



Town of Arlington
Department of Health and Human Services
Office of the Board of Health

27 Maple Street
Arlington, MA 02476

Tel: (781) 316-3170
Fax: (781) 316-3175

Artificial Turf Study Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: January 16, 2024

Meeting Time: 5PM-6:30PM

Location: Zoom

Objectives:

- 1) To provide feedback/guidance to each working group on current research findings.
- 2) To establish a guidelines/standard structure for how groups will report out their final research findings to the larger group of Committee Members.
- 3) To further clarify additional research needs within working groups and any additional topic areas relevant to Artificial and Natural Turf fields.
- 4) To identify potential Subject Matter Experts that members of the working groups would like to invite to a future meeting to present information to the Committee.

Committee Members present: James DiTullio, Chair; Natasha Waden, Clerk; Mike Gildesgame; Leslie Mayer; Jill Krajewski; Joseph Connolly; Claire Ricker

Agenda

- I. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve meeting minutes from 01/09/2024 was made by Mike Gildesgame.

2nd by Leslie Mayer

Vote:

Mike Gildesgame, Yes
Leslie Mayer, Yes
Joseph Barr, Absent
Jill Krajewski, Abstain
Natasha Waden, Yes
Marvin Lewiton, Absent
James DiTullio, Yes

Approved (4-0 with 2 Absent and 1 Abstain)

- II. Correspondence Received

Natasha Waden reviewed correspondence received from Susan Chapnick and Leslie Mayer. No additional discussion by Committee Members.

III. Working Group updates

a. Health

This group is composed of Marvin Lewiton, Jill Krajewski and Natasha Waden. Lewiton was unable to attend this meeting, but did provide input/feedback to the health working group via email which was incorporated into the update provided by the group.

The group reported that they had not been able to meet in the last week due to vacation schedules, but that members have been working independently to review a variety of studies that have been shared amongst the group. Additionally, the group has begun to reach out to potential speakers and hopes to share more information about this next week.

b. Safety

This group is composed of James DiTullio, Leslie Mayer, and Joseph Connelly.

This group met and discussed possible speakers and additional research avenues to explore. The group has reached out to Mass Department of Public Health in hopes to connect with someone from the agency or multiple agencies that have put together the State's FAQ on Artificial Tuft. Additionally, the group has reached out to the Athletic Director at Arlington High School in hopes to connect with one of the athletic trainers who may be willing to speak to the group about injuries/safety issues they have observed as it pertains to Artificial Turf and Natural Turf fields.

c. Environmental

This group is composed of Mike Gildesgame, Joseph Barr, and Claire Ricker. Barr was unable to attend this meeting.

The group has reached out to a variety of agencies, including but not limited to: 1) Mass DEP Northeast Region to discuss any investigations, cases, or research that they are involved with as it relates to Artificial Turf Fields. Although the group is waiting on more information from DEP, they did discover that there is a case before DEP in regards to an Artificial Turf field at a school in Dorchester, MA. 2) The group is also waiting to hear back from representatives at the Mass Department of Fish and Wildlife to determine if they have any investigations, cases, or ongoing research related to artificial turf. 3) The group has reached out to the State House to get background information on a Bill sponsored by Senator Pacheco regarding Artificial Turf.

The group has looked further into the City of Boston's ban on Artificial Turf and discovered that Mayor Wu's initial Executive Order on the ban, may now be a recommendation, but the group is still looking to get more information on this.

The group acknowledged that it has been difficult to find studies on non-rubber infill materials and components of Artificial Turf fields for the purpose of understanding the potential impacts these materials may have on the environment. However, the group

has reached out to some of the EPA research groups regarding non-rubber infill materials and hopes to provide that information to the Committee at a future meeting.

The group has identified several possible speakers including toxicologists from academia, but a challenge has been the ability to identify a presenter who can give a broad overview of the big picture.

IV. Discussion: Guidelines for working group reports

The Committee discussed the best way to move forward would be for each working group to outline bullet points about the topics they have been researching and a narrative on what they have concluded from the research. This would allow all Members to get a better understanding of: 1) the research topics each group has covered; 2) the direction the research is leading the group in; and 3) provide an opportunity for Members to give feedback on whether or not any additional topics in the respective category should be further explored or revisited.

The Committee seemed to agree that the final report would include a narrative from each of the working groups that will follow a standard format. Some components of the format include an introduction of the working groups, the specific topics the group covered, how research was conducted, what the findings were, what gaps were identified, what conclusions the group came to, what/if any mitigation measures were identified, and what/if any recommendations the group proposes. Additional components of the final report will be discussed in future meetings.

V. Discussion: Additional research needs/ gaps

Jim DiTullio discussed concerns raised by various Committee Members as it pertains to Artificial Turf topics/concerns that fall outside of the working groups and preview of the Committee, but none the less seem relevant for Town Meeting members to make informed decisions about Natural/Artificial Turf fields. Topics included the following: 1) field cost comparisons between Artificial and Natural Turf as it relates to installation, maintenance, and repairs; 2) general information such as the number and types of fields available in Arlington; 3) field demands of user groups; 4) closure of fields due to inclement weather and/or excessive heat; and 5) comparison of the number of playing hours between Artificial and Natural Turf fields.

The Committee seemed to agree that these topics were relevant and should be further explored and included in the final report to Town Meeting. As such, Natasha Waden agreed to follow up with the Town Manager's Office to determine if there are other departments or town staff available to help with obtaining this information. Joe Connelly also offered to assist with gathering this data and consulting with some landscape architects to get some estimates on the cost differences associated with the installation, maintenance, and repairs as it pertains to Natural and Artificial Turf fields.

VI. Discussion: Subject Matter Experts

This agenda item was discussed under the working group updates.

VII. Discussion: Updated 2024 Meeting Schedule

Natasha Waden reported that the survey results revealed that Tuesday evenings from 5pm-6:30pm still appears to be the best meeting time for the Committee. However, the second best meeting time was Thursday evenings from 6pm-7:30pm.

The Committee agreed to continue to meet on Tuesdays at 5pm-6:30pm.

VIII. New Business

No new business was discussed.

IX. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn was made by Leslie Mayer.

2nd by Mike Gildesgame.

Vote:

Mike Gildesgame, Yes
Leslie Mayer, Yes
Joseph Barr, Absent
Jill Krajewski, Yes
Natasha Waden, Yes
Marvin Lewiton, Absent
James DiTullio, Yes

Approved (5-0, with 2 Absent)