

Field Lighting Proposal for the Mandel Rec Center



Town Commitments to Recreation Needs

As quoted from the 2024 Town of Palm Beach Comprehensive Plan & Town of Palm Beach Strategic Plan 2023-2028

2024 Town of Palm Beach Comprehensive Plan:

The Town has developed a cohesive recreation and open space plan. To ensure the continuation, the Recreation and Open Space Element must reflect the existing and future population, the location and condition of existing facilities, as well as the supporting role that the private sector plays in the recreational network. Recommended is the recognition of the exceptional recreational programming the Recreation Department manages. As such, a new Sub-Element has been established that pertains exclusively to programming with associated corresponding Goals, Objectives, and Policies. Recreational programming will continue to play a critical role in the Town as younger families with children move to Palm Beach. That trend is expected to continue, impacting programs, sports, and enrichment programs in the future. Priority will be given to Town residents. (Page 264 of 477)

OBJECTIVE 1 - The Town will continue to maintain its system of parks and recreational facilities to meet the needs of the current and future resident population. (Page 266 of 477)

POLICY 1.6 - The Town of Palm Beach shall prioritize potential future improvements to Town parks and recreational facilities. (Page 267 of 477)

OBJECTIVE 3 RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE: GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES - The Town will ensure the continued mutual relationship between it the Town and with public and private sector ventures providing recreational programming and amenities. (Page 268 of 477)

POLICY 3.3 - The Town shall periodically review recreational programming at the Mandel Recreation Center. (Page 268 of 477)

2023 - 2028 Town of Palm Beach Strategic Plan:

Strategic Objectives: Update youth and adult programming and seek partnerships as needed. Collaborate programming with partner HealthFitness, Rush Soccer, and Perseverance Basketball. (Page 5)

The Opportunity

The Mandel Recreation Center is at the heart of our healthy community here in Palm Beach. Every year, it hosts countless sports, activities, and social events that boost local participation and foster community health and ties for residents of all ages. Still, one major shortcoming persists: the absence of field lights limits its offerings, particularly post-sunset, which can be as early as 5:30 pm in winter months.

Based on community demographic changes, demands, and needs, we have an opportunity to transform our recreation center into a space that is productive, safe, and aesthetically conscientious of its surroundings during all operating hours in the winter months.

The proposed lighting is new LED lighting technology that provides highly directed lighting that seriously reduces neighborhood impact. The location of the proposed lighting is for the field that abuts Royal Palm Way, which is surrounded by commercial structures and zoning on all sides.

Who is behind the proposal

The Friends of Recreation Board and Residents of the Town of Palm Beach community would like to propose the installation of permanent lighting on the field at the Morton and Barbara Mandel Recreation Center in the Town of Palm Beach.

- Friends of Recreation Board (exhibit a)
- Friends of Recreation Field Lighting Committee (exhibit b)
- 122 Palm Beach Residents, petitioners (exhibit c)

“From the Community to the Community”

Who benefits from the proposed lighting

Child/Youth Residents of Palm Beach

Since the new Rec Center opened in 2019, the town of Palm Beach has grown significantly, with a significant increase in the number of children calling the town of Palm Beach home. We have seen a record number of children using the rec center for classes, camps, soccer and football leagues, and lacrosse. There is an opportunity and need for more of these classes across youth ages.

If approved, this would directly impact Resident Majority Youth Only Sports programs for children from preschool age through eighth grade - specifically soccer, flag football, and lacrosse.

