

Park and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes

Date: April 12, 2022

Place: Zoom Webinar

Commissioners Attending: John Bain, Nancy O'Connor, Clara Batchelor, Wendy Sheridan Ames, Antonia Bellalta, Theresa Mooney, and Jon Pan

Commissioners Absent:

Staff: Alexandra Vecchio: Director of Parks and Open Space, Leigh Jackson: Director of Recreation, Jessica White: Parks and Open Space Assistant, Justin Lawson: Golf Course General Manager, Jonathan Lewitus: Assistant Director of Recreation, Erin Gallentine: Commissioner of Public Works

Welcome call the Meeting to Order

J. Bain called the meeting to order.

Approval of the March 8, 2022, Park and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes

N. O'Connor moved for approval of the minutes. Seconded by J. Bain. All in favor. A roll call vote was taken.

Public Comment

No Public Comment

Golf Course Landscape Master Plan and Committee Update

- Justin Lawson stated that the golf course landscape master plan committee has been quite busy with several meetings in terms of the public outreach process and existing conditions. Currently, the focus is a lot on the golf course, the US Open impact, and the architect. Mark and his team are leading the charge and overseeing the restoration efforts. These efforts were detailed.
- J. Lawson discussed the annual fairway turf repair Program.
- J. Lawson stated that the landscape master plan design review committee has an exciting meeting tomorrow evening at 5:30 pm. At this meeting, the results of the golfer and residents survey will be released. He stated that there were 567 respondents and 33% of them were Brookline residents. J. Lawson detailed what tomorrow's meeting will entail. The May 17th meeting will unveil a preliminary master plan from the design team, and then the committee will take a pause to handle and take care of the US Open, as well as to give time for feedback of the master plan with the committee.

- A. Bellalta stated that the whole team is doing a great job and she finds it exciting to follow the movement of all the projects. She stated that the community input has been great.
- L. Jackson discussed where the information can be found for the meetings for the golf course.

Ice Rink Task Force Update

- Wendy Sheridan Ames stated that at the March 16th meeting, the Task Force opened the meeting with public comment, and then had a discussion. A vote was taken for a recommendation to the Park and Recreation Commission.
- A copy of the language of that vote has been sent to the full Commission. She suggested the Commission take a deep dive into the language and a more in-depth conversation can take place at next month's Park and Recreation Commission Meeting. She suggested that all the Commissioners go through all the motions and come to the next meeting with questions.
- Alexandra Vecchio stated that she wanted to thank the Task Force for their service, time and commitment

Parks and Open Space Update

- A. Vecchio shared a Parks and Open Space update with the Commission. Please see the presentation here:
<https://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/Index/2489>
- A. Vecchio discussed the work happening at Larz Anderson Park.
- S. Landgren discussed the colors/textures of the Tempietto.

Warrant Article 26 Petitioner Presentation, Public Hearing, and Possible Vote

- Deborah Brown stated that she sat with Town Counsel and went through the language, where she thinks people had most of their questions on the membership side. She saw that the law doesn't allow the town to go up to seven and what she proposed couldn't be done. That came off the table. Deborah Brown stated that it comes down to making sure that children have an opportunity to have a place to play.
- Nancy O'Connor stated that it was great meeting D. Brown last week. She thinks largely that she and D. Brown are on somewhat the same page in terms of opportunities for children and for families. She stated that some of the warrant article is being adjusted. She stated that there were a lot of red lines and a lot of changes and she isn't sure what version we are talking about. Deborah Brown stated that she was wrong about the composition of the Commission.
- Clara Batchelor stated that the Parks and Recreation Commission IS A volunteer board. She stated that the charge is to advise and that they are specifically allowed

to set fees. She stated that D. Brown stated that the Commission put a report together, but she feels that the Parks and Open Space Division and the Recreation Department should be the ones putting the reports together because they would be the ones that have the staff for that. The department is required to put an open space plan together every five years. Clara Batchelor stated that D. Brown could request to focus on some areas that they're not currently focused on. She doesn't disagree with a lot of D. Brown's objectives but feels that they should be directed to the departments, not to the Commission in many instances. Deborah Brown stated that the only reason why she said the Commission was because the Commission is the highest body and the assumption is that the department will do the work as directed by the Commission. C. Batchelor stated that the Commission does not direct the Department and feels that the hierarchy needs to be corrected.

