

Edgewood Sports Complex – Questions and Responses

April 13, 2020

Misconception: Acquiring Edgewood will increase our taxes.

Acquiring Edgewood will not result in a tax increase. Rebuilding Ballantine Pool would result in higher taxes. We have the reserve funds to purchase Edgewood. Our reserve funds are insufficient to pay for a Ballantine rebuild project. Based on the estimates we currently have, it would cost nearly double to rebuild the Ballantine Pool compared to buying Edgewood.

Misconception: Edgewood will operate in the Red, and increase our taxes.

The truth is that Ballantine ran in the Red for decades. Last year, the Town spent \$90,000 of taxpayer money to keep Ballantine in operation. We anticipate, based on conservative estimates of membership, that Edgewood operations would result in positive cash flow to the Town. It appears that Edgewood operations would be self-sustaining despite normal annual cost increases and not have to be subsidized by the taxpayers.

Misconception: The taxes paid to Middlebury will be hefty, and we can't bear that burden.

As time goes on, all costs go up. Insurance, electricity, and taxes all go up over time.

If we buy Edgewood, we would owe taxes to Middlebury. Those taxes are included in our financial analysis for Edgewood operating costs. The study shows, even with conservative membership numbers to the low side of expectations, that Edgewood operations would put money into the Town's coffers.

The fiscal plan shows that Edgewood will be a self-sustaining facility so that it would not require taxpayer funds to keep it going. Last year, Ballantine's pool operation was subsidized by taxpayers to the tune of \$90,000. It's been like that for many years. Edgewood should be able to change that, by adding funds into our coffers, instead of the other way around.

Misconception: The Edgewood facility is in bad shape. Retaining walls are washed out, and the Basketball Courts are shot. The place is a dump. It's falling apart. It's a money-pit.

A couple of self-described experts on Social Media have made startlingly adverse claims about the condition of Edgewood. If true, they would certainly make one question the acquisition. However, the building inspector, hired by the Town, has the opposite opinion.

Let's just Fix Ballantine to save money.

It's not practical to fix Ballantine. It is not a viable option. The pool has deteriorated to the point that repairs are not an option. We've already tried to fix Ballantine using a vinyl liner failed. The pool was opened up; the experts advised that the repair could not be accomplished.

Misconception: Buying Edgewood is riskier than fixing Ballantine.

The opposite is true. Edgewood is ready to go as-is.

Ballantine can't be repaired; it would have to be demolished and rebuilt from scratch. New construction costs are highly uncertain.

Be wary of statements posted on Social Media.

This Task Force is aware that there has been a tsunami of Facebook postings regarding the merits and demerits of acquiring the Edgewood Sports Complex. Some of the postings are factual, but many are not. Some appear to be deliberately misleading. Our advice to you is to take Facebook posts with a grain of salt. Everyone is entitled to their opinion, but please make an effort to get the facts straight before passing judgment. There is plenty of information on the Town website to assist in that process.

Why purchase Edgewood now, when the 2020 swim season is in jeopardy from COVID-19?

If the Town acquires Edgewood, we will not take it over until the 2021 swim season. The current owners will operate Edgewood throughout the entire 2020 season.

Why don't we just get some real bids to rebuild Ballantine Pool? That way, we'll know the actual cost instead of only estimating it.

To get actual bids on the cost to rebuild the Ballantine Pool, we would need to create a full package of design documents. Creating such documents is an expensive and time-consuming process. Typically, the cost of generating the necessary design documents will cost 6% of the value of the project. If we assume that the cost to rebuild Ballantine is \$4,000,000, the cost to create the drawings needed for bids will be about \$240,000.

The Town, as a rule, does not go for bids until a project has been approved. Before approval, the Town relies on estimates, which is what we have done in this case. This is how the Library and the current Town Hall projects were handled. The Town relied on estimates to get the project approved. Once approval was obtained, and the project was underway, the Town had design documents made up, and then went out for bids.

Misconception: The "cracks" in the Edgewood Tennis Courts are just as bad as the cracks in the Pomperaug High School Tennis Courts.

This is not true. There are minor surface cracks in the Edgewood Courts. These can be repaired quite easily. The cost to resurface all six Tennis Courts and the Basketball Court is \$50,000.

The cracking of the Tennis Courts at Pomperaug High School is much worse. These courts can no longer be resurfaced. They would need to be torn up and rebuilt from scratch. The cost for a rebuild of this magnitude is \$1,000,000. That cost would be paid for by Region 15. Southbury taxpayers pay about 67% of their property taxes to Region 15.

Misconception: The driveways and parking lots at Edgewood are in terrible condition.

This is not true. The parking areas at Edgewood show normal wear and tear for a ten-year-old facility. As with our Town roads of similar age, the Town will cover them with chip sealing once we take ownership.

Misconception: Edgewood is too far away.

The Google Maps average drive time test shows that Edgewood is, on average, a less than two-minute increase compared to Ballantine. Check for yourself. We've had some folks comment that their drive time will be longer to Edgewood. When checking the approximate drive times using Google Maps, their drive time to Edgewood was less.

Misconception: Kids can ride their bikes to Ballantine.

That was true many years ago, but not the case in today's world.

Who will replace the aging Pool Heaters?

The owners of Edgewood.

How long will the public the comment period be open?

The comment period will be open for all relevant information before the BoS makes its decisions.