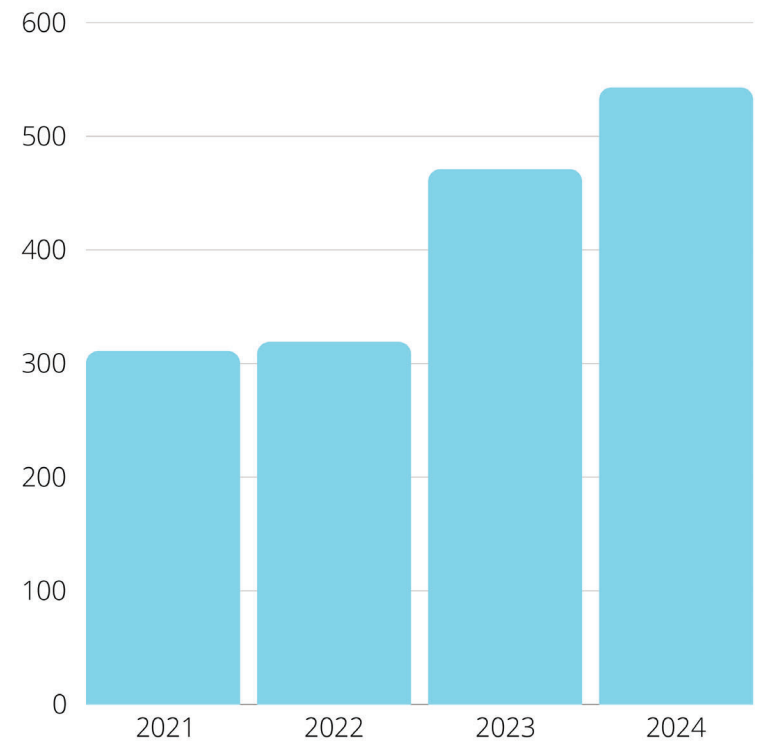
It is important to note that The Town Recreation Department is solely responsible for regulating and managing access and programming on the field.

An analysis of Demographic Changes in the Town of Palm Beach

Understanding and keeping up with the community's needs requires understanding the changing demographics of the town's residents, particularly the increase in number of children who now call Palm Beach their full-time home.

Resident youth program participation at the Town of Palm Beach Recreation has grown substantially, rising from 311 children in 2021 to 543 in 2024—a remarkable increase of approximately 75%. This surge highlights the community's expanding engagement with local youth initiatives.

Increase in Resident Child Usage at the Mandel Rec Center



Demographic Analysis continued...

Looking at child demand/population increases across community institutions:

Palm Beach Day Student Enrollment: Increased by 49.6% over the last 5 years

'24-'25 593 students
(85 new)
'23-'24 579 students
(100 new)
'22-'23 575 students
(101 new)
'21-'22 557 students
(147 new)
'20-'21 465 students
(141 new)
'19-'20 396 students
(85 new)

Palm Beach Synagogue Student Enrollment: Increased by 140% over the last 5 years

2019 - 40 kids enrolled in Hebrew School
2024 - 96 children enrolled in Hebrew School

St. Edwards Church Children Programming: Increased by 133.3 % over last 5 years

Parishioners and families have more than doubled in size over the last five years. On Sundays, faith formation classes used to attract 30 kids, but they now average around 70.

Royal Poinciana Chapel:

Average Sunday has anywhere between 20-40 children in Sunday School

Kids Club Tuesday after school:
Toddlers- 4th Grade 20-30 Children

Friday Night Live: Children 5th-8th grade 25-35 Children

*In July 2023 the estimated population of youth in Palm Beach from census data was 500.



Why addressing children's needs benefits the community at large

As mothers, we see that a quiet battle is going on today in capturing kids' focus and attention. The screen epidemic is real, and children at younger and younger ages are falling into screen addiction, alienating them from critical social development and investment in community structures. In order for our community to be healthy, we must have citizens who are participating and connecting within that community.

We see that in our community, we need options for children to play together, work together, and move their bodies together. In past generations, we saw a direct correlation with outliers in youth who did not participate in group and community structures more easily falling into delinquency, gangs, and other self-harming and community-harming behaviors. What is at stake now in this generation is far greater, with many children participating in solo alienating screen addictive behavior.

It is imperative for our community today that its children actively participate in physical and social group activities. This is important for the long-term health of our community and its individuals.



Historically, when only a few children lived in Palm Beach, families would drive off the island to towns like Palm Beach Gardens and Jupiter to participate in sports and community activities. However, with so many new children calling Palm Beach home, active group structures closer to home are needed to meet that population's needs. As stated in the Town Comprehensive Plan and Strategic Plan, the town has an obligation to keep up with and meet these changing and expanding needs.

The Rec Center is now offering competitive sports right here on the island. Families are thrilled to be able to participate in the RUSH soccer program in their backyards, along with Lacrosse and Flag Football for both girls and boys. There is a large demand for more lacrosse programming for more age groups.