- A. Vecchio stated that the Park and Recreation Commission has explicit authority in a few specific areas. One is recreational fees and the other is in regards to the design and construction of a new art project/design review committee. She stated that Parks staff might ask Park and Recreation Commissioners to help on a special task force or something related to a specific project to help research that and pull that information together if requested.
- Clara Batchelor feels that it would be better to put these requirements into this article directed at the Departments versus the Commission. Deborah Brown will take it up with the Town Counsel.
- John Bain stated that from his understanding the Commission is an advisor to both the Parks and Recreation Departments. He stated that whatever it takes, no child will be turned away from Recreation. He knows that we need to do better and to do more. He has read the petition and there's a lot of merit in it, and if we need to be more aggressive on programs, he feels that we can do that. However, he feels that one of the problems to solve is coming up with funding.
- C. Batchelor is happy to hear that Deborah will check with the Town Council, and suggested checking with the Town Clerk as well. She understands that when some people see the prices of some of the programs they don't even apply, so she agrees there needs to be a way to see if people are eligible for scholarships; that way people don't just say "oh I can't afford that." She feels that the Commission should work on getting the word out there. Clara Batchelor stated that we don't turn people away, but they need to know to ask. Deborah Brown stated she calls that the chilling effect: you look at something and it's more than you can pay and you take no further action. D. Brown feels that the money for these programs to help these kids is money well spent.
- Wendy Sheridan Ames thanked Deborah for writing this warrant article and bringing to light some really critical issues in our town. She stated that she wrote a

letter to this Commission about the roles and responsibilities of this Commission, despite trying for over a year to understand the roles and responsibilities and she feels that she still has not gotten an answer. Deborah Brown stated that it sounds like it's a big enough issue that we should try to get an answer as soon as possible. Wendy Sheridan Ames stated that she also agrees that some of the items in this warrant article should be department-driven and should have a funding source because she remembers reading a line about Commissioners raising funds. She 1,000% agree with D. Brown that there needs to be equitable access to out-of-school time activities, including recreation. She also agrees with D. Brown that there are barriers, not only the price tag but the process of potentially applying for the scholarship is cumbersome for families, and there needs to be a better system town-wide that if you're already approved for free and reduced lunch then you're already approved. She stated that for access to recreation programming, there shouldn't be a separate application process. She discussed her experience with this as a volunteer coach. She stated that not only is there a need to find a funding source for this but to make the process simpler so access is easier and faster. She feels strongly that transportation issues tie deeply into this issue. Wendy Sheridan Ames stated that recreation directly correlates to academic success and a healthy lifestyle. She believes strongly in this, and she would like to come up with a way to create a policy and find funding for this. She is a little nervous that the language and the warrant article that tasks the Commissioners with doing the work. She feels that it may be outside of the Commission's roles and responsibilities. She stated that D. Brown has a team of advocates here on the Commission that wants to work with her to solve this problem, and she has W. Sheridan's full support in helping to get there.

- D. Brown thanked W. Sheridan. D. Brown stated that she has heard Mel Kleckner say that he thinks the Town has the money.
- N. O'Connor stated that she has not seen an updated copy of the warrant article as it stands, and personally wouldn't feel comfortable supporting something she hasn't seen yet. She stated that she would love to have a group of us get together to discuss getting more families involved, funding, figuring out a way to get transportation, and figuring out if there is a way to easily identify families. She feels that more work needs to be done. D. Brown stated that the big change to the Warrant article was taking out the paragraph that talked about the composition of the board, and eliminating the date that it takes effect.
- D. Brown explained why she didn't make this warrant article a resolution. She will make sure all corrections are made before Town Meeting.
- J. Bain feels that there are some questions that still need to be answered, he is not ready to vote until at this time. He feels that funding needs to be figured out. Alexandra Vecchio stated that the Commission may want to meet again before the May 5th deadline to take an official vote or to respond and submit something in

writing. J. Bain stated that the wording needs to be figured out by the Commission to support staff. D. Brown feels like it's getting into the weeds with "staffing." She feels that first and foremost, we need to have a conversation about whether the town wants to do it and if the town wants to do it, how it's going to be paid for, and everything should just sort of flow from there, right down to transportation.

