

CHOOSING WISELY

A whitepaper contributed to the Liberty Ledge / Sewataro Advisory Committee demonstrating the value of a stable, integrated and Town-aligned land use vision for Liberty Ledge.

.

Mark A. Marchionni, PhD

28 Julians Way Sudbury, MA

August 31, 2026

Executive Summary

The Liberty Ledge/Sewataro Advisory Committee (L/SAC) has done its homework. All of the prep work — the site visit, the presentations, the public input session, and the meetings — has enabled the Committee to enter deliberation and decision-making from a well-informed perspective. Now is the time to place the options on the table and evaluate the risks and benefits of each potential future land use of Liberty Ledge. The Committee is in the home stretch, ready to produce its advisory report for the Select Board.

The Committee's deliberation is now organized around three core objectives — expanded camp operations and resident benefit, public access and programming, and conservation and stewardship — each paired with a specific governance challenge the Town must address to move forward responsibly.

The first objective will fulfill the Town's most strongly supported pursuit. A Camp Sewataro that is bigger and better than ever and more accessible to a greater number of Sudbury residents. More than anything else, this is what the Town wants and a long-term management agreement will make this possible.

The second objective is to capitalize on the natural beauty of Liberty Ledge and the camp facilities to make Liberty Ledge a town-wide, year-round place for recreational programming and community enrichment. This objective requires closer coordination with Town departments and also can deliver larger benefits under a longer-term management agreement.

The third objective centers on the benefits of protecting and preserving the land. It reflects the fundamental value of stewardship that Sudbury is known for and delivers peace of mind for the community.

Other options were given full consideration during the investigative and deliberation phase, but for firm reasons, the Committee did not see them as satisfactory long-term options for Liberty Ledge. They gravitated instead toward options built around a stable and expanded Camp Sewataro plus opportunities for community-wide year-round enjoyment (i.e., Sewataro Plus).

Note added: Following on from the Committee meeting of Aug. 27, 2026, this whitepaper has been re-structured. The *Rationale for Full Implementation of Sewataro Plus* has been re-located to Appendix A. The section immediately following the Executive Summary is entitled *Marking a Recommendation*. It reflects where the Committee is at this time (end August 2026), including the adoption of Sewataro Plus as the responsible path forward.

Marking a Recommendation

1. The LLSAC Remit Toady (August end 2026)

As the Committee transitions from exploration to recommendation, it is important to distinguish between collection and analysis of data and design of a solution. The Committee has already gathered information, discussed ideas, mapped constraints, and solicited input to identify community priorities. We now know what could be done and what could not.

The next step is to synthesize the information into a solution—what should be done. This process starts by selecting the objectives the Town should pursue and then articulating the options that best advance those objectives. Implementation details such as cost, design, permitting, staffing, and timing can be noted for future study, but they should not prevent the Committee from recommending the options that most clearly align with Sudbury’s long-term goals for Liberty Ledge.

2. Objectives, Options and Governance Challenges

The Committee’s top three options, drawn directly from the LLSAC Future Use Ideas and the Brainstorm Worksheet, are listed below. Each option has a specific objective and a corresponding governance challenge that must be addressed for the Town to pursue the option responsibly. This structure keeps the Committee focused on one objective at a time and ensures that the governance framework supporting each objective is clear, actionable, and aligned with the Town’s long-term goals.

1. Camp Operations & Resident Benefit

Objective Expanding camp facilities, increasing enrollment capacity, prioritizing Sudbury residents, and strengthening storm-safe shelter and year-round programming.

Governance Challenge: Contract Horizon

The challenge is determining the contract length that best supports this objective. The Select Board will ultimately decide, but the Committee must step up and make a clear recommendation. Expanded facilities, increased enrollment capacity, and year-round programming all depend on long-term stability.

2. Public Access, Recreation & Programming

Objective Enhancing year-round recreational, educational, cultural, wellness, and seasonal programming for residents, coordinated with Parks & Recreation.

Governance Challenge: Administrative Framework Grainger has already articulated the core requirement: the Town needs to create the appropriate administrative framework to manage pursuit of this objective. Year-round programming must be organized under the auspices of a Town department — most logically Parks & Recreation.

3. Park, Conservation & Agriculture

Objective Preserving undeveloped land, protecting natural resources, and supporting low-impact uses such as trails, gardens, and environmental education.

