

## Letter to the Editor

The need for new fields at Haynes is real. Ask a lacrosse parent how much they play on Boxford fields. There are 167 Boxford kids in that program. Ask a football or cheerleading parent how much they play on Boxford fields. There are 114 Boxford kids in that program. Ask a flag football parent. It's the fastest growing sport in our area. There will likely be 100 Boxford kids in that program next year. Add field hockey to the mix and a staggering 75% of the field hours requested for these kids is denied. No room. Despite a 20% decline in K through 6 school enrollment, the demand for fields has not budged. Participation in youth sports is growing. Youth sports have expanded into multiple seasons. New sports are being introduced.

Some have asked, "Where are all the supporters of these fields?" They were there in 2007, when the town voted in favor of purchasing the Haynes land, with the intention of designating a portion for athletic fields. They were there in 2008, when the town voted in favor of funding the master plan, schematic design, and cost estimates. They were there in 2010, when the town voted in favor of final design and permitting. They were there in 2011, when the town voted in favor of rezoning the property. The Haynes Land Committee has represented the supporters for nearly seven years. "We Need Fields" cheerleaders at the Conservation Commission meetings, Planning Board meetings, and ZBA meetings would not be productive. These meetings are best left to the subject matter experts to comment on traffic, noise, storm water management, buffers, setbacks, invasive plants, turtle habitats, and impervious roadway material.

We would like to take a minute to dispel a few myths. 1) The project does not involve clear cutting 75 acres. Only 15 acres will be occupied by fields. Most of the remaining acreage will remain undisturbed, forever preserved as open space. 2) The fields will not be visible from Middleton Road or Main Street. They will be nestled in the woods. 3) The access road to the fields will not be on Main Street. The entrance and exit will be on Middleton Road, near Cole School.

The support for new fields is strong. It's time to bring the Boxford children back to Boxford.

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