- Jon Lewitus stated that he thinks we need to identify what the "it" is. He wonders if we are talking about every program that we offer for every kid available. He thinks it's important to establish what the ask is before evaluating.
- N. O'Connor stated that she has not seen the most recent version of the article and feels that she cannot make a vote until she sees it. She feels that the Commission is going to need a special meeting. She thinks there are a lot of great ideas floating around.
- L. Jackson stated that she would like to make a general comment. She is really supportive of the idea. She does have some ideas around what could be improved but feels that we do need to talk about the financials. She is not prepared to speak for Mel Kleckner on the budget, but she does think this idea is very good and it's very solid.
- D. Brown discussed how she worked with Town Counsel on the language of this warrant article.
- N. O'Connor stated that the Commission needs to see the most recent version in order to provide feedback and or vote.
- Clara Batchelor stated that Jon Lewitus raised a really good question in regards to what programs we are talking about. She wonders if we are talking about everything the Recreation Department has to offer. She feels that we need to know if we're guaranteeing scholarships to every program that's offered. Deborah Brown stated that she thinks that's for the Commission and the Recreation Department to decide what's going to make the most sense. She stated that the Bylaw is not at that level of specificity to answer those kinds of questions. She stated that she needs to talk to her other Co-petitioners about it. This is not meant to crush the system. She stated that she could come back with another question of, "How would you design this program so the greatest number of children can actually benefit".
- Leigh Jackson stated that Recreation currently has a great financial aid program. Recreation does provide financial aid, right now, as part of their policy for all of their programs. She stated that with their contractors, all the registration is handled through them, so they don't provide financial aid for that, because they run their own programs and have their own fees.
- J. Pan stated that he supports the spirit of the warrant article and agrees with all the things that others have said. He just wanted to clarify a couple of things. He

wondered if a vote of support from the Commission is a requirement for this warrant article or if it is something that would be nice to have. He stated that there were comments made, that this was written in tandem with the Town Counsel, and was looking for some clarification on who Town Counsel is. D. Brown explained the work she did with Town Counsel.

- J. Bain stated that there are so many unanswered questions that are really important to this article that need to be clarified and answered. He stated that right now he is prepared to vote no action, which doesn't mean he is opposed to it
- Leigh Jackson stated that she wanted to reply to J. Pan's questions. She stated that the vote is a standard procedure and stated that Town Counsel is the legal team, not the Select Board directly.
- Nancy O'Connor stated that she feels we need to have a clean version of this warrant article before any kind of vote.
- Deborah Brown stated that saying a vote is not required, but nice to have is disrespectful. She feels that a vote should happen. She will work with the moderator and Town Counsel to have all these questions answered, but wanted to point out that all these answers will not be found in the body of the warrant article.
- Clara Batchelor stated that it would be important to the Commission, whether you're directing the Commissioners or the department; that section is very important to her.
- Wendy Sheridan Ames stated that the Commission could create a policy. She stated that the Commission is involved in fee setting but not involved with the overall budget, which seems very contradictory to her. She can see this tying into policy-making about funding, assuming there is an identified funding, rather than the Commissioners fundraising themselves, and stated if funding is identified she would absolutely support and help work on policy setting to achieve the goals that are in the warrant article.
- Jon Lewitus and A. Bellalta discussed Recreation's financial aid policy and goals.
- D. Brown stated that the reason she wrote the warrant article was that the average income at BHA is 16,000 and some change even asking somebody to put up 20% up is prohibitive, and that doesn't even involve transportation. She stated that when she is talking about a scholarship, she is talking about 100% free. Deborah Brown stated that she is uncomfortable being overly prescriptive in a bylaw.
- D. Brown stated that the town meeting has acknowledged that the revolving fund is not enough to sustain exactly what she is describing.
- D. Brown stated that she is working on a budget amendment to make sure there is money there to implement the article.

- Nancy O'Connor stated that the Commission looks forward to seeing that updated version
- The Commission agreed to hold the vote and will have a special meeting in a few weeks to vote/discuss this warrant article further.

Warrant Article 23 Petitioner Presentation, Public Hearing, and Possible Vote

- Mike Toffel stated that he drafted article 23 in response to article 24 which seeks to impose a moratorium for three years on the construction of new synthetic turf and then places restrictions going forward. He noticed in the meeting materials that the petitioners have made some clarifications, so it will be important to hear exactly what those qualifications are.
- He discussed the version of a motion that the Advisory Committee subcommittee constructed the night prior. They will be deliberating that on Thursday at the full AC where their version might get passed, or modified and passed. He stated that as an alternative he has tried to lay out an evidence-based approach. The original version calls for the Park and Recreation Commission to create a task force, based on experts from a variety of perspectives, not just recreation so that they can generate the facts. He stated that there's a lot of conjecture out there by nonscientists and by scientists who have an opinion about how to weigh the evidence that may or may not be unbiased. His hope is that we get on the table a set of facts and tradeoffs across these various issues. He stated that in consultation with Alexandra he helped create two deadlines. A September 1st deadline for the task force to put forward their draft policy and an October 15th deadline for the Park and Recreation Commission to hold a public hearing and to create a policy based on the input. He feels that the policy should be created by an elected or appointed body, not by an appointed task force of experts. It was meant to be a two-step process. The deadlines again are aggressive, but the point of why they are aggressive is they're not doing new science- they're just reporting out what the science is. The aggressive deadline is in place because he wants to make sure this policy is in place before the fall town meeting, so that if the petitioners of article 24 or anyone else feel like they don't like that policy enough or want Town Meeting to seek to override that policy and move in a different direction, then they have that opportunity He stated that Article 23 is not a stall tactic to study this forever and meanwhile we build Driscoll and meanwhile we build Skyline, but it is meant to be a very fast-moving group. He stated that there are examples of such fast-moving groups that have occurred in town, often they are when a body like the Park and Recreation Commission constructs the task force.

