

Hi Susan,

I didn't see the link for comments about the proposed artificial turf fields, so here is mine:

I'm a parent facilitator of the Thompson Green Team and a parent of 2 select team soccer players, so I'm well versed with the concerns on both sides of the proposed soccer fields.

My son's 7th grade peers are passionate about soccer and have been playing soccer regularly on the natural field next to Thompson since first grade. Although formal practices and games have occasionally been delayed by lack of access to turf fields in Arlington, their passion for soccer has persisted.

In addition to soccer, this peer group of Thompson graduates have been equally passionate about protecting the environment, banning all forms of single use plastic, protecting pollinator ecosystems and addressing climate change! They have lobbied the APS Director of Food Services, APS School Committee and their school communities to eliminate Styrofoam trays, plastic straws and plastic cups and for a switch to compostable trays and industrial composting for school lunches throughout the district. They organized all town climate rallies, wrote letters and lobbied their State Senator and Representative to pass bold, comprehensive climate legislation. The Thompson community also planted pollinator gardens around the school and in their neighborhoods.

Replacing the natural soccer fields with artificial turf fields is not consistent with the hopes and dreams of this generation.

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Given the challenges of maintaining a livable climate and pollinator ecosystems for the next generation, we need to plan ahead and take responsibility by cultivating green space and native pollinator ecosystems at every opportunity. Our children are resilient and will persist in learning soccer despite the occasional rainy day (or pandemic!). Our ecosystems and climate are dangerously close to tipping points of irreparable damage and at some point will be less resilient. The elimination of green space and the production of plastics add up and heighten levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere worsening climate change.

Instead of reducing green space, I'd like to see any new town plans mandate increased green space and native pollinator ecosystems that both decrease the levels of carbon dioxide of the atmosphere reducing the threat of climate change and support easy to maintain native ecosystems for our all important pollinators protecting our food supply.

I hope the town of Arlington will consider this generation's hopes and dreams for a sustainable town and livable climate!

Thank you,

Elizabeth Rocco M.D.
Thompson Green Team
Mom of Grade 4 and 7 Select Team Soccer Player