Governance Challenge: Stewardship Guidelines

This is the crucial environmental piece. The challenge is producing clear guidelines for responsible stewardship of the unspoiled areas of Liberty Ledge. This is not a Sewataro responsibility — it is a Town responsibility. And it moves the Town decisively toward preservation.

3. Finishing the Job — Writing the Advisory Report

The Advisory Report is where the Committee marks its recommendation. At this stage, the work is not about revisiting analysis or restating the full rationale; that material will be preserved in the appendix. The Committee's responsibility is simply to state, with clarity and confidence, which objectives the Town should pursue and how the Select Board should address the associated governance challenges.

The report should present the three objectives and their governance challenges in a straightforward manner, followed by the Committee's recommendation for each. Implementation details such as cost, design, permitting, staffing, and timing can be noted for future study, but they do not need to be resolved now. The Committee's role is to recommend direction, not to engineer the solution.

By keeping the report focused on clear objectives and the governance decisions required to support them, the Committee provides the Select Board with a concise, actionable roadmap. This degree of clarity makes the Select Board's job easier, not harder — and that is the Committee doing its job.

Appendix A. Rationale for Full Implementation of Sewataro Plus.

1. Introduction

The enthusiasm for Sewataro Plus is unmistakable across Sudbury. Residents, Committee members, and subject matter experts consistently point toward the same conclusion: Liberty Ledge is uniquely suited for recreation, enrichment, and responsible stewardship. This shared perspective has only strengthened as the Committee's work has progressed, underscoring the importance of moving decisively from information-gathering to recommendation-making.

Environmental and operational constraints further reinforce this direction. While the Committee has explored multiple possibilities, the evidence continues to converge on a single, coherent path: Liberty Ledge's best use aligns with Sewataro Plus, not new housing development. The Committee's deliberations reflect this reality, and the sections that follow articulate why.

2. The Central Question

The Committee faces a simple and consequential choice. The central question is whether to preserve Liberty Ledge so the full vision of Sewataro Plus can be realized, or allow new housing development to impose on this unique opportunity. The only plausible area for future housing development is the three northern lots, which directly conflict with full implementation of Sewataro Plus. Their development would constrain expansion, limit year-round programming, and undermine the very benefits residents have repeatedly asked for.

The Committee must make a decision; continued deferral or equivocation is itself a decision — and a risky one. The opportunity before Sudbury is both rare and time-sensitive. The Committee's responsibility is to provide clarity, not ambiguity, and to articulate an actionable path that reflects the Town's priorities and the land's inherent strengths.

3. Why Sewataro Plus

Sewataro Plus stands out because it is responsive, responsible, and ready. Resident input consistently emphasized expanded camp operations, recreational and educational programming, and continuity of Sewataro's stewardship. These priorities emerged repeatedly across meetings, public comments, and Committee deliberations, forming a clear picture of what the community values most.

Environmental constraints reinforce this direction. Guidance from the Conservation Commission aligns Liberty Ledge with recreation and stewardship, not housing development.

Similarly, the Commission on Disability emphasized accessibility, participation, independence, and belonging — principles that are far easier to achieve through Sewataro Plus than through new residential construction.

Equally important, the current Sewataro operators are ready, willing, and able to make Sewataro Plus a reality. Unlike housing concepts, which remain speculative and undefined, Sewataro Plus is backed by a ten-year plan, demonstrated operational capacity, and a proven municipal partnership model. Their track record includes:

1. Effective and compliant Camp Sewataro operations since 2019;
2. A successful municipal partnership with the Town of Sharon at Everwood Day Camp;
3. Distinguished leadership at the national level; and
4. Strong institutional endorsement through Sudbury’s procurement and contract extension processes.

Sewataro Plus delivers unmatched community benefit in recreation, enrichment, and stewardship — and it does so with clarity, readiness, and alignment with Town values.

4. Why Not New Housing Development

New housing development at Liberty Ledge is neither feasible nor aligned with community priorities. Multiple forms of input — including recent lawn signs stating “No Development at Sewataro” — make this abundantly clear. Residents have expressed a consistent preference for preservation, recreation, and stewardship, not residential construction.

Committee deliberations and the August 13 option worksheet reinforce this conclusion. Environmental and operational constraints create significant barriers to housing development, and these barriers are not easily mitigated.

