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Department of Health and Human Services
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Artificial Turf Study Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: January 30, 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; Leslie Maher; Joseph Barr; Jill Krajewski; Claire Ricker

Agenda

- I. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve meeting minutes from 01/23/2024 was made by Mike Gildesgame.

2nd by Jill Krajewski.

Vote:

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

Approved (5-0 with 1 Absent and 1 Abstain)

- II. Correspondence Received

Natasha Waden reviewed correspondence received including 3 emails from Susan Chapnick and one from Clarissa Rowe.

Waden responded to Ms. Chapnick's email about PFAS as a chemical of concern, stating that although the Health group has not discussed this specific matter in detail at the Committee Meetings, PFAS as a chemical of concern, it is one of the topics that the group is looking at. The intent of the Health working group's update at the last meeting was to provide a brief overview to the Committee about the overall topics and general findings of their research to date.

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.

This group reported that this past week they continued to work on reviewing and synthesizing their research, writing their report, and identifying potential guest speakers. The group acknowledged that they are still trying to understand more about access and usability issues of fields as it relates to health.

The group discussed the challenge of trying to quantify and understand acceptable PFAS exposure limits other than those established for drinking water. For example, whereas Arlington's drinking water comes from the MWRA, the concern for PFAS to contaminate Arlington's drinking water as it relates to water runoff from an artificial turf field in town does not seem to be an issue in this context. However, there are no standards or limits that have been set as "acceptable" for any other routes of exposure to PFAS. Although, a point was made about surface water runoff and potential contamination of drinking water resources to Arlington's neighboring communities.

As a point of clarification, James DiTullio added that it is not to say that other PFAS contamination (surface runoff into a Brooke and the effects on aquatic life) are not important to understand or explore, but thus far PFAS in drinking water has been the primary focus on regulatory agencies. Additionally, in the context of this Committee, PFAS may be discussed more heavily by the environmental working group than the health group.

b. Safety

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

The group reported on the work they have been doing in terms of looking at Maintenance and Costs associated with artificial turf, natural grass fields, and organic maintenance/treatment of natural grass fields vs. the current maintenance and

treatment of Arlington's grass fields. This discussion led to the comparison of grass fields vs artificial turf fields. Another Committee Member referenced a contact in the Athletics department at MIT who indicated that the maintenance costs between the two were significantly different. This Member will reach out to MIT to get additional information as a reference point. The safety group indicated that regardless how a grass field is treated, the issue remains the same; users cannot utilize a grass field when there are vulnerable conditions (wet weather) in the same way that they would be able to utilize an artificial turf field. The group indicated this is especially true in the early spring and late Fall/early winter months. The group expressed interest in finding a speaker who could talk more about this topic at a future meeting.

c. Environmental

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

The group reported that they are making progress on narrowing down their environmental topic areas to 4 or 5 bullet points and they are looking into several possible speakers.

This group inquired about the format and time allotment for guest speakers at upcoming meetings. James DiTullio stated that a presentation, Q&A, or combination of the two would be appropriate. The format and time allotment may be based more on what is being presented/discussed to/with the Committee. The speaker details will be worked out prior to the meeting date and in consultation with the Chair on a case by case basis.

The group is in the process of reviewing Town published plans such as Arlington's Hazard Mitigation Plan and Corporate Action plan to determine how those plans/goals relate to the discussion about artificial and natural turf fields. The group briefly discussed that the potential classification of artificial turf as an impermeable surface could have a big impact on the management practices for both storm water and other water runoff. The group also referred to the climate work being done in the community; the limited green space and potential impacts of converting a grass field to an artificial turf field in connection with other playing areas; issues related to the over fertilization of fields which leads to runoff into waterbodies that may cause high nutrient levels/algae blooms, etc. in the waterbodies; and recycling of the artificial turf itself.

The group also asked if it would be appropriate to reach out to a landscape architect/designer to present to the Committee. The Committee seemed to agree that if such a speaker could discuss both artificial turf and natural grass fields it would be helpful and appropriate. The group reported that during a conversation with a representative from the Mass Municipal Association, it was made clear that there could be changes at both the State and Federal levels in regards to artificial turf in the near future.

Another Committee Member inquired about whether or not trees and foliage could be incorporated into a plan where artificial turf is being utilized as opposed to grass. The group was interested in this possibility and discussed potential issues associated with

the root system and interference the artificial turf system, but ultimately thought this might be better answered by a landscape architect.

IV. Discussion: Report Format/Template

James DiTullio described that working group reports should generally be organized by providing an introduction as to what and why the group studied certain topics. Each topic can be broken into its own section and discussed further to include what the group studied, what the findings were, what types of resources were utilized, what type of mitigation measure were identified, and/or what gaps or information was not available. Groups can decide if they want to break out areas such as mitigation measures, gaps in research, and resources cited into completely different sections and talk about them as a whole or fold them into each one of their topic sections. In some cases a group may have identified a topic, but that topic may have led to additional points, in which the group can follow the same outline for discussing different points/issues under the general topic heading.

The bulleted report should be similar to the report structure and be reflective of an outline, but with slightly more detail about the topics. One example given to provide more substance in this context was something similar to a thesis statement for each topic that will help the reader understands the points the group is trying to make.

V. Discussion: Subject Matter Experts

This agenda item was discussed under the working group updates.

VI. New Business

The Committee determined that they will not meet on 2/6/2024, unless a speaker has been identified and is available to present on that day. The Committee agreed it would be a better use of time for working groups to meet and continue to work on their reports.

VII. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn was made by Leslie Maher.

2nd by Mike Gildesgame.

Vote:

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

Approved (5-0, with 1 Absent)