

10-Year History of Turf Fields

June 6, 2022

10-year History of Turf Field Efforts 2012 to 2022

- **2012: Zoning Board of Appeals Application to Allow Field Lighting Above 70-Ft.**
 - ZBA Approved.
 - ZBA Decision Appealed by Neighbors.
 - Neighbors Won the Appeal in Court.
- **2013: P&Z Application to Allow 80-Ft. Athletic Field Lighting in All Residential Districts subject to a Special Permit**
 - First step in a plan to build a privately funded turf field at Middlebrook School.
 - Filed by Wilton Youth Football, Lacrosse and Field Hockey.
 - Application denied by P&Z Commission.
- **2014: BOS Authorized Wilton Youth Football, Lacrosse and Field Hockey to Apply for A Permit with Inland Wetlands Commission for A Turf Field at Middlebrook**
 - BOS expectation field would be fully funded by donations with a mechanism to fund future turf replacements.
 - Inland Wetlands approval obtained.

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- **2015: P&Z application by Same Youth Sports Groups to Install a Crumb Rubber Infill Turf Field with Lights at the Middlebrook School**
 - Contentious application with neighbor and environmental opposition.
 - P&Z approved a crumb rubber infill turf field. Denied lights.
 - Sports groups didn't continue to pursue without lights.
 - Neighbor appealed the P&Z approval to the CT Supreme Court in 2017.
 - Neighbor withdrew the appeal in 2019.
 - Two existing 30-ft. lights on the side of the Middlebrook field facing the neighbors were found to be illegally installed due to the lack of proper permitting. Lights were made inoperable and eventually removed for safety reasons.
- **2016: ATM Approved Replacement of WHS Stadium Crumb Rubber Infill Turf with Coconut Infill Turf**
- **2016: Board of Selectmen Authorized an Application to Planning & Zoning Commission for Temporary Lighting Regulation, with restrictions.**
 - Addressed inadequate lighting or lack of lighting at fields.
 - Regulation Approved.

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- **2016/2017: BOS Appointed Two Parks and Recreation Subcommittees. One to Study the Need for Additional Turf Fields. One to Recommend Locations for Any Future Turf Fields**
 - *June 2017 Committee Findings:*
 - Need for two new turf fields
 - Priority locations: North Field and Allens 5 & 6
 - June 2017 BOS & P&Z Discussions:
 - Funded through donations.
 - Wilton Youth Sports Council to be formed. Future replacement costs funded through an annual fee charged to participants.
 - Discussion to be held with Inland Wetlands Commission as to feasibility. Commission wouldn't discuss without an application.
 - *Results:* Sports groups resistant to co-fund a study without a level of certainty.
- **2017: BOS Authorized WARF to sell signs at WHS Stadium to Raise Funds for Future Turf Replacements and Repairs**
 - Pilot program began in October 2017.
 - Approval for ongoing Stadium and Lilly followed.

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- **2018: ATM Approved Replacement of Lilly Crumb Rubber Turf with Coconut Infill Turf**
- **2021/2022: BOS Authorized Study of a Domed Turf Facility at Comstock**
 - *Unpublished Results:*
 - Due to the nature of the property, site development costs for a facility at Comstock would substantially increase the cost versus construction on flatter property, meaning Comstock is not a preferred or viable location.
 - Same issues for a non-domed turf field.
 - *Pursuing state-owned property at Allens as a possible location.*
 - Phase 1 study.
 - Inquires as to a longer-term lease from the State.
- **2022: Parks and Recreation Commission Requested Design Fee and Partial Funding for a New Turf Field:**
 - Did not identify a location.
 - Currently, there isn't consensus as to a location.
 - Stantec studies ruled out Comstock and Guy Whitten as viable location.
 - Increase in storm intensity ruled out North Field as a location.
 - Middlebrook isn't a viable location.
 - Allens remains a possible location. WPS would not have first priority. Proximity to wetlands-possible issue
 - WHS Varsity baseball and softball have recently been suggested as a site for a multi-field turf. WHS would have first priority. Question as to access and lack of parking during school hours.

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- **2022: Planning & Zoning Commission Chair and Director of Land Use Management/Town Planner Requested Funds for Amenities Master Plan**
 - *A Master Plan should/would address turf fields and possible location(s).*
 - *A Master Plan should/work include Allens.*

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- **POCD: Additional Recreational Facilities, Including Fields and Turf Fields Weren't Identified as Priorities During the POCD Process:**
 - Residents who use the facilities may not have engaged.
 - Residents may have been turned off by the Middlebrook result.
- **Included In One PODC Strategy**
 - Page 122, **Objective 4.1-2 Continue prudent community control and cost-effective investment in school facilities and programming to maintain and enhance Wilton Public Schools' attractiveness to current and prospective residents and businesses.**
- **Survey Results:**
 - Telephone Survey: https://wilton2029.files.wordpress.com/2019/01/telephone_survey_results.pdf
 - Mini Survey: https://wilton2029.files.wordpress.com/2018/05/comm_facilities_survey_results1.pdf