

Turf Field Bonding Proposal

Overview

May 2, 2023

Annual Town Meeting

Turf Field Bonding Proposal

Proposed Field and Location

- *255' x 405' coconut husk infill turf field.*
- *LED energy efficient and updated lights to light the field only.*
- *Path lighting along the short path from the field to the parking lot.*
- *Reconfiguration of the existing parking lot.*
- *Minimal disruption to Allen's Meadow-no asphalt, no additional fencing.*
- *Overview of Allen's Meadow with the proposed turf field [here](#).*
- *Close up view of the proposed turf field [here](#).*

Need for a Third Turf Field

- ***Turf vs Grass***

- A turf field provides a greater number of hours of playing time versus a grass field.
- A grass field can't be used in wet conditions. Photo of a wet Allen's Meadow field [here](#).
- Town grass fields are overplayed. Demand means grass fields can't be rested as is required to maintain quality. Photo of Guy Whitten field [here](#).
- To maintain a grass field at an equal quality to turf, a grass field needs
 - *over \$100,000 per year in annual maintenance,*
 - *must have an irrigation system, and*
 - *must be rested for up to a year,*

Need for a Third Turf Field

- ***Shortfall in Available Playing Time***

- The two current turf fields are not sufficient to meet resident demand for turf.
 - *Demonstrated lack of field availability.*
 - *[Example](#) of availability for April 17 thru May 14 as of April 9th*

- High level of youth sports participants ([source](#))

- *750+ Wilton Youth Football and Cheer participants.*
- *275+ Wilton Youth Field Hockey participants.*
- *600+ Wilton Youth Lacrosse Association participants.*
- *1,000+ Wilton Soccer Association participants.*

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Cost and Funding

		WARF	BOND
Cost of Turf Field-current \$	\$1,822,527		
Cost Escalation-1 yr @6%	\$109,352		
Contingency @ 10%	\$182,253		
	\$2,114,131	\$180,000	\$1,934,131
Possible Seasonal Bubble Infrastructure	\$ 320,000	\$ 320,000	
		\$500,000	\$1,934,131
Rounded			\$1,950,000

- *If the contingency is not required, the Town's bonding will be reduced to as low as \$1.752 million.*
- *The contribution of at least \$180,000 from WARF towards the turf field is fixed. If the cost of the possible seasonal bubble infrastructure is less than \$320,000 that savings will be allocated to the cost of the turf field and reduce the Town's bonding.*
- *Detailed Cost available [here](#)*

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Impact on Debt Service

Budget Year	Debt Service	Mill Rate Impact*	Mill Rate Incr % Impact*
2024	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
2025	\$ 135,000	\$ 0.07	0.12%
2026	\$ 257,725	\$ 0.098	0.22%
*Based on Current Mill Rate Calculation			

Annual Maintenance Grass at Allen's Maintained at Turf Quality vs. Turf Field

	Grass-Equiv Quality to Turf*	Turf	Difference
Labor Field Grooming		\$ 1,120	\$ 1,120
Labor Mowing	\$ 3,360		\$ (3,360)
Fertilization/Herbicide	\$ 4,600		\$ (4,600)
Sodding	\$ 78,400		\$ (78,400)
Top Dressing	\$ 3,000		\$ (3,000)
Irrigation Servicing	\$ 2,000		\$ (2,000)
Water Cost	\$ 8,000		\$ (8,000)
Labor Overseeding	\$ 210		\$ (210)
Labor Aeration	\$ 350		\$ (350)
Field Line Painting	\$ 4,480		\$ (4,480)
Synthetic Turf Repairs		\$ 500	\$ 500
Additional Infill		\$ 7,000	\$ 7,000
Annual Operating Expenses	\$ 104,400	\$ 8,620	\$ (95,780)
Avg. Annual Debt Service		\$230,750	\$230,750
Net Difference-existing grass	\$ 104,400	\$ 239,370	\$ 134,970
* Existing irrigation			

Future Turf Replacement

- *The life of a coconut infill turf field is approximately 10 years.*
- *The life of the underlying concussion padding is 20 years.*
- *The Town already has a sinking fund to offset the cost of turf replacements.*
 - Revenues from field and light rentals are held in the sinking fund.
 - Net revenues from banner program at the Stadium and Lilly, managed by WARF on behalf of the Town, are transferred to the Town and held in the sinking fund.
 - The Town's share of any field and light revenue will also be deposited into the sinking fund.

