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## Artificial Turf Study Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: January 23, 2024  
Meeting Time: 5PM-6:30PM  
Location: Zoom

### **Objectives:**

- 1) To provide feedback/guidance to each working group on current research findings.
- 2) To further clarify additional research needs within working groups and any additional topic areas relevant to Artificial and Natural Turf fields.
- 3) 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; Joseph Barr; Jill Krajewski; Joseph Connelly; Claire Ricker

### **Agenda**

- I. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve meeting minutes from 01/16/2024 was made by Mike Gildesgame.

2<sup>nd</sup> by Jill Krajewski.

Vote:

Mike Gildesgame, Yes  
Leslie Mayer, Absent  
Joseph Barr, Abstain  
Jill Krajewski, Yes  
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 Joseph Connelly and Wynell Evans. 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 have begun drafting their section report which includes 3 major topics: 1) Mental and Physical health benefits; 2) Heat related illness; and 3) health risk associated with exposure to chemical/metals/other compounds found in Artificial Turf fields.

The group reported that while they are still working on reviewing research, thus far, the research indicates there is an important association connected to mental and physical well-being of children and adults as it pertains to participation and accessibility to athletics. The research reviewed in terms of heat related illness indicates that there is a temperature difference between artificial turf and natural turf fields, but some communities and organizations have implemented policies on the usage of such fields during periods of high heat/humidity as mitigation measures. The research reviewed in terms of health risks associated with exposure to chemicals/metals/components found in artificial turf fields indicates the presence of some of these, but the studies are limited to crumb rubber, and have been focused more on single exposures. While the studies seem to indicate low potential exposures and health risks, the group continues to study this area to get a better understanding. Additionally, the group has reached out to a few organizations/individuals such as other communities, epidemiologists, academic professors, and other state and local public health officials/organizations to help with identifying a speaker. The group is considering a speaker who can talk about risk analysis, epidemiology, and heat related illness, etc, but has not settled on the topic(s) yet.

The group also discussed the concerns about the layout of the report and whether or not the topics should be discussed in order of importance and how that might be determined.

#### b. Safety

This group is composed of James DiTullio, Leslie Mayer, and Joseph Connelly. Leslie was unable to attend this meeting, but did provide input/feedback to the Safety group during the weekly meeting which was incorporated into the update provided by the group.

This group reported that they have been exploring information from surrounding communities. Of particular interest to the group is the city of Malden who is in the process of constructing a new artificial turf field and intends to use an alternative infill to crumb rubber called Brock Fill. Although the group has not spoken directly with city officials, the group believes that Malden may have chosen this infill because it helps with keeping the field temperature down and is overall a safer material than crumb

rubber. The group is hoping to connect with officials from Malden to learn more about their research and processes that has lead them to this point.

The conversation also focused on looking at a variety of other communities who are similar to Arlington that have begun or have already gone through a similar artificial turf review. The Committee seemed to agree that reviewing such communities and particularly the research materials and conclusions they came to, might be beneficial for this Committee to review. Some other communities mentioned included Lexington, Brookline, Boston, Springfield and Burlington.

c. Environmental

This group is composed of Mike Gildesgame, Joseph Barr, and Claire Ricker.

The group reported that they are still having difficulty finding studies which focus on alternative infill materials (as opposed to crumb rubber). Despite the group's efforts to connect with State Agencies, there has been no response. The only communication has been from Mass DEP in regards to potential changes to the Wetlands Protection Act, which would classify Artificial Turf as an impervious surface. The group pointed out that this change may impact how future assessments are done on artificial and grass turf fields that fall within Wetland Resource areas and how this classification may relate to heat island issues.

The group is still working on narrowing down the specific topics to be discussed and the depth in which these topics can be explored given the time frame and accessibility to information pertaining to each area. Specific areas mentioned include chemical pollution, storm water runoff, climate change resilience, ecological impacts, and soil impacts.

The group was able to connect with the Recreation Department at MIT and as such will be speaking more in depth to their architect to learn more about the heat effects of the turf. Additionally, the group will be speaking with a representative from Mass Municipal Association next week to discuss these various topics. The group is optimistic that between these additional connections and the other professionals they have already reached out to, that they will be able to identify a speaker(s).