Environmental impact is a major red light. Liberty Ledge is a natural resource in need of protection, and new housing development would introduce grading, deforestation, impervious surfaces, and stormwater challenges. These impacts conflict directly with the Town’s stewardship goals.

Child safety protocols present additional constraints. No resident, delivery driver, service provider, or visitor may enter the camp footprint while children are present. This makes any housing within or adjacent to the active campus operationally impossible.

The three northern lots — the only plausible area for housing — face substantial issues:

1. Direct conflict with Sewataro Plus expansion plans;
2. Requirement for new access roads due to safety restrictions;

3. Significant impervious surface additions;
4. Major soil disruption and deforestation.

By contrast, a single indoor facility tucked into the trees and accessed via existing roadways would have far less environmental impact and would support the Town's goals rather than undermine them.

5. Stewardship and Continuity

Long-term stewardship delivers benefits that short-term or speculative approaches cannot. It reduces ambiguity, aligns land use with community values, and creates a stable footing for capital investment. Housing development, by contrast, introduces uncertainty and conflicts with the Town's long-term vision for Liberty Ledge.

Sewataro's leadership provides proven, long-term stewardship. The Sharon/Everwood partnership is a strong example, but Sudbury's own governance record (see Appendix B) is even more compelling. The Town Manager's 2019 procurement statement (see Appendix C) emphasized that Brody's proposal stood out because it included a well-articulated future plan. Municipal partners value clarity, continuity, and demonstrated capacity — all of which Sewataro provides.

Looking ahead, the Select Board and the Town can be confident that Scott Brody is steering the ship. A long-term agreement would allow Sewataro to invest in facilities and programming that directly support the Town's priorities, while ensuring continuity of operations and stewardship for years to come.

6. Institutional Endorsement of the Sewataro Management Agreement

Sudbury has repeatedly affirmed the strength of Sewataro's stewardship through formal votes, evaluations, and contract actions. This institutional record is not incidental — it reflects a sustained pattern of confidence in Sewataro's leadership and alignment with community values.

Key milestones include:

- Town Meeting (May 7, 2019) approving the acquisition by more than a two-thirds vote;
- Debt Exclusion (June 4, 2019) approving financing (2,561–2,195);
- Town Manager Recommendation (Aug. 19, 2019) stating:
 - *“Scott Brody is the most advantageous proposal.”*
 - *“His proposal introduces the least amount of financial risk to the community.”*

- Staff Evaluation Committee rating Sewataro Highly Advantageous across all categories;
- Select Board authorization of the management contract;
- Contract extension reaffirming confidence in Sewataro’s stewardship;
- Comparable municipalities (Concord, Lincoln, Wayland, Lexington, Carlisle) using the same governance model: Town ownership paired with long-term stewardship partnerships.

Taken together, these actions form a clear institutional endorsement of Sewataro’s stewardship and provide a strong foundation for the long-term vision embodied in Sewataro Plus.

7. The Uniqueness of Liberty Ledge

Liberty Ledge — home to Camp Sewataro — is a unique Town asset. No other Town-owned property offers this combination of land, setting, and potential. Its natural beauty, recreational suitability, and existing infrastructure make it irreplaceable.

Camp Sewataro delivers “summer as it should be” to hundreds of children each year. Enrollment fills almost instantly every September, reflecting strong community demand. Residents and Committee members consistently express the same sentiment: we want more.

The operators are ready to oblige. What limits expansion today is the need for adequate shelter to protect more campers during heavy storms. A long-term agreement would unlock the ability to build such facilities, enabling expanded enrollment and improved safety.

Liberty Ledge hosts Camp Sewataro for a little more than two months each summer, but the property is available on summer evenings, weekends, and throughout fall, winter, and spring. This creates a rare opportunity for year-round recreation, education, and enrichment — almost any activity compatible with responsible stewardship.

Preserving Liberty Ledge in all its natural beauty makes possible a vision of abundance. The formula is simple: protect the natural resource, partner for the long term, and let the land serve the community in every season.

8. Recommendations Before the Committee

Sudbury’s future at Liberty Ledge depends on the recommendation made to the Select Board. Committee discussions have surfaced three distinct paths:

Recommendation 1 — A Long-Term Commitment (10 years or more)

A long-term commitment to Camp Sewataro, including full implementation of Sewataro Plus. This recommendation positions Sudbury for stability, stewardship, continuity of operations, and meaningful opportunities for expansion and community enrichment. It also preserves Liberty Ledge and forecloses new housing development.