- He stated that the AC's version makes some serious changes to the resolution, which calls for the Select Board to be the one to appoint this task, in consultation with the Commission, Advisory Council and the Department of Public Health. He feels that getting the Advisory Council, public health advisors or other medically- trained folks seems like a good idea to him. He stated that his major hesitation, with the Select Board involvement, is twofold. The first one is it, almost by nature, politicizes the issue rather than making it a task force of experts. The second issue is the Select Board has a million things going on and it can take a lot of time for them to construct a task force even pursuant to an article like this passing from town meeting. He worries greatly about the timing and if the Select Board is involved if we can meet these aggressive timetables. He does want to make this an open, transparent, and fair process.
- M. Toffel is here to answer questions and to get the Commission's opinion about the differences between the original version and the ACS version. He is trying to absorb all the changes and trying to decide whether he will go along with the AC's version, or whether, in fact, he will put his own motion up that may embrace some of the changes from AC but not all of them.
- Alexandra Vecchio stated that the AC's version came in during the midst of this meeting. A. Vecchio shared the latest track changed version on the screen for the Commission.
- Wendy Sheridan Ames asked what happens if we adopt this recommendation from advisory, it goes to the Select Board and we don't meet the timeline. M. Toffell stated that this is a resolution, not a bylaw. A resolution is basically a plea for action, it's not binding.
- Clara Batchelor asked if M. Toffel agrees with what the Advisory Committee changed rather than presenting his own; she asked M. Toffel if he feels he would have a better chance of passing the town meeting. Mike Toffel stated that he hasn't been able to think through that analysis yet, in part because this just came out yesterday and it's not necessarily what the Town meeting will be voting on anyway. The AC needs to still finish its work. He feels that either people are going to favor 23 in one flavor or another, or they will favor 24.
- M. Toffel discussed why he thinks AC made that change. He wants to create this in a way that would give even the petitioners of article 24 comfort that this is not going to be studied to death.
- Antonia Bellalta thanked M. Toffel. She is conflicted about the whole issue and she is really trying to weigh how and what the benefits are. She is trying to look at everything that the town is doing and that's why she feels this issue is political. There are so many organizations trying to focus on climate change, urban forests, and the lack of our sports fields and sports programs. She loves what M. Toffel is

doing by trying to implement how and where. She would be guarded to say what is the best way to push it forward the fastest; she wouldn't want to make yet another mistake. She feels that personally, one of the makeup of this board should be an urban planner. She stated that this is a very delicate situation and she is not saying to not replace any of the synthetic turf that we already have, but she feels that it is a very difficult question, so she wouldn't rush to say how we're going to get this through the fastest. She stated that it needs to be figured out properly. A. Bellalta stated that our kids need the sports fields, but we need natural turf also in our parks. She feels that there could be another option, maybe it's not just synthetic turf. She listed a few examples of this. She finds that it's a very difficult problem but she supports warrant article 23 because she thinks it's the only way to look at things carefully, as to how we're going to proceed. Mike Toffel stated that he listed 12 factors that he could think of that need to be considered in this trade-off, which makes it a tough problem. He stated that the Commission has grappled with this for four years, it's obviously a tough problem and so 23 is an attempt to bring more facts to bear. The problem will not become easier, but at least we'll be talking about a common set of facts. A. Bellalta stated that is why she feels we need an urban planner. She stated that right now mental health in our country has raised 28% for all sorts of factors and one of the first things that they say is to go out to Mother Nature. A. Bellalta stated part of that mental health is because of this contamination and the toxins. She stated that there are studies that have been done on depression and anxiety on those things. She discussed the healing powers of Mother Nature. A. Bellalta stated that she suggests bringing in an urban planner and also somebody else that has to deal with mental health issues

