



Meeting Minutes

Turf Fields Advisory Committee Meeting #4

February 17, 2016 2:45-4:45pm

Members Present:

Benner, Steve	Hodge, Gary
Brown, Patrick	Hust, Lisa
Burke, Jeff	Keeley, Brian
Cowan, Ron	Kish, David
Clarke, Steve	Knutson, Nick
Cushman, Colin	Larsen, Chad
Denton, Julie	Lawyer, Curtis
Everett, James	Read, Matthew
Flint, Ted	Reilly, Kay
Harding, Bob	Swanson, William
Hatch, Greg	Vaughn, Jeff

Members Absent:

McAtee, Molly
Pitton, Amber
Ryan, Kevin
Stinson, Jonah
Weeda, Brian

Ron welcomed the group back together. There was no discussion or edits to the February 3rd meeting minutes and they were approved by the committee.

Ron shared some updates with the projects. We will be moving forward with the Squalicum turf fields this summer. The decision has been made by Bellingham staff and administration to delay the Bellingham High School turf field installation for one year. The necessary alley vacation, in order to build a regulation sized field, won't be completed and processed in time to install the Bellingham High School field this summer. District staff will meet with Parks and Rec to share our trail alignment plan and pursue vacating the alley with the City of Bellingham in the near future.

Jeff Burke went over field specifics from the last meeting. There were some revisions due to comments from committee members at the February 3rd meeting. Jeff shared revised Draft Plans of both the Squalicum and Bellingham fields indicating changes. Bellingham plans included maximizing the field length, maintaining a 15' zone on either end, and changing women's lacrosse lines from red to grey.

Jeff Vaughn stated needing net fencing between the field and soft pitch area at Bellingham. With the field being closer to the diamond area and spectators sitting near, there should be netting for protection.

There was discussion of using two tones of green for the Bellingham field with a striped pattern but it was the consensus of the group to use one color of green. Three examples of end zone colors to consider were shared, with the committee preferring Bellingham's Draft 2 plan, which is a green field, with red end zone, boys lacrosse lines in blue, girls in grey and soccer in yellow.

Changes to Squalicum's Draft Plan include navy blue end zones with white letters. Girls lacrosse was changed to grey, with men's black. The committee was unsure about the two toned green turf option, noting that Joe Martin has an alternating green turf pattern that a number of committee members like. Of three drafts shared, Drafts 2 and 3 plans were preferred.

Ted Flint commented that we need to look at the throw areas. They need to be close together, not across the field from each other.

Patrick Brown stated on the north side of the Squalicum field some kind of netting should be considered to prevent soccer balls from going into the wetland. There is already a 6' fence on the north side. We would want an approximately 21' high net fence on the new field that would be the length of the field and permanent. Ron suggested we make fencing part of the base bid, for both Bellingham and Squalicum, and look at lettering and logos as alternate considerations.

Restrooms are not part of this phase, but it was suggested to have an area designated for porta potties .

Steve Clark reiterated that the plan is to install Squalicum's field first. Ron added that we would hope to break ground in May or June and have the field ready prior to school beginning in the fall of 2016. Steve stated that we have heard valuable information from Dr. Greg Stern, Health Officer for Whatcom County Health Department, and also Stewart Mhyre, Executive Director-Business and Operations for the Edmonds School District, and have read a lot of in-depth research documents. Greg Hatch commented we have been very thorough. Steve Benner questioned if we delay the project is there a risk of the funding going away. Steve Clarke assured the monies would still be there. Curtis Lawyer added the longer we wait potentially project costs could rise. Ron stated the perspective of waiting is that while many studies have been done, there will be more studies. If we move forward we need to move quickly in order for Squalicum's fields to be completed by fall. James Everett questioned if we are in the middle of the project and there are new findings that would not allow certain in-fills, could our project potentially be shut down. Not knowing what new findings might emerge, we would certainly comply with all new rules and regulations.

Ron Cowan read an email from Jonah Stinson, Director of School Safety and Emergency Management, who was unable to attend the meeting:

"I am open to moving forward even with recent legislative developments, but I think the project would need to have the right communication, community buy-in, and safety measures to go with it. The Edmonds example was eye opening for me. I think we'd want to proceed with an openness that conveys we've done our homework, we've asked the questions, and weighed the risks and evaluated the research. Given the continually evolving nature of the research, I anticipate we'd want to include

some suggested best practices for field use, (washing hands, not ingesting material, etc.) if we do decide to move forward.”

A committee vote was taken with 17 members supporting moving ahead with the project, and one member unsure; a very strong consensus to move forward.

Ron then stated that now that we’ve decided we want to move forward, we need to address what in-fill we want to recommend, first making sure all questions answered.

Ted Flint asked if we choose a more expensive option, would we run out of money. Ron replied that health trumps lettering, logos, etc, and we need to recommend what we think is best to the superintendent. Gary Hodge added that we need to be factual with our decision and not emotional about it.

Matthew Read reminded the group that Dr. Stern spoke of the health benefit of a 12 month a year field. Brian Keely agreed, adding that natural turf fields require maintenance including fertilizer, water and other chemicals to maintain them and also athletes may incur more physical injuries than on synthetic turf. Colin Cushman echoed Brian’s concerns of injuries, stating a very large health concern is concussions.

Locally, Civic Fields and the new Northwest Soccer Park fields used crumb rubber in-fill. David Kish commented when you feel the SBR there is some cushion to it. Coated Rubber doesn’t seem to give when you squeeze it. Brian Keeley stated we don’t have any information on the benefit of Coated Rubber. At its core it’s the same material. The Coated SBR just encapsulates the rubber with a coating, and there isn’t data on the health effects associated with the coating.

Geofill products need to be watered. Organics break down about every 3-4 years requiring more maintenance. All natural products would require us to have a way to store additional infill material for ongoing field maintenance.

David Kish stated that Zeofill is an interesting product but without any firsthand knowledge of how it will hold up, he wasn’t sure about recommending it.

Should a problem be identified with any in-fill we recommend, Ron explained within the first 2-3 years after the field’s installation we can extract the infill and replace it with a new in-fill. It involves bringing the fibers back up to vertical, vacuuming out the in-fill, and then brushing in another in-fill product. Every time this is done, it wears the fibers a little bit. The cost would run approximately \$79,000 including extraction and disposal. If we go beyond 3 years, we’d likely have to replace the top turf layer in addition to the in-fill.

After much discussion, the committee went through a prioritization exercise. Afterward, SBR (crumb rubber) and Coated SBR were the top two preferred in-fill materials. With very low or no interest in Nike Grind (post manufactured product), Cork, EPDM (manufactured rubber), TPE (manufactured plastic) or Zeofill (mineral), the committee unanimously chose to eliminate these products as options. Following a committee vote between SBR (crumb rubber) and Coated SBR (crumb rubber), the committee as a whole was overwhelming in favor of recommending SBR (crumb rubber).

The committee voted for a community meeting to take place next Wednesday, February 24th from 6:00-7:00p.m. at Squaticum's library. Ron requested help from committee members to assist with the presentation which will include an introduction, project overview, our tours, our deliberations, (type of in-fill and why), and exhibits. Patrick Brown, David Kish, James Everett, Colin Cushman, Chad Larsen, Brian Keeley and Gary Hodge volunteered to assist. Anyone else interested in working with the presentation is to email Ron Cowan.

The committee will meet briefly after the community meeting to discuss turf selection. Ron asked the group to come to the meeting prepared to discuss turf. If anyone has questions for Bob or Jeff, please email Ron to forward.

Meeting adjourned 4:47p.m.