



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

Meeting Date: December 19, 2024

Meeting Time: 5PM-6:30PM

Location: Zoom

Objectives:

- 1) To define specific topic areas to be studied/researched in each of the working groups.
- 2) To approve the topic areas to be studied/researched in each of the working groups.
- 3) To establish guidelines for the Committee to conduct and evaluate research.

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 approve the meeting minutes from December 12, 2023.

2nd by Marvin Lewiton

Vote:

Mike Gildesgame, not present for vote
Leslie Mayer, Yes
Joseph Barr, Yes
Jill Krajewski, Yes
Natasha Waden, Yes
Marvin Lewiton, Yes
James Ditulio, Yes

Approved (6-0 with 1 Absent)

II. Correspondence Received

Natasha Waden shared correspondence received from Joan Roman, Town of Arlington Public Information Officer, as it pertains to the recording and posting of meetings. Waden informed the Committee that it is possible for the Town to record the Artificial Turf Study Committee meetings, but posting on the website is a bit more complicated. As such, it has been common among other committees/boards that record meetings to have Arlington Community Media Inc. (ACMI) post the recordings and for the Town to provide a link to the

recording on the appropriate website. The Committee agreed this would be appropriate moving forward. Waden informed the Committee that the deadline to include correspondence for today's meeting was last Thursday at 5pm, so any correspondence received after that would be included in the next meeting. The Committee acknowledged correspondence received, but there was no further discussion on it. Jim Ditullio shared that the Chat function during the meeting has been helpful and it will continue to be available to the public.

III. Working Group updates

a. Health:

This working group is comprised of Natasha Waden, Marvin Lewiton, and Jill Krajewski. The group met on Saturday 12/16/23 and discussed the need to research the following topic areas: chemicals associated with turf (including PFAS, PFOS, VOC's, Semi Voc's, PAH's); mold; bacteria; metals; heat related illness; factors that contribute to overall physical and mental health; and exposure risks. The group plans to research these topics and make a comparison between artificial turf and natural turf. Additionally, a request was made to the Department of Public Works to inquire about field maintenance schedules and/or any products that might be used on fields as part of treatment/care/maintenance.

b. Safety:

This working group is comprised of Jim Ditullio, Joe Connelly, and Leslie Mayer. The group met earlier today and identified two primary focal areas: 1) Bodily injuries including but not limited to: concussions, skin abrasions, muscle/ligament tears; and 2) Heat Effects on living organisms. The group plans to research these topics and make comparisons between artificial turf and natural turf fields. The group also discussed the need for research to include evidence based and peer reviewed research articles. Additionally, a request was made to the Athletic Directors at both Arlington High School and Arlington Catholic High School to provide the group with any injury reports that have been reported internally or with the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA). The group was also looking into Safety Data. A brief discussion was had about the difference in material between new and older fields as well as the maintenance needs.

c. Environmental:

This working group is comprised of Mike Gildesgame, David Morgan, and Joseph Barr. The group communicated through email and was able to identify the following topic areas to be studied: 1) Evaluating the onsite effect of the materials that make up the grass, infill and other components related to Artificial Turf; 2) Evaluating the run off effects/potential damage caused by components identified in Artificial Turf and the effects it has on the environment including human life, aquatic life, and wildlife; 3) Heat effects on the environment, wildlife, and other things that come in contact with Artificial

Turf; 4) Climate change resilience such as the temperature difference between Artificial Turf and Natural Turf and the impact of those changes and variations; 5) Soil Health and Biodiversity. The group stressed the importance of reviewing reference materials that are peer reviewed and science based. The group also mentioned that one of their members will be taking parental leave in the near future so it will be important to discuss how this working group will continue.

IV. Discussion: Agreement of Topic Areas in Working Groups

The Committee agreed that the working groups are off to a great start and should continue on with conducting research. There was general consensus that the Committee would not meet again until January 9, 2024 at 5PM via zoom, but in the meantime Committee Members would continue researching their topic areas and the working groups would meet during the first week of January. The goal is to have a more in depth update on the research efforts by each working group at the January 9th meeting.

The Committee discussed the feasibility of including in person testimony as part of the research. The Committee agreed that recommendations will come from the working groups and be presented to the larger group for consideration. As such, it was recommended that working groups begin thinking about this sooner rather than later. If the Committee decides to consider in person testimony, it would need to take place in the first couple of weeks in February.

The Committee also discussed research associated with crumb rubber infill and acknowledged that while this topic does need to be explored, there seems to be an understanding amongst the Members that crumb rubber is not the ideal infill for Artificial Turf. As such, the Committee agreed that crumb rubber will be researched but more attention would be focused on researching alternative components to crumb rubber infill. The Committee also acknowledged that by limiting the research on crumb rubber infill it is not the Committee's intention to overlook the other materials (backing, blades of grass, etc) and the respective chemicals/components that make up Artificial Turf.

V. Discussion: Guidelines for Conducting Research

The general consensus of the Committee was that research material should include a variety of aspects, including but not limited to the following criteria: peer reviewed; studied by academia and/or government agencies; and/or material published in a professional/reputable journal.

The Committee agreed that it is important to look into the author(s), such as their credentials, affiliations (including employment status), as well as the funding source of the research/study.

The Committee acknowledged that research takes a long time and in some cases relies on funding cycles. As such, the amount of material and/or availability of recent research associated with Artificial Turf Fields may be limited. Therefore, the Committee determined they would not pose any time restrictions on research material.

VI. New Business

The Committee had no new business to discuss.

Natasha Waden reminded the Committee and Public that the cut off to include materials or correspondence received for a meeting is at 5pm the Thursday before a Tuesday Meeting (with the exception of a Monday holiday). Materials or correspondence received after that time will be included in the next meeting packet.

VII. Adjourn

Motion made by Mike Gildesgame to adjourn the meeting.

2nd by Marvin Lewiton

Vote:

Mike Gildesgame, Yes

Leslie Mayer, Yes

Joseph Barr, Yes

Jill Krajewski, Yes

Natasha Waden, Yes

Marvin Lewiton, Yes

James Ditulio, Yes

Approved (7-0)