- Wendy Sheridan Ames thanked M. Toffel for drafting and presenting this resolution. She agrees with Antonia that this is really difficult, but she also agrees that this community needs to have a fact-based analysis of the broader scope of this subject. She feels that if a certain contingent doesn't feel that the Park and Recreation Commission should be the only one then she is totally open to supporting being brought in from other Boards and Commissions. She does feel strongly that those aren't the experts, despite serving on those committees; the experts are going to be the people who are brought in. She would love to see an open-to-the-public roundtable presentation seminar series that's fact-based. She is a little concerned that she has not heard anything about funding for this talked-about. She stated that we have to remember that recreation and sport is a mental health and wellness benefits for many people. Wendy Sheridan Ames stated that access to quality recreation programming is a mental health benefit for many people in our town. Wendy Sheridan Ames stated that she believes the statistic is somewhere around 3853 hours of program time on synthetic turf. Sometimes those fields have 25 people sometimes they have 100 people. If you take 50 as an average that's 200,000 individual hours of participation on these synthetic turf fields and if for any reason those were eliminated, how do you replace that? She would absolutely support

coming up with a different structure of who helps organize and facilitate the discussion by relevant experts.

- Sean Lynn-Jones addressed the Commission. He knows that some of the fields in Brookline are used by outside groups and he wondered if we have such a field shortage how we can do that and is contributing to the wear and tear on our natural grass fields. He wonders if these are outside group contractors that serve Brookline participants or are they outside groups that serve another constituency. He wonders if this brings in revenue that actually makes it easier to maintain fields. Leigh Jackson stated that we primarily serve 95 percent of Brookline residents. She stated that the Commission has prioritized residence in terms of our fee structures for years now, and recently moved to a 100% residency rate for some of the discounted fees for rentals. The total revenue for permits is about 130,000 a year last year and 10,000 of that was for non-primary Brookline residents. She stated that out of approximately 10,000 permits, we gave out last year only 100 were for non-residents. She feels like it's a small group and they are only permitted to use it if priority members are not using them. She stated that we were not renting the fields to non-Brookline residents for the benefit of money only, they are being rented when they're available for use and Recreation primarily turns down non-Brookline residents for permits.
- Erin Chute Gallentine stated that we look at total hours of usage, by season and user group- we have not evaluated that by resident versus non-resident. She stated that we are looking at overall usage and the impact of those hours of use on the condition of the field. She stated that there are some situations with, for example, Beaver Country Day where they use the synthetic turf field at lower Soule, and that is in exchange for access to their athletic fields. There are some situations where the town is leveraging lower priority use times to gain more access to their recreation programs. The Recreation Department does all of the programs that are not done out of the Parks and Open Space Division.
- Andrew Fischer addressed the Commission. He is a parent and grandparent of kids who have used these fields and participated in athletic teams, both in school and through recreation programming. He is an abutter to the Driscoll School. He stated that there were a lot of people in favor of the Driscoll building fund under the illusion that there were going to be real green turf fields. He recognizes the need for more playing fields, but he feels this needs to be done in a safe way. He feels that M. Toffel is wrong when he says that articles 23 and 24 are not inconsistent. He stated that we need to know what's safe and what's the best thing for our children while providing safe fields and reducing carbon footprint. He agrees that we need to explore what is safe and figure out the best way to increase the amount of playing fields and the usability of the playing fields we have.

- Nancy O'Connor stated that including the Advisory Council on public health is a great idea. She thinks the schools should be involved. She feels the makeup of this Group looks like it would be very helpful. She stated that we know how important the fields are to recreation programs and athletics. She stated that we have been working on this for more than two years and have been discussing it for years and years since. She feels that we need to have a panel of experts to provide more information than what we had had previously.
- A. Vecchio discussed the timeline of Warrant Article 23. She stated that the Commission has started work on this and it has been accelerated by these warrant articles.
- Erin Chute Gallentine stated that the outline that is provided by M. Toffel to her is helpful in terms of items to be analyzed and discussed by this task force. She is concerned about the timeline and exhaustion as it relates to the overall workload of the ice rink Task Force. There have been a lot of meetings and an incredible amount of staff time and she is wondering whether it is time for a Select Board's Task Force, with input from the Park and Recreation Commission and our health and human services board and staff to raise this to a higher level. She feels that Parks and Recreation have been trying to educate on this topic for well over a decade, and she thinks the message isn't getting out there. She is a little worried about Park and Recreation Commission leading this with such an aggressive timeline and they do not generally meet in August. She thinks it may be helpful to have the Select Board taking the role of trying to cast a broader net and then all of us really working together to make sure that this task force has all of the technical support and information that it needs to do its work. She is concerned that if Park and Recreation take this on it's actually a burden that staff alone will not be able to handle.
- Mike Toffel stated the July 1st date of when the task force was meant to be convened was something that AC injected and it was not in the original. The first deadline is September 1st, so it is right that the task force would need to be appointed rapidly. He would encourage this group between now and their next meeting to think about the list of folks the Commission would imagine bringing into the conversation. He came here seeking advice, and he needs to think about this over the coming weeks about where he thinks it is best suited. He thinks the Commission may want to vote on each version.
- Alexandra Vecchio wanted to acknowledge that Arlene Mattison, for the record, has also made the suggestion that it seems appropriate to her to include someone who can study possibly additional fields acquisition as well.
- Nancy O'Connor stated that she is concerned about the timeline and not being able to produce at the end of it. J. Bain agreed.