Environmental Considerations

- *Coconut husk infill turf fields don't require watering.*
 - Aquarion newly included Wilton for watering restrictions.
 - Voluntary in June 2023. Mandatory in 2024.
- *Coconut husk infill don't create heat.*
 - Coconut husk absorbs moisture, creating a cooling effect.
 - Crumb rubber infill turf creates heat.
 - Wilton abandoned crumb rubber infill in 2016.
- *Town's two existing turf fields don't contain detectible PFAS chemicals*
 - Test results of water directly from the Lilly and Stadium discharge pipes were non-deduct for PFAS chemicals.
 - Test results of the water from Goetzen Brook just after passing Lilly Field were non-detected for PFAS chemicals.

Environmental Considerations, cont.

- *The turf manufacturer of our two turf fields represented the turf fields do not contain PFAS chemicals. This is consistent with our testing results.*
- *CT DPH website re turf fields and PFAS:*
 - *“..research on this topic is limited to a single, peer-reviewed study (Lauria et. al. 2022). Results of this study... indicate that the fluorinated substances (fluoropolymers) measured in the artificial turf fields appear to be bound to the components of the artificial turf and do not leach into the environment. Further, they are not the type of fluorinated chemicals that transform in the environment into harmful PFAS. For all these reasons, this peer-reviewed study shows that the presence of fluorinated substances in artificial turf fields does not pose an exposure concern to users of the fields...”*
- *The State reviewed the question of a turf field at Allen’s twice:*
 - First, when evaluating the Town’s request for a turf field.
 - Second, following a request from a resident group to reconsider.

Environmental Legal Considerations

- *No liability associated with PFAS per Town Attorney Nick Bamonte as stated at April 4th Board of Selectmen meeting:*
 - The recent EPA Advisory for PFAS chemicals does not create any liability on the part of the Town for PFAS that may or may not exist in private wells. Causation is required for liability. The Town's voluntary testing of the water from the discharge pipes from the Town's two turf fields showed no detect, which shows no causation. There is no liability, even if future laws are passed for the advisory levels.
 - There are no Connecticut laws or regulations related to PFAS, except for packaging materials.
 - Watch meeting [here](#).

Lease Status

- *Agreement with CTDOT on a draft lease.*
- *30-year cumulative term, initial 10 years with two 10-year extensions at the Town's option (twice the current lease term).*
- *No rent, as long as the Town does not charge a fee for use of the property. If fees are charged, the State receives a portion of the fees as rent. Examples of potential fees: Community Gardening Program fee, turf field rental fee or turf light rental fee.*
- *New uses include community gardening, a turf field, a seasonal bubble over the turf field.*
- *Pesticide use is not allowed.*
- *Current lease expires in November. New lease would be executed prior to expiration.*

We took the allegations seriously and investigated them including:

- *Allegation-The proposed turf field will leach PFAS chemicals into the water supply.*
 - **This statement is not supported by the facts detailed in slides 5 & 6.**
 - During NRWA's sponsored webinar, their provided environmental advocate was asked by an attendee, "Are there studies to show the significance of artificial turf sites as a source of PFAS relative to other sources?" The answer was no. The advocate stated there was only anecdotal evidence. She provided the example of PFAS found in town-owned wells in her hometown of Easton, MA. A town she noted that has two turf fields. Though the Town of Easton has filed a lawsuit against the manufacturers of fire fighter foam citing that as the cause of the PFAS in the wells. Nothing on the Town of Easton dedicated PFAS webpage mentions the turf fields as a source.
- *The proposed turf field will create financial liabilities for the Town related to PFAS chemicals.*
 - **This is not supported by the facts and advisory opinion provided by the Town's attorney at the April 4th Board of Selectmen meeting and as documented on slide 7. The meeting can be watched on this [link](#).**

- *Allegation-Lilly and Stadium turf fields are responsible for the PFAS chemicals levels of the retention pond by Cider Mill.*
 - **This statement is not supported by the PFAS testing, the watershed mapping, as prepared and presented by DPW Director Frank Smeriglio, and the current drainage system.**
 - Water runoff samples from both Lilly and the Stadium tested non-detect for PFAS chemicals.
 - The water runoff from Lilly is NOT piped into the pond. The Stadium runoff is directly piped.
 - Many other areas are also piped into the pond, including the water runoff from residential properties above and behind the Stadium and the stream from the top of Catalpa Road. The water sample testing results from that stream were similar to the water samples taken from the pond.
 - The discussion of the watershed mapping, drainage system and sampling processes can be watched on this [link](#). Fast forward to 35 minutes on this link for the start of the discussion.
- *Allegation-The proposed turf field will cause excessive heat.*
 - **This statement is not supported by the facts. We have 7 years of experience with coconut husk infill. Coconut husk absorbs moisture, which does the opposite and cools the field.**
 - This allegation relates to crumb rubber infill that the town does not allow.
 - Like this allegation, many of the allegations assign data/research related to crumb rubber infill to all turf fields, even those without crumb rubber infill.