34 PM

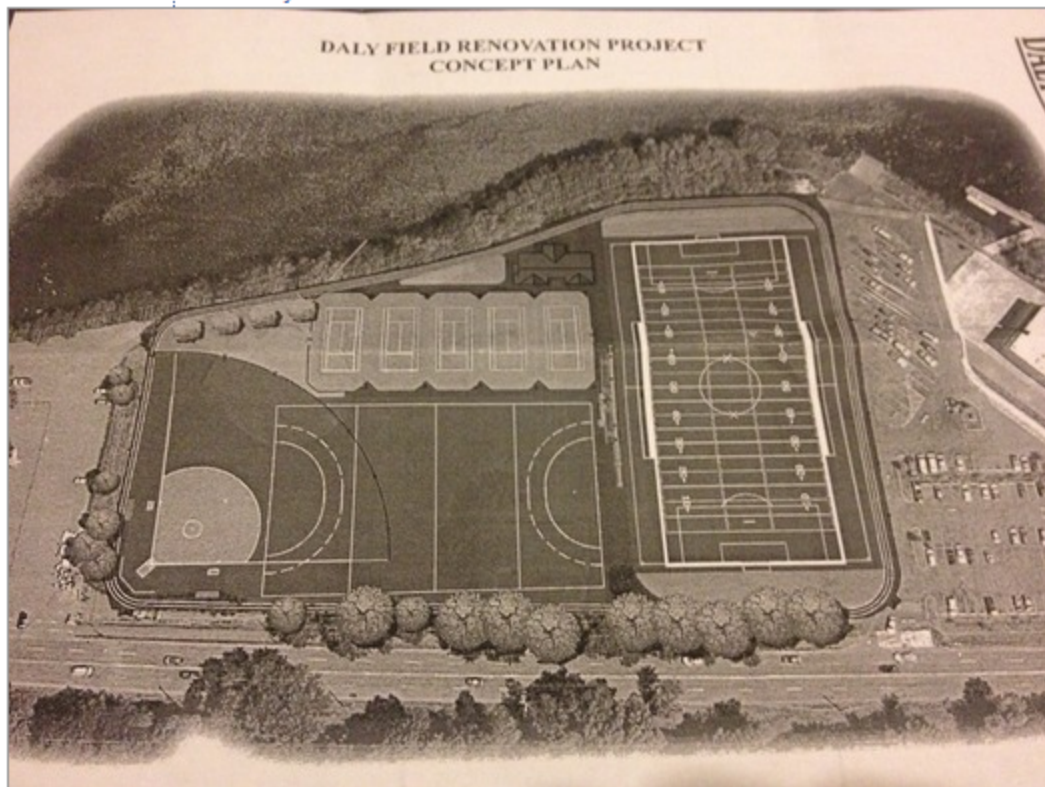
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Above is a photo handed out at a meeting in March. The flyer noted that the image is an overlay rendering for comparison purposes only. It is not an architectural or engineering document and is not to scale.

By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

The state's Department of Conservation and Recreation will hold a meeting this week to discuss a proposal to have a private, nonprofit lease the state-owned, 8.6-acre Daly Field in Brighton and then renovate the run-down green space.

The meeting or "listening session," which will include a presentation about the proposal and then time for questions and feedback, is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. Thursday, May 30 at the Community Rowing boathouse on Nonantum Road in Brighton.

The proposal to lease the field to the nonprofit [Allston-Brighton Friends of Daly Field](#) has been criticized because it allows the state to designate times when Simmons College, Brighton High School, and the Allston-Brighton Little League would have the chance to use the site, a set-up some worry could severely restrict general public use. Others are concerned about potential environmental impacts to the Charles River waterfront property.

If the plan moves forward, Simmons would spend [\\$5 million to renovate](#) the property to create a multi-purpose outdoor sports complex with two new synthetic fields, a running track, tennis courts, river path, lighting for the entire parcel and other amenities for athletes and spectators, officials said. The friends group hopes the renovation would be complete by the spring of 2014.

The college would also give \$500,000 for restoration work along the Charles River in Watertown.

Leaders of the nonprofit said at a [meeting in March](#) that they hope to start construction on the field renovation project as soon as this fall.

S.J. Port, a spokeswoman for the state conservation and recreation department, [has said](#) that the department, while authorized by a [newly signed law](#), is not required to lease the property.

"The project is dependent on proposals received by DCR and public input we will seek on those proposals," she said.

The worn-down Daly Field is flanked by river to the north and Nonantum Road to the south. It currently features space for softball and soccer. The rebuilt athletic complex would allow for uses including football, soccer, field hockey, lacrosse, rugby, softball, and tennis.

The lease would be for 20 years with an option for a 10-year extension and would allow the friends group to oversee the property. The newly-signed law stipulates that scheduling of the field's use would be controlled by the state's conservation and recreation department.

The law explicitly reserves full use of the site for Simmons from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. on weekdays from March to May and from mid-August to November.

Brighton High football would have the space reserved from 2:30 to 5:30 p.m. on weekdays and on Friday nights from mid-August to November for its practices. The Allston-Brighton Little League would reserve weekdays from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. from May to July.

Saturdays would be shared by Simmons College and the local and abutting communities. Sundays would be reserved for local community use.

Daly Field was once home to the high school's football team. But due to deteriorating conditions, the team abandoned the space more than 20 years ago. Since then, the Bengals have used other sites, most recently White Stadium at Franklin Park. But football team has not had a home field since it left Daly Field

For more information about the meeting set for May 30, [click here](#).

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