Because Recommendation 1 envisions a new long-term agreement rather than a continuation of the existing renewal cycle, the Town would have the opportunity to negotiate updated terms. This includes formalizing contributions that are currently voluntary — such as Sewataro’s assumption of property maintenance costs — and exploring financial terms that strengthen the Town’s position.

Recommendation 2 — A Five-Year Extension

A five-year extension of the existing management agreement, with limited implementation of extended programming and no expansion of camp facilities. This is the middle ground — operations continue, but the Town does not fully capitalize on the opportunity before it.

Year-round programming may be pursued, but the camp’s footprint and capacity will not increase. New housing development remains possible, creating ambiguity and limiting long-term planning.

Recommendation 3 — A Return to “Ground Zero”

Restarting procurement and requiring the current management team to re-engage in a new process from scratch. Committee discussions noted this possibility, but the rationale for describing the current agreement as “temporary” has collapsed.

If the Town destabilizes the partnership or attempts to restart procurement, Scott Brody may decline to continue. This would jeopardize Sewataro Plus and even Camp Sewataro as it exists today, damaging Sudbury’s reputation as a reliable municipal partner. Recommendation 3 is not a realistic or responsible path forward.

9. The Choice Before Sudbury

The three recommendations lead to two fundamentally different futures:

Future A — Sewataro Plus and Stewardship

Sewataro Plus strengthens a proven partnership, expands community benefits, and preserves Liberty Ledge as a recreational and environmental asset. This future delivers stability, continuity, and long-term enrichment for residents. Recommendation 1 fully supports this future, and Recommendation 2 supports it only partially.

Future B — Housing Development and Long-Term Conflict

New housing offers modest returns and introduces enduring conflicts with recreation, stewardship, and the Sewataro Plus vision. It divides land-use priorities and risks undermining a successful partnership. Recommendation 3 aligns entirely with this future — and is not a responsible or realistic path forward.

The Responsible Path Is Clear

Sudbury must choose between a future defined by stewardship and community benefit, or one marked by uncertainty, conflict, and modest gains. All evidence — environmental constraints, community priorities, operational realities, and institutional history — points toward Sewataro Plus as the responsible path.

APPENDIX B — Governance Record & Procurement Timeline

Drawn from the Compilation Report; not intended to summarize or reproduce the entire report.

B1. Overview

This appendix documents the full governance history of the Town’s stewardship partnership at Liberty Ledge. It covers the RFP process, staff evaluations, the Town Manager’s determination, Select Board authorization, contract execution, contract extension, and upcoming governance milestones. It also clarifies how certain RFP conditions — “temporary,” “at risk,” and “subject to acquisition outcome” — were rendered moot once the Town acquired Liberty Ledge and executed a long-term management agreement. Finally, it outlines the governance steps ahead and explains why they matter for long-term planning.

B2. Chronological Timeline of Key Events

Early 2019 — Town begins due diligence on acquiring Liberty Ledge. May 7, 2019 — Town Meeting approves Article 25 (acquisition of Liberty Ledge) by more than a two-thirds vote. June 4, 2019 — Debt exclusion approved (2,561–2,195). July 2019 — Town issues the Camp Sewataro Management RFP, including conditions such as “temporary,” “at risk,” and “subject to acquisition outcome,” all applicable only if the Town did not acquire Liberty Ledge.

August 2019 — Proposals Received Three proposals were submitted:

- Everwood Day Camp (Scott Brody)
- Marcus Lewis Enterprises
- MetroWest YMCA

Staff Evaluation Committee Review

The Committee produced five separate evaluations, each assessing the proposers across five metrics: Interview, Experience with Summer Camps, Management Experience, Experience Working with Community Stakeholders, and Overall Composite Ranking.

• **Everwood Day Camp (Scott Brody)** — Rated Highly Advantageous (HA) across all five metrics by every committee member. Brody was the only proposer to receive unanimous HA ratings across all categories and evaluators.

- **Marcus Lewis Enterprises** — Rated HA in most categories but consistently only Advantageous (A) in “Experience Working with Community Stakeholders.” Strong operational experience but less demonstrated engagement with municipal partners.
- **MetroWest YMCA** — Rated HA across all categories by all but one evaluator, who rated “Experience Working with Community Stakeholders” as A. Committee notes included concerns about insurance coverage, permitting requirements, and the fee-based membership program that could limit public access.

