

MINUTES - Meeting of RTM Health/Human Services; Education and Parks/Rec Committees held on June 28, 2018 in Town Hall.

DISCUSSION SUBJECTS - The Committees met in what was primarily an information gathering session to review( in the context of a proposed ordinance which would ban crumb rubber and other hazardous materials as filler materials in any turf playing field used in Westport) the current maintenance and replacement plans for our turf fields and the research data in existence which calls into question the risks of crumb rubber in contact with humans. Presentations were heard from Jen Fava Westport Parks & Rec Director and noted research experts on hazardous materials Dr. David Brown and Ms. Patricia Taylor.

IN ATTENDANCE - RTM Moderator Velma Heller and the following RTM Committee members (note the letters H, E, & P next to names referring to their Committee memberships).

Jack Klinge - H, P, E      A. Colabella - H      D. Cady- H      W. Batteau - H

C. Tait H, P      C. Rea - P, E      K. Schneeman - H, E      M. Friedman - E

L. Karff - E, P      K. M. Purcell - P      B. Briggs - E      N. Phillips - E      E.Lautenberg - E

There was a quorum for each Committee although no votes were planned or taken.

GUESTS PRESENT - J. Steinberg - State Senator      D. Bergman & S.Prince - constituents

#### DISCUSSION

\* Introduction by meeting Chair Jack Klinge re objectives and desired flow of discussions/presentations

\* Jen Fava summarized current status of Westport school and rec playing fields and presented active plans for proceeding with maintenance/replacement of 4 turf fields over the next several years ( 2 to be done by Summer 2019 and the others later). An RFQ has been submitted for bids and it appears a leading candidate has been selected to begin compiling all necessary and requested data prior to a formal RFP for the work. Ms. Fava plans to hold public hearings in addition to meeting with town bodies Bof Ed, Bof Fin, PW and recreation groups like PAL, WSA and WLA. There was broad discussion re timetable, questions to be answered and specific info of field materials and their safety.

\* Dr. David Brown, Westport resident and widely respected expert on environmental and human health issues involving hazardous materials, spoke at length about all the research he had been involved with and its implications on any decisions the Town would be making on turf field materials. Dr. Brown basically stated that "while there exists no perfect correlation between crumb rubber in fields and contracted human illnesses, any reasonable person would have to be concerned about the real possibility of a health hazard present in crumb rubber". In other words : "why take the chance". Copies detailing much of Dr. Browns' research and other studies are available from Wendy Batteau Chair of the RTM Environmental Committee.

\* Patricia Taylor, a published researcher on the same topics as Dr. Brown, strongly intimated that kids should never play on crumb rubber turf fields given the potential risks. Ms. Taylor cited several local towns which had already banned crumb rubber and advocated for a return to only grass fields or turf with a demonstrably safer fill material.

\* There was a lively discussion after both presentations and the Committees concluded that much valuable information had been presented and that more Committee work needed to be done.

#### SOME NEXT STEPS

\* Jen Fava will prepare a timetable of necessary events sequencing final RFQ recommendations, hearings and design specs required prior to RFP release leading to completion of 2 fields by Summer 2019.

\* RTM Ordinance Committee will prepare recommendation for individual Committee discussion and vote prior to item on RTM September agenda.

\* RTM Ed Committee will quickly work to involve Board of Ed to clarify responsibility for maintenance and replacement of fields. All Committees will look to Parks & Rec for status updates and information. For example details on neighboring town field decisions and rationale; evaluation of alternatives to crumb rubber economics; and additional as needed.

\* The meeting left open the option of setting up a study group to evaluate a change back to only grass fields.

The reporter, Jack Klinge thanks all presenters and participants for making the meeting most informative and worthwhile.