

Conservation Commission Requests for Information #3



Re: Arlington High School Expansion

SCI File #17211.00

RE: Conservation Requests June 25, 2020 Item #3 Climate Change Summary for Turf Fields

At the request of the Conservation Commission, in addition to the heat island analysis provided, the following details other factors in the alternative analysis for selecting turf fields over grassed fields.

For some background on how this alternative was selected, the Arlington High School Building Committee has held public meetings for over three years and many discussions centered on the benefits of installing an artificial turf field (similar to the one currently at the high school stadium) for all other sports. As designed the new artificial turf fields will serve baseball, softball, soccer, lacrosse, and football. This is due to the ability to layout out overlapping sports within the same footprint. Many discussions regarding costs/benefits analysis occurred when the Committee needed to reduce project costs. It was agreed by the 18-person committee that artificial turf fields versus natural grass turf fields are essential for the high school program. The artificial turf, with its superior drainage, will allow for six (6) more weeks of outdoor activity for Arlington students. This benefit was paramount to the educators, parents, and residents of the School Building Committee.

These additional six weeks of outdoor activity also assumes that the grassed fields remain in playable condition for the entire fall and spring season. In actuality, the grassed fields typically become muddied and bare – causing erosion and siltation – most season due to challenging weather and over-use for that surface versus student activity needs. The selection of turf fields will remove that siltation source to the resource areas.

Regarding the turf meeting ecological standards, the project will now meet the specifications of the New York State Standards per the request of the Commission, the strictest guidelines that are available. Additionally, the project meets all the MA DEP Performance standard for how the turf fields would affect the waters and wetland plantings, as there are no studies nor data available showing that any runoff from turf fields has a detrimental affect on those resources for us to meet.