



Town of Arlington
Office of the Town Manager

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TO: Select Board

FROM: Sandy Pooler, Town Manager *SMP*

DATE: March 10, 2023

RE: Warrant Article 12: Vote/Three-year Moratorium on Installation of Artificial Turf on Town Land

There may be many people attending Monday night's Select Board meeting to discuss the Artificial Turf proposed warrant article. I thought I should give you an update on the issue and my position on the article.

I told Beth Melofchik that I will actively oppose this warrant article. I think there is no scientific basis for a three year moratorium. It is an arbitrary time period.

The water protection issues are in the purview of the Conservation Commission, the health issues are in the purview of the Health Department/Health Board, and the funding recommendation issues are in the purview of the Town Manager. Town Meeting should not try to usurp those powers/responsibilities.

The Conservation Commission and the Parks and Recreation Commission are sponsoring forum on artificial turf on April 11, where speakers from both sides of the issue will share their views. We hope to come to some common understanding of the issues and to learn more about what kind of artificial turf field, if any, we might propose for the Town.

I am hoping that the Town consider each field issues separately, based on conditions at the site, available alternatives for turf material, and environmental and recreational needs. While some people would very much like to build a turf field at Poet's Corner, I know that Joe Connelly is supportive of the need to build fields that do not harm the environment. The Health Department has started looking at some of the health related issues and I await its judgment. In January, I issued a statement that I would not put forward a proposal for a turf field while I was Town manager, to allow more study and public understanding. I am open to more turf fields in town and am also committed to protecting our environment.

Finally, I worry that a three year moratorium would not only block development of new turf fields but may also interfere with the installation of the new artificial turf fields at the High School. The high school fields were approved by the Conservation Commission under the condition that they pass various tests related to chemical emissions. The High School Building Committee is proceeding with that installation in accordance with the Conservation Commission's requirements. Action by Town Meeting would not be appropriate for a project that is already approved.