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Artificial Turf Study Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: December 12, 2023
Meeting Time: 5PM-6:30PM
Location: Zoom

Objectives:

- 1) To identify the specific content areas outlined in the project scope for the committee to review and report on as part of the study.
- 2) To establish working groups in which Committee members will work in smaller groups to conduct research on the specific content areas as defined by the Committee.
- 3) To establish a method on how the Committee will consider and/or process public input.

Committee Members present: James Ditullio, Chair; Natasha Waden, Clerk; Mike Gildesgame; Leslie Mayer; Joseph Barr; Jill Krajewski; Marvin Lewiton; Joseph Connelly; David Morgan.

Agenda

I. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes

Motion made by Leslie Mayer to accept the Meeting Minutes dated December 5, 2023

2nd by Jill Krajewski

Vote:

- Mike Gildesgame, yes
- Leslie Mayer, yes
- Joseph Barr, yes
- Jill Krajewski, yes
- Natasha Waden, yes
- Marvin Lewiton, not present for vote
- James Ditullio, yes

Approved (6-0 with 1 Absent)

II. Correspondence Received combined with item V. Discussion: Methods for Public Input

Jim Ditullio, Chair of the Artificial Turf Study Committee informed the group that agenda item II and V would be combined as discussing correspondence received is directly related to the Committee's discussion about methods for accepting public input and recording meetings. Ditullio reviewed the Committee's discussion from the previous week to allow for public comment in the form of written comment as opposed to oral comment during Committee meetings at this time. Ditullio explained that there had been a request from ACMI to record and post the Artificial Turf Committee Meeting. The Committee determined it would be easier for the Town to record the meetings and post them on the Artificial Turf Study Committee website. Ditullio mentioned that the Chat comments from the previous meeting had been included and posted in the agenda packet. It was determined that the Chat feature would be left on at this time, as it seems that the Chat function has been helpful to this point, but the Committee would continue to evaluate this as needed. Mike Gildesgame agreed. Ditullio briefly discussed Open Meeting Law and asked that both Committee Members and the Public send information to Natasha Waden at boh@town.arlington.ma.us so that proper dissemination of the materials can be forwarded to Committee members and avoid any potential violations of the Open Meeting Law. Waden provided additional information explaining that in order to get information out to the Committee and comply with Open Meeting Law; information/materials must be received by 5pm the Thursday prior to a meeting. Materials received after that time frame will be included in the following meeting packet.

III. Discussion: Establishment of Working Groups

Natasha Waden, Artificial Turf Study Committee Clerk, provided a brief overview of establishing small working groups. Waden stated that the idea would be to establish 3 working groups (Health, Safety, and Environmental) and ask Committee members to sign up to work on researching that particular topic. Jim Ditullio clarified that once the groups are formed, the groups would report back to the larger Committee at regularly scheduled meetings to provide updates on the work they are doing. Ditullio reiterated the importance of this so that Committee members and the Public are aware of what the groups are working on, how decisions are being made, and have the opportunity to provide feedback. Ditullio then opened up the conversation to Committee members for input.

Mike Gildesgame spoke about the importance of integrity and respect of the report that will come at the end of this process and therefore requested that the Committee establish guidelines for the working groups which outline the types of reference material that should/should not be included in this study. Gildesgame provided examples of criteria to consider such as funding source and employment status. Ditullio acknowledged the comments and stated that it was his intent to discuss this in more depth at the next meeting. Marvin Lewiton added that criteria should also include reputable sources such as peer reviewed research and materials from Government agencies, but that pure advocacy material should be avoided. Ditullio agreed with Lewiton's comments and asked the Committee if they agreed with the 3 working group categories. Jill Krajewski added that it will be important to clarify the difference between Health and Safety, as it seems challenging to separate them. Further discussion about how to distinguish the 3 groups was had amongst the Committee and is detailed under agenda item IV: Defining Project Scope.