We should be able to keep up with our residents' demand for additional outdoor activities. As the programming expands, so does our need to meet those demands.

National Data Points:

- 2.7 million: The number of children experiencing severe major depression
- Suicide is now the second leading cause of death for children ages 10 to 14, killing more kids those ages than every type of cancer combined
- 15% of teens reported first seeing online pornography at age 10 or younger.



THE PROPOSALS

Two Proposal Options for Lighting

We have received two proposals from Commercial lighting vendors. If the Town Council approves the field lighting concept, it would then move forward to ARCOM. A Notice of Availability for Bids would open up, enabling further competitive and targeted bidding managed by Town Staff. This would dive further into exact specification needs and requirements.

The First Proposal is for six fifty-foot lights, using special targeted LED technology to mitigate upward light pollution. The system is International Dark Sky Certified and supplied by Musco, the nation's leading sports lighting supplier. The price of this system is roughly \$400k - \$500k

The Second proposal is from Lite Maintenance. They are the suppliers of tennis lighting at The Breakers and The Mandel Rec Center tennis courts. They are proposing six 24-foot Lights with targeted LED lights. The price of this system is roughly \$150k

The following images are renderings of light locations and how the mitigated targeted lighting looks at night.

Lighting Location Rendering

Locations of proposed lights



Usage

Over the course of a year, adding lights provides approximately 350 additional hours of youth programming. This extended time is especially beneficial during the shorter days of fall and winter, where early sunsets currently limit after-school activities. By enabling programming to continue until 8 p.m. each night, we can significantly enhance opportunities for youth engagement, physical activity, and community involvement throughout the year. This also allows for parents to be able to watch their children play after work hours.



This presents a good balance of increasing programming without adding to the overuse of the field. Please note that the rec center has already purchased and is utilizing a new robotic mower, which is successfully helping maintain field integrity.

Month	Sunset	Hours Gained/ Day	Days/Month	Total Hours Gained
January	5:46 PM	2.23	31	69.13
February	6:10 PM	1.83	28	51.24
March	7:27 PM	0.55	31	17.05
April	7:44 PM	0.27	30	8.1
May	8:00 PM	0	31	0
June	8:12 PM	0	30	0
July	8:12 PM	0	31	0
August	7:57 PM	0.05	31	1.55
September	7:23 PM	0.62	30	18.6
October	6:46 PM	1.23	31	38.13
November	5:32 PM	2.47	30	74.1
December	5:30 PM	2.5	31	77.5
Total				355.4

The Rec Center is currently staffed through 8 pm as a standard. No additional town-salaried staffing will be required.

Lights will go on as needed, and will stay on until 8pm ONLY if the field is in use. Lights will NOT be on in sunlit hours and will only be used in months with shortened days.



Funding

From the Community to the Community

The Friends of Recreation Board commits to privately funding the lights. We estimate the cost at between 100k and 500k. The board alone has raised 244k, and we plan to raise the rest, if needed, privately.

Current Commitments:

- 100k The Friends of Recreation Endowment
- 144k Raised from eight individual members of the Friends of Rec Board, all of whom are Palm Beach residents and parents of school-aged children.

Future Raising (if needed):

- ~150-250k to be privately raised by the Field Lighting Committee of the Friends of Rec Board

The intention is to begin the program in Oct 2025.

The yearly maintenance of proposed lights is less than 5k per year from the town. No additional staffing is required, and more over any additional usage would likely result in more income/revenue for the town as a result.