- Wendy Sheridan Ames wants to read through the edits and suggests waiting till the next meeting to take a vote on this. She stated that she thinks this subcommittee, however it's formed, is really an education- and fact-based presentation by experts and at the end of the presentation by experts, there is a discussion the by committee. She wonders if that is how M. Toffel envisions this happening. Mike Toffel stated that he envisioned that the task force itself would be experts who would document what is known, and what is not known. He stated that it would not be that this Commission is working through the summer, it would maybe be one member or two members from this group and similarly from the advisory for public health. Wendy Sheridan Ames stated that she thinks of the memo from the Parks and Open Space Division, which felt very factual fact based and came both from department staff and also from consultants. It was a memo produced by our departments in cooperation with some consultants and she could see other panels that participate on this to similarly reach out to experts in their particular field. She stated that this has to be really well-coordinated. Alexandra Vecchio stated that W. Sheridan's interpretation of that memo is correct.
- Leigh Jackson stated that she just wanted to support the conversation a little bit and share that obviously Recreation wants to be supportive of whatever the Commission decides to do with voting this evening.
- Nancy O'Connor stated we would want to be voting in support or not in support of something that's accurate, so she thinks that we need to put this vote two weeks out when we talk about Article 26 as well.
- The Commission agreed to hold the vote.

Warrant Article 24 Petitioner Presentation, Public Hearing, and Possible Vote

- Clint Richmond addressed the commission. He is a longtime committee member for precinct six and a resident since 1985. His children were born and raised in Brookline, they played Brookline sports both in recreation and at high school, and some of them played on-field sports. He is a former High School soccer player and he has been a youth coach here in Brookline. He stated that his family, perhaps like yours, has several cancer survivors and he stated that one of the reasons we're bringing forth this article is to highlight the issues of health and the interrelated issues of health and the environment. He stated that recently there was a very disturbing peer-reviewed scientific article that he has shared with the Advisory Council on public health and will happily share with the Commission. This article is about how humans and the planet have crossed a planetary threshold in terms of exposure to synthetic chemicals which. These issues really can't be mitigated and

it's fair to make trade-offs, which we have and we will but we're doing it in the face of these health and environmental problems.

- Please see the attached presentation given by Clint Richmond here: <https://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/Index/2489>
- Nancy O'Connor and Clint Richmond discussed the changes that have been made to the Advisory Subcommittee regarding Skyline and Soule.
- Clint Richmond commended the town for switching to an Organic infill, but PFAS has been found in that infill as well.
- Mike Toffel stated that his presentation highlights the components of PFAS fields, and wonders if C. Richmond has any sense of what proportion of PFAS stays in the Brookline community or communities like Brookline that's caused by the turf fields versus all the other substances chemicals. He thinks that one might be misled to think its only turf fields as a source of a PFAS in our communities. C. Richmond stated that M. Toffel is correct. He stated that there are many sources of PFAS in Brookline and everywhere, but we don't know about the water because we're on MWRA and it has a very tiny amount of PFAS. He stated that we need to be consistent because this is a really dangerous chemical- it's not something you can make at home. He stated that it is a very complex chemical with many processes and that's also true of every ingredient in artificial turf. It's not easy to make plastic- there are a lot of additives in it. He stated that since we don't even know what the chemicals are it's really hard to gauge what percentage might be coming from PFAS. It is an impossible question.
- Alexandra Vecchio stated that she did invite some staff and some folks from Weston and Sampson Engineering to join us this evening. A. Vecchio introduced this staff and the engineers from Weston and Sampson.
- Antonia Bellalta stated that we are doing such a good job using coconut fill in the new synthetic turf that we have, and she was wondering if we should include Northeastern which is still using chrome rubber in their policy since it is a Brookline site. John Bain stated that it's privately owned, but we also use it. Wendy Sheridan Ames stated that there are lots of synthetic turf fields, besides that field in Brookline.
- Wendy Sheridan Ames stated that C. Richmond listed supporters of Warrant article 24 and wanted to point out that C. Richmond currently serves two of those supporters. Wendy Sheridan Ames stated that she struggled with some of the language and the explanations in this warrant article. Wendy Sheridan Ames stated that she noted six in particular in her email communication. She detailed a few of them for the Commission.