Summary Judgment The Committee’s consensus was clear: Brody’s proposal demonstrated the highest overall strength, consistency, and alignment with Sudbury’s community values. His unanimous HA ratings across all evaluators and metrics made his selection the wise and defensible choice.

August 19, 2019 — Town Manager Determination Town Manager Melissa Murphy Rodrigues, Esq. issued a formal procurement determination: “Scott Brody is the most advantageous proposal.” “His proposal introduces the least amount of financial risk to the community.” She recommended Brody to the Select Board.

Late August 2019 — Select Board Authorization Select Board authorized the Town Manager to execute the management agreement.

Fall 2019 — Contract Execution Town and Brody executed the Camp Sewataro Management Agreement. Once executed, all RFP conditions tied to acquisition risk became moot.

2022 — Contract Extension Town exercised the first of two possible five-year extensions, reaffirming confidence in Brody’s stewardship and demonstrating performance legitimacy.

B3. RFP Conditions Rendered Moot

The original RFP included several conditions that were relevant only before the Town acquired Liberty Ledge:

- **“Temporary”** — Applied only if the Town did not acquire Liberty Ledge; moot once Article 25 passed and the debt exclusion succeeded.
- **“At Risk”** — Applied only if the acquisition failed; moot once the Town closed on Liberty Ledge.
- **“Subject to Acquisition Outcome”** — Applied only until the Town completed the Liberty Ledge acquisition; moot once the property purchase was finalized.

- **“Town may revisit operator selection”** — Procedurally true only before contract execution; moot once evaluations were completed, the Town Manager issued her determination, the Select Board authorized the contract, and the contract was executed and extended.

These conditions no longer apply and cannot justify reopening procurement.

B4. Upcoming Governance Steps and Their Significance

Committee Advisory Report (Oct. 31, 2026) — Provides clarity and synthesis; guides Select Board decision-making; forms the basis for any future Town Meeting action.

Letters of Intent (Jan. 1, 2027) — Required from Scott Brody and the Select Board; confirm mutual interest in continuing the partnership; ensure continuity heading into the next contract cycle.

Contractual Milestones — Second five-year extension remains available; Sewataro Plus planning aligns with this timeline; operator stability is essential for long-term planning.

Possibility of a Longer-Term Agreement — Discussions may occur between Brody and the Select Board regarding a longer-term contract. A longer horizon would enable Sewataro to make capital investments that directly support the Town’s enthusiasm for expanded operations and enrollment. While a five-year extension is a viable option, a longer-term agreement would strengthen planning and investment.

Appendix C — Town Manager’s Recommendation Memo (August 8, 2019)

Melissa Murphy Rodrigues, Esq., Town Manager (Full memo text included exactly as issued.)

TOWN OF SUDBURY Office of the Town Manager Melissa Murphy Rodrigues, Esq. Town Manager

To: Honorable Board of Selectmen From: Melissa Rodrigues, Esq., Town Manager RE: RFP for Management of Camp Sewataro Date: August 8, 2019

Process The evaluation committee was comprised of Dennis Keohane, Finance Director; William Barletta, Facilities Director; Adam Duchesneau, Director of Planning and Community Development; Frank Livera, Acting Director of Park and Recreation; and William Murphy, Director of the Board of Health.

The evaluation committee reviewed and evaluated each of the proposals based on the criteria spelled out in the RFP as well as the interviews that were completed with each camp operator on August 8, 2019. As Chief Procurement Officer, I opened and reviewed the price proposals and reviewed the evaluations by the evaluation committee and based on those two documents I am making a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen on award of the contract.

On August 20, the Board of Selectmen will vote whether or not to authorize the Town Manager to negotiate and sign a contract with the camp operator.

Recommendation Based on my review of the five evaluation forms, as well as review of the price proposals, my recommendation would be to authorize the Town Manager to enter into negotiations with and sign a contract with Scott Brody of K&E Camp Corporation.

The proposal by Scott Brody maintains the camp in its current form, and introduces the least amount of financial risk to the community.

The contract would include and incorporate the request for proposals as well as the response. Further, it would flush out some areas of the proposals that highlight a few concerns for the team.

This was a difficult decision. All three proponents are capable, and we had the positive problem of choosing from three strong operators.

In the end, it is my determination that Scott Brody is the most advantageous proposal.