We hear your concerns

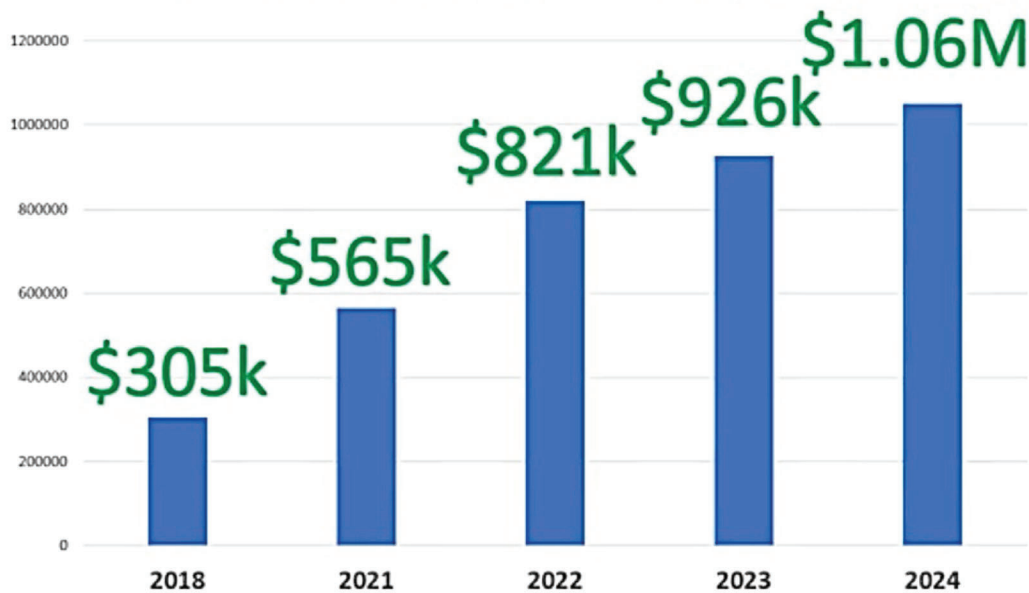
On Friday, January 24, 2025, the Town of Palm Beach Rec Commission unanimously approved the field lighting for further approval by the Town Council.

An area of concern that was raised was the integrity and maintenance of the field. The Town currently needs to add more rope drainage to the remainder of the back field and the front field.

If the lighting is approved, the Friends of Rec Board is committed to funding the additional ropeage up to \$250k, less the cost of the lights.

Currently, the cost of the second lighting proposal is \$150k, which will well allow for the full cost of the remainder of ropes needed, coming in at an estimated cost of \$65k.

Rec Center Revenue



- 2018 at \$305k was the largest year revenue of the old building.



Important to note is the vast increase over the five years in revenue. Please note the table to the left shows Rec Center Revenue alone, not including tennis.

While we cannot directly correlate the increase in child population to the increase in revenue, it should be noted how financially well the Rec Center is doing.

We believe that the lights can positively add to an increase in revenue.

Mandel Rec Center In the News

Palm Beach Daily News

NEWS

Palm Beach's popular Mandel Recreation Center marks fifth anniversary



Jodie Wagner
Palm Beach Daily News

Published 5:08 a.m. ET Jan. 28, 2025



5 Photos

[VIEW FULL GALLERY](#)

See photos as Mandel Recreation Center marks fifth anniversary with Birthday Bash
Event on Jan. 25 was moved indoors because recent rain

January 28, 2025

"The influx of young families moving to the island has led to a noticeable rise in youth participation across recreational and competitive sports, making our programs more vibrant than ever," Bresnahan said. "At the same time, we've embraced cutting-edge technology to enhance efficiency and the user experience."

"Whenever you step through our doors, it's hard not to feel the positive transformation and sense of joy that define the Mandel Recreation Center as the heart of Palm Beach," he said.

Participation numbers are up "across the board" for the facility's fitness center and its youth sports programs, he added.

Youth participation in nearly every sport remains at or near record highs, Bresnahan said, which has driven a significant growth in revenue.

"We surpassed the \$1 million mark this past fiscal year, soaring well above the former high of \$305,000 in the old building," he said.

"This center represents more than just a building," Bresnahan said. "It's where resident connections are made, health goals are achieved, and families come together."

THE MANDEL RECREATION CENTER IS AT THE HEART OF PALM BEACH - PUMPING LIFE, VITALITY, AND JOY THROUGHOUT OUR BEAUTIFUL COMMUNITY. AT THE FRIENDS OF REC BOARD, WE BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT TO GIVE RESOURCES AND ATTENTION TO WHAT WORKS, AND TO METAPHORICALLY AND FIGURATIVELY BRING LIGHT TO WHAT BRINGS LIGHT. WE HOPE YOU'LL SEE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE GIFT WE WANT TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE WELL-BEING OF OUR BELOVED COMMUNITY. IN PARTICULAR, ITS SMALLEST AND MOST FORMATIVE MEMBERS.

