

**In reply to a Statement from the Arlington Board of Health on Artificial Turf (Article 12),
as voted 4/26/2023:**

The Board of Health in its statement acknowledges that the carcinogenic group of chemicals known as PFAS are found in artificial turf fibers, and other contaminants are in the tire rubber in-fill including PAHs and VOCs. The Board also says it is concerned about increased risks of abrasions, injuries and high surface temperatures of artificial turf. The Board says it is confident that many of these concerns can be ameliorated by the use of “alternative materials” but ignores the science and testing that has found toxic chemicals in all of these so-called alternatives.

We are disappointed that the Board has not followed through on its own acknowledged concerns over potential human exposure to toxic chemicals and increased physical injury, and that it has chosen to support the continued use of artificial turf: a toxic plastic field product for Arlington athletic fields.

As for having non-voting study committee members, one would hope that the Board realizes that it is a common and acceptable practice of Town study committees to have non-voting, advisory members. For example, at the recent May 3, 2023 Special Town Meeting, Members passed Article 2 for a Hybrid Town Meeting Study Committee, supported by the Select Board, which contains “...a member of Town staff appointed by the Town Manager as a non-voting member.” In addition, the current Parking Advisory Committee contains a non-voting member, ex-officio member from the Department of Planning and Community Development. And the Civilian Police Advisory Board Study Committee, proposed by the Select Board and approved by Town Meeting in April 2022, had four non-voting, ex-officio members.

As a rule of thumb, voting members should not include individuals who may choose loyalty to their employer over the health and environmental hazard at hand. After all, this is about our community making a commitment to the long term environmental and physical health of all residents. And it is about halting toxic PFAS pollution via plastic sports fields.

Please support the Article 12 Substitute Motion.

~ Beth Melofchik, Robin Bergman, Wynelle Evans, Jordan Weinstein

Data Based, Science Driven

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