Wendy Sheridan Ames stated that this test that it's free of organics fluorine, she wonders if it is true that it doesn't identify PFAS, that it's a screening tool, not a method to be utilized for risk assessment and it's not standardized for analysis of solid material. She believes it is part of C. Richmond's 2027 tests that are going to be required, but wonders if there will be a different test by that point and that test may not actually be able to identify PFAS or the actual PFAS it finds. C. Richmond listed where the temperature studies are from that he has shared. He stated that the temperature studies are a little misleading and explained why. He doesn't think there's any disagreement about the surface temperature. The Tory data stated that the turf surface is hot, no matter what the infill is and that the blades are independent of the infill and the infill does not cool the blades. He stated that asphalt has a melting point, but artificial turf doesn't have a melting point.

- Clint Richmond discussed the conversation he has with staff regarding total organic fluorine. He stated that the EPA has developed a total organic flooring test that was supposed to be completed in 2027, so they are actively working on this test and there are labs today that offer that test. However, he stated that by then there might be more targeted, more accurate tests. He stated that the total organic fluorine test is useful for determining if it is PFAS or not. Wendy Sheridan Ames stated that the assumption is if that test comes back as yes there's a presence, then its C. Richmond's view is that it is assumed to have risk. Clint Richmond stated yes because it's a forever chemical. He stated that there are two things to be aware of, there's the general risk from all organic fluorine and then there's the specific risk from specific chemical species with their own toxicology and epidemiology and XO toxicology. He stated that we're protecting our drinking water but at the same time, we're emitting these into the environment, whether it's in the atmosphere of the water or the soil. Wendy Sheridan Ames stated that this PFAS is in furniture, carpet, textiles, rain gear, food containers, and food. It is in a lot of things we're in contact with every day, and from her perspective, she needs to understand the risk of two and a half synthetic turf fields and the impact that losing those fields has. She needs to weigh those risks because she feels that everything we do in life is a balance of risk assessment and that's really where she personally feels that she needs to make her decision based on that. Clint Richmond stated that the only thing he would add is that people have different risk tolerances. W. Sheridan asked if C. Richmond would consider separating the school vs the recreation issue. He stated that in a way that's why he wants the moratorium. He stated that we could further divide the restrictions to school grounds versus athletic fields that are not part of a school.
- Nancy O'Connor stated that's what worries her about Soule is it's down the line a little bit and knowing how the budgets work she is a little worried that 2027 isn't enough time for Soule. C. Richmond and N. O'Connor discussed the votes of the warrant articles by the school committee.
- Steve LaRosa stated that the total organic Fluorine analysis tells you all of the Fluorine associated with carbon atoms in a sample. What it can't do is tell us what

the concentration of those or what those individual compounds are. It is a good screening tool to see if you have organic fluorine in your sample, but unfortunately, right now you can't really figure out which PFAS they are.

- John Pan stated that he has a question and concern about the links of PFAS to the multiple cancers that C. Richmond showed in his presentation. He thinks this highlights the need for more scientific fact-based discussion. He has not seen any solid studies that generate a direct link and even the environmental studies that have tried to show a link, are from a critical scientific eye. They are not strong and the levels of exposure that are required would be much higher than kids would be exposed to by playing on the turf field. He stated that if you have any evidence to disprove that he would love to see that. He is concerned that we are presenting something that is not truly accurate as a reason to put such a broad ban on something. He is a little bit troubled by the comments that C. Richmond made that we can't find out from manufacturers what PFAS is in and we will never be able to find the evidence. He is for finding the truth.
- T. Mooney thanked C. Richmond for presenting tonight and for all the energy he is bringing to this topic. She thinks it's inspiring to see how much work C. Richmond and other petitioners have put into this. She stated that she lived in Phoenix for six years and lived on a property that had a lot of artificial turfs and there was an obvious risk and outcome associated with that. The amount of water that went into watering real grass in phoenix was certainly worse for the environment at the time with the tremendous drought that was there when she lived there. She wondered if C. Richmond's Feelings relate to other parts of our country or whether it's just specific to Brookline. She doesn't think we need to discuss that tonight, but to W. Sheridan Ames' point, there are a lot of risks and benefits that we need to weigh here. She thinks that we need to think about the benefits of the time that kids can spend on the fields playing and the number of sports and activities that can go on while we have these fields that can be used. She stated that, to her, having a couple of fields with turf seems potentially worth the risk that PFAS may or may not pose for children. She is in full support of what Mr. Pan said in regards to putting forth a full scientific study and conversation and committee that we were discussing with Warrant article 23 before we can make a decision with this warrant article. She thinks we need a lot more information and conversation before we can move forward here.
- Andrew Fischer stated that he would like to respond to Dr. Pan. He is not a doctor or scientist, but he is a lawyer and has been trained to evaluate what we know, what we don't know, and what we can conclude from what we know. The argument that the science isn't complete is not an argument to proceed. It is an argument to take caution, it's the argument that was perfected by the tobacco companies when they said we can't prove that it causes cancer and lots of people smoked for many, many years. It's the argument that we can't prove that carbon fuels cause climate change,