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PALM BEACH RESIDENTS
THE FIELD LIGHTING COMMITTEE
FRIENDS OF RECREATION BOARD

Exhibits :

Exhibit A

Friends of Recreation Board

Executive Committee:

Matthew Smith
Michael Ainslie
Darlene Jordan
Michael Kluger
Alicia Mullen
Steve Smith

Board Members:

Suzanne Ainslie
Katie Benjamin
Cody Crowell
Natalie Emerson
Kimberly Goodwin
Kelly Grace
Jason Kalisman
Sara Maggio
Marley Overman
Todd Peter
Gary Pohrer
Carolyn Ryan
Diana Sterne
Tara Vecellio

Exhibit B

The Committee for Field Lighting of the Friends of Rec Board

Chairs

Natalie Emerson
Kimberly Goodwin
Tara Vecellio

Committee Members

Kelly Grace
Sara Maggio
Gary Pohrer
Carolyn Ryan

Exhibit C

Change.org Petition

<https://www.change.org/p/install-field-lighting-at-the-mandel-recreation-center-palm-beach>

119 Signed Petitioners
Palm Beach Residents



Exhibit C - continued...

change.org

RESIDENT PETITION



Install Field Lighting at the Mandel Recreation Center, Palm Beach

Share this petition

The Issue

The Mandel Recreation Center is at the heart of our healthy community here in Palm Beach. Every year, it hosts countless sports, activities, and social events that boost local participation and foster community health and ties for residents of all ages. Still, one major shortcoming persists: the absence of field lights limits its offerings, particularly post-sunset, which can be as early as 5:30 pm in winter.

The proposed lighting is new LED lighting technology that provides highly directed lighting that seriously reduces neighborhood impact. The location of the proposed lighting is for the field that abuts Royal Palm Way, which is surrounded by commercial structures and zoning on all sides.

The tennis courts at the Rec Center, located adjacent to Seaview, are already equipped with lighting during dark operating hours. This proposal aims to provide the field with the same level of usability during dark operating hours as the Rec Center tennis courts have.

We have an opportunity to transform our recreation center into a space that is productive, safe, and aesthetically conscientious of its surroundings during all operating hours.

We need your signature rallying to install field lights to illuminate our community Rec Center field even after sunset. Please sign this petition and support our cause for a better-lit and utilized field at the Mandel Recreation Center.

Exhibits :

Exhibit C - continued...

Name	City	State
Adam Demark	Palm Beach	FL
Alejandro Canet	Palm Beach	FL
Alexandra Garrison New	Palm Beach	FL
Alicia Mullen	Palm Beach	FL
Allison Wren	Palm Beach	FL
Allyson Shrikhande	Palm Beach	FL
Amber Grow	Palm Beach	FL
Andrea Kosoy	Palm Beach	FL
Andres Alfonso Fanjul	Palm beach	FL
Andrew Scharf	Palm beach	FL
Andy Gottlieb	Palm Beach	FL
Andy Unanue	Palm Beach	FL
Ann DesRuisseaux	Palm Beach	FL
Ann Kovacs	Palm Beach	FL
Aurelia Demark	Palm Beach	FL
Brian Kosoy	Palm Beach	FL
Brooke McKernan	Palm Beach	FL
Brooke McKernan	Palm Beach	FL
Cameron Preston	Palm Beach	FL
Cara Coniglio McClure	Palm Beach	FL
Carin Searby	Palm Beach	FL
Carissa Coniglio	Palm Beach	FL
Caroline McClelland	Palm Beach	FL
Carolyn Pressly-Ryan	Palm Beach	FL
Catherine Fanjul	Palm Beach	FL
Charlotte Ross	Palm Beach	FL
Chris O'Connor	Palm Beach	FL
Christie Fennebresque	Palm Beach	FL
Christine Beall	Palm Beach	FL
Christopher Goldberg	Palm Beach	FL
Claire Capello	Palm Beach	FL