The group also asked that the Committee provide the dates and times that will be available for speakers; a template for working groups to follow that will create uniformity in each of the working group section reports; and to identify who/how additional background information will be obtained for the final report. Background information discussed includes costs comparisons between artificial turf and natural turf fields, Arlington field use data, weather conditions, etc.

Jim DiTullio indicated that the project timeline would be discussed later on in the meeting (Agenda Item V). DiTullio acknowledged the difficulty with getting a response or information from state officials. Natasha Waden offered to reach out to the Office of Local and Regional Health, an agency that the Health Department connects with regularly, that may be able to help the Committee connect with the right person at the various State Departments/Divisions.

IV. Discussion: Additional Research Needs/Gaps

This discussion item was incorporated into each of the working group updates.

V. Discussion: Project Timeline

Jim DiTullio presented the following timeline for discussion with the Committee.

Tuesday 1/23	Full Meeting
Tuesday 1/30	Full Meeting
Tuesday 2/6	Full meeting/ guest speakers
Friday 2/9	Working groups submit bullet point outline of findings and recommendations to full committee
Tuesday 2/13	Full Meeting/ discussion of bullet point outlines/ guest speakers
Tuesday 2/20	No Meeting
Friday 2/23	Working groups submit section drafts to full committee
Tuesday 2/27	Full Meeting/ discussion of section drafts
Tuesday 3/5	Full Meeting/ discussion of final report drafting process and formulation of final recommendations- possible vote on tentative recommendations
Friday 3/8	Committee Releases draft report to public
Thursday 3/14	Full Meeting/ public meeting on draft report
Tuesday 3/19	Full Committee meeting final vote
Friday 3/22	Final report submitted to Select Board

The Committee agreed that despite the tight timeline, the dates are reasonable. Additionally, the Committee agreed that time would be allotted wherever needed in the schedule to accommodate speakers and that the timeline would continue to be reviewed and adjusted as needed. Additionally, a template will be circulated at the next meeting which will outline a standard format for which the working groups can follow when writing their section reports.

The Committee agreed that draft working group reports would be included as part of the meeting materials and would allow for public comment in the same fashion that public comment is accepted currently. Making the reports public will allow the public with several opportunities to comment. The Committee clarified that although it is not a requirement, the Committee still plans to hold a public meeting for commenting/feedback purposes.

However, the Members reiterated that the charge of the Committee is to provide a report to Town Meeting, and any debate about the report would be taking place at Town Meeting.

DiTullio informed the Committee that the authors of the warrant article that formed this Study Committee last spring have submitted a new warrant article for this spring's Town Meeting. This new article, if passed, would provide an extension to the Artificial Turf Study Committee to continue their work. It was unclear what might happen if Committee did not file a report and the proposed warrant article failed. However, the Committee reiterated their desire to complete the work by the current deadline, but acknowledge the potential safeguard to honor the work of the Committee.

It was decided that groups looking to bring in a guest speaker will need to inform DiTullio and Waden about potential dates/times so that the agenda can be set as necessary. Additional discussion was had in regards to allowing guest speaker who presented at the Artificial Turf forum last spring. There was some discussion that it might be best to hear from new speakers, but no formal decision was made regarding this matter.

A conversation about accessibility and collecting other background information was had. Waden suggested that whereas the Town does not have additional staff that can help to collect this information that it might possible for both she and Joe Connelly to take on some of this work and share it with the Committee. The Committee seemed to agree with that suggestion.

VI. Discussion: Subject Matter Experts

This agenda item was discussed under the working group updates.

VII. New Business

No new business was discussed.

VIII. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn was made by Joseph Barr.

2<sup>nd</sup> by Jill Krajewski.

Vote:

Mike Gildesgame, Not present for vote  
Leslie Mayer, Absent  
Joseph Barr, Yes  
Jill Krajewski, Yes  
Natasha Waden, Yes  
Marvin Lewiton, Absent  
James DiTullio, Yes

Approved (4-0, with 1 not Present and 2 Absent)