it is an argument that was perpetrated falsely by the energy companies and still lives. It has been to our detriment as we approach the point of no return on climate change. It's the argument that the chemical companies used where they created toxic fields like in Woburn saying, well, we can't prove that our chemicals are with closet. Andrew Fischer stated that the absence of proof is not a logical or reasonable reason to proceed, it is just the opposite. He stated that if we don't know what the risk is we're foolish to proceed and take the risk. He thinks M. Toffel is absolutely right when he says we need to evaluate and know what the risk is. He thinks the corollary to that is, that we need not keep doing the potentially dangerous thing until we know whether it's dangerous or not.

- A. Mattison stated that she does support this one article beyond the issue of PFAS. She thinks that it's relatively conservative in that it doesn't include skyline and Soule. She does hear Nancy in terms of timing. She stated that as a person who has student-athletes in her family that there's enough to be concerned about. She is convinced enough that Brookline is committed to climate change considerations in terms of the policies were making, and she sees artificial turf as an environmental issue, as well as a health issue. She is very concerned about the availability of fields for students and athletes in Brookline, but while we study we shouldn't go ahead and make a decision that's going to possibly contradict everything that we could learn from studying. She would like to see Article 23 expanded in terms of use of our fields currently, it's not an issue to her of how much money we're making by permitting, but when we permit private groups or groups outside of Brookline. A Mattison stated that our burden in Brookline is overuse of our fields, we hear it over and over again, so she wonders why we are even considering having any increased use ever. She doesn't understand that. She thinks studies should also include the possibility of increasing the number of our fields. She wonders if CPA can help. She thinks we need to proceed with caution and study. She thinks that we should pause and think that that's the wise route, thank you.
- J. Bain and N. O'Connor feel that the Commission should pause, discuss this briefly, and vote on the at the same time as the other warrant articles at the special meeting in a few weeks. W/. Sheridan agrees and would like the opportunity to read the change of language to warrant article 24 which was emailed just before the meeting.
- Clint Richmond stated that if Nancy doesn't think the date is sufficient, please provide the date that will ensure that Soule can be covered. N. O'Connor thinks it is something we should look at. C. Richmond stated that the warrant article can be modified, but obviously, it's much better to get it right, the first time.
- E. Gallentine stated that sometimes projects shift in the CIP based on the big picture town needs, and so it could be that the replacement for Soule is exempt and that a specific date isn't provided necessarily in the language. Wendy Sheridan Ames stated town meeting still has to agree to fund it all.

- J. Pan wanted to respond to Mr. Fisher's comments. He appreciates his comments. His point was mainly that using language linking PFAS directly to not just one cancer but multiple cancers seems to him to be a tactic that he doesn't feel comfortable with and that from his own personal perspective, and also from a physician's perspective of not the right route to go. He stated that smoking and the links of tobacco to cancer is not an apples-to-apples comparison.
- N. O'Connor stated that the advisory council and public health will be taking up articles 23 and 24 on Thursday at 530. A. Vecchio stated that the Advisory Council full committee will meet on these warrant articles she believes at seven o'clock on Thursday as well.

Other Business

- Leigh Jackson stated that she went to the Select Board tonight for a discussion on the potential move of Brookline day for 2022 to Coolidge corner. The Select Board is in full support of us trying this out. She stated that we will likely move in that direction and just wanted to give the Park and Recreation Commission that update.

Adjourn

- J. Bain moved to adjourn. Seconded by N. O'Connor. All in favor. A roll call vote was taken.