Cody Crowell	Palm Beach	FL
Crista Kobza	Palm Beach	FL
Dabney Jewel	Palm Beach	FL
Dana Koch	Palm Beach	FL
Daniel Castro	Palm Beach	FL
Daniel Stanton	Palm Beach	FL
David Lambert	Palm Beach	FL
David Sinclair	Palm Beach	FL
Diana Sterne	Palm Beach	FL
Dominick Maggio	Palm Beach	FL
Edward Emerson	Palm Beach	FL
Elizabeth Coleman	Palm Beach	FL
Elisabeth Munder	Palm Beach	FL
Elizabeth Ryan	Palm Beach	FL
Elizabeth Wetherell	Palm Beach	FL
Emily Myers	Palm Beach	FL
Frances Frisbie	Palm Beach	FL
Franchesca McGann	Palm beach	FL
Gary Pohrer	Palm Beach	FL
Greg Saville	Palm Beach	FL
Holly Grace	Palm Beach	FL
Hunter Beall	Palm Beach	FL
James Sterne	Palm Beach	FL
Jeff Preston	Palm Beach	FL
Jenna crespi	Palm Beach	FL
Jennifer Charlston	Palm Beach	FL
Jennifer Lazzara	Palm Beach	FL
Jennifer Saville	Palm Beach	FL
Jill Schecter	Palm Beach	FL
Joan Weinsten	Palm Beach	FL
John Copeland	Palm Beach	FL
John Mendell	Palm Beach	FL

Juliana Gendelman	Palm Beach	FL
Kathryn Bauman	Palm Beach	FL
Katie Benjamin	Palm Beach	FL
Katie Crowell	Palm Beach	FL
Kelly Pohrer	Palm Beach	FL
Kevin McNamara	Palm Beach	FL
Kevin Ryan	Palm Beach	FL
Kristen Lambert	Palm Beach	FL
Kristen Schonwald Vila	Palm Beach	FL
Laura Day Baker	Palm Beach	FL
Leo Vecellio	Palm Beach	FL
Lisa Rodman	Palm Beach	FL
London Jacobs	Palm Beach	FL
Lorraine Dodge	Palm Beach	FL
Marley Overman	Palm Beach	FL
Mary MAHONEY	Palm Beach	FL
Mary Stucchi	Palm Beach	FL
Mary Willis	Palm beach	FL
Matthew K. Smith	Palm Beach	FL
Matthew Mittelberg	Palm Beach	FL
Maura Ziska Christu	Palm Beach	FL
Melanie Fowler	Palm Beach	FL
Meredith Hunt	Palm Beach	FL
Michael Selverian	Palm Beach	FL
Molly Austin	Palm Beach	FL
Natalie Emerson	Palm Beach	FL
Ned Grace	Palm Beach	FL
Neville Marks	Palm beach	FL
Nick Coleman	Palm beach	FL
Nick Coniglio	Palm Beach	FL
Patrick Ryan	Palm Beach	FL
Patty Garvy	Palm Beach	FL

Peter Garvy	Palm Beach	FL
Ricky Grow	Palm Beach	FL
Rochelle Cummings	Palm beach	NY
Samantha Carroll	Palm beach	FL
Sara Quinn	Palm Beach	FL
Scott Carmilani	Palm Beach	FL
Scott Goodwin	Palm Beach	FL
Sean Bresnan	Palm Beach	FL
Stan Johnson	Palm Beach	FL
Stephanie Benavides	Palm Beach	FL
Stephanie Eady	Palm Beach	FL
Stephanie LaNasa	Palm Beach	FL
Stan Johnson	Palm Beach	FL
Stephen Smith	Palm Beach	FL
Sydney Kosoy	Palm Beach	FL
Tami Lippit	Palm Beach	FL
Tara Vecellio	Palm Beach	FL
Timothy Moran	Palm Beach	FL
Toni Zoumas	Palm Beach	FL
Tony Smith	Palm Beach	FL
Vanessa Rooks	Palm Beach	FL
Wendy Topkis	Palm Beach	FL
Whitney Hesse	Palm Beach	FL
William Eady	Palm Beach	FL
Sara Maggio	Palm Beach	FL
Lore Smith	Palm Beach	FL
Kimberly Goodwin	Palm Beach	FL