The Committee agreed on 3 working groups with 3 members assigned to each group. Clarification was made by both Ditullio and Waden, that non-voting members could be included in the working groups, as the working groups are not voting on anything.

The working groups and assigned committee members are as follows:

- 1) Health: Natasha Waden, Jill Krajewski, and Marvin Lewiton;
- 2) Safety: Leslie Mayer, Jim Ditullio, and Joe Connelly;
- 3) Environmental: Mike Gildesgame, Joe Barr, and David Morgan.

Joe Connelly expressed concern that both the Safety and Environmental working groups have 2 Committee members out of 3 that represent a specific department such as Recreation and Conservation Commission. Connelly asked the Committee if having 2 out of 3 members who represent one department in the working group may be concerning in terms of the perspectives and influence they may have in the working groups. Ditullio stated he was not concerned about this, as these are working groups and the entire Committee will have the opportunity to provide feedback/comments/suggestions during regularly scheduled meetings. Gildesgame agreed.

IV. Discussion: Defining Project Scope

Jim Ditullio made reference to the link that was sent to the Committee from the Artificial Turf Forum in May and asked if Committee members had any additional thoughts on what should be included in the research under each of the working groups. The Committee acknowledged that there would likely be overlap in topics in groups, but being able to parse out and clarify exactly what the group is looking at as it pertains to the subject will be most helpful. Topics under health included, risk exposure, accessibility, mental and behavioral health, and heat related illness. Topics under Safety included maintenance, injury such as skin abrasions, torn muscles/ligaments, falls, accessibility, and chemical exposure. Topics under Environmental included chemical impact on the environment, water runoff/drainage, aquatic and wildlife habitat, climate change, sustainability, and water quality issues. Leslie Mayer mentioned her concern about looking at the science and chemical studies globally but then being able to relate it to what we have in Arlington. One example given was a study related to professional athletes, which does not relate to the population utilizing Arlington's fields. Mayer asked if there are any local statistics and/or if it might be possible for the Committee to complete its own case study regarding how both natural and artificial turf fields in Arlington have impacted the community. Ditullio acknowledged Mayer's comments and concerns raised and reiterated that this is the conversation he is hoping to have next week which will help to steer the Committee in what/which research pathway(s) to pursue for this study. The Committee found it challenging to further define the topics in the large group; therefore the Committee agreed that the working groups should meet amongst themselves to further discuss the topics and present back to the larger group at the next meeting. David Morgan added that it is not clear where maintenance and cost fall in regards to the working groups. Additionally, Morgan added that when thinking about research guidelines the Committee might want to consider Meta reviews, longitudinal studies, and the credentials of the individuals/organizations that conducted the research. Jim thanked the Committee for the discussion and requested that members come prepared next week with more ideas/thoughts on the guidelines so that they can be formerly discussed and agreed upon at the next meeting.

V. Discussion: Methods for Public Input

This agenda item was combined with agenda item II.

VI. New Business

Natasha Waden provided a recap of the meeting and reiterated the Chair's request for members to prepare for next week meetings by doing the following: 1) meet with the members of their working group to identify specific topic areas under their respective subject; and 2) begin to explore research material and identify what research guidelines they think should be included as part of the study. Waden reminded the Committee that each working group would provide an update at the next meeting so that all Committee members could provide input on the topic areas. Waden offered to organize a meeting for the Health working group; Leslie Mayer offered to organize a meeting for the Safety working group; and Mike Gildesgame offered to organize a meeting for the Environmental working group. The next Artificial Turf Study Committee Meeting will take place virtually via zoom on Tuesday December 19, 2023 at 5pm.

VII. Adjourn

Motion made by Joe Barr to adjourn meeting at 6:20PM

2nd by Jill Krajewski

Vote: Vote:

-Mike Gildesgame, yes

-Leslie Mayer, yes

-Joseph Barr, yes

-Jill Krajewski, yes

-Natasha Waden, yes

-Marvin Lewiton, yes

-James Ditullio, yes

Approved (7-0) Unanimous