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March 14, 2019

The Westport Parks and Recreation Commission and the Board of Education held a joint meeting on Wednesday, March 13, 2019 @7:39pm in the Staples High School Cafeteria.

Members Present:

Parks and Recreation Commission: Charles Haberstroh, Chairman; Edward Iannone, Steve Axthelm

Board of Education: Mark Mathias, Chairman; Elaine Whitney, Jeannie Smith, Vik Muktavaram

Members Absent:

Parks and Recreation Commission: Alec Stephens, Karen Hess

Board of Education: Neil Phillips, Candice Savin, Karen Kleine

Also Present:

Jennifer Fava, Parks & Recreation Director; Rick Giunta, Deputy Director

Dan Kroeber, Milone & MacBroom Engineer; Kevin Fuselier, Milone & MacBroom Landscape Architect, along with members of the public

The meeting began at 7:39pm with Mark Mathias, Chair of the Board of Education welcoming everyone to the meeting with a call to order and the Pledge of Allegiance. Mark Mathias stated that this was the second combined meeting with the Board of Education and the Parks and Recreation Commission to review turf replacement options, surfacing material for the track and tentative schedule relative to the replacement of the four synthetic turf fields and Staples track.

Mark Mathias introduced Jennifer Fava, Director of Parks and Recreation. Jennifer Fava gave an update, by first stating that bids were received on March 1 from five different companies, and they were very competitive. The synthetic turf working group met on March 5 and reviewed the bids along with the pricing and discussed the types of infills and fields to be selected, as well as reviewing the various alternates, which were bid out separately. Each field was reviewed with that criteria, along with the upcoming schedule. As a result of that meeting, DeRosa Sports Construction came in as the lowest bidder. All the bids were included in the packet distributed to the members, and will be reviewed tonight. The working group determined that the infill selected for Staples, Wakeman B and PJ Romano fields would be the TPE infill. For the Ginny Parker Field, the shorter pile and silica sand was selected, as it creates a superior surface for field hockey. It was decided to keep all of the alternates. Dan Kroeber from Milone & MacBroom explained in more detail. It was also stated that the first scheduled field trip was snowed out, however, Marty Lisevick took some athletes to Greenwich Academy. They have two fields that are being recommended, the TPE as well as a similar field for the field hockey. The response was very positive from the athletes regarding both types of fields.

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Dan Kroeber from Milone & MacBroom stated that he will review each base project along with the estimated cost and then review each one of the alternates that they received pricing for and review the project cost for each one of the four sites.

Staples Stadium:

- 1) Completely replace the current track.
- 2) Replace the synthetic turf (System B – TPE, was chosen by the group over System A – Organic and System C – Envirofill) and add shock pad.
- 3) Include some minor improvements in the long jump event area by adding a third sand pit and rebuilding the pole vault jumping event outside the track.
- 4) Add additional ball safety netting. Netting that will go by the end of the field that will allow for better joint use of the facility.
- 5) Alternates include:
 - a. Remove and replace the chain link fence around the perimeter of the track.
 - b. Remove and replace bituminous walkway around the home bleachers.
 - c. Installing a bituminous walkway around the east perimeter of the track.
 - d. Add 3 sand pit covers.
 - e. Install chain link fence north of visitor bleacher.
 - f. Add elevated accessible seating platform and ramp at visitor bleacher.

Base Project = \$1,751,643.00

Base Contract + Alternates = \$1,984,293.00

Wakeman B:

- 1) Replace the synthetic turf (System B – TPE, was chosen by the group over System A – Organic and System C – Envirofill) and add shock pad.
- 2) Alternates include:
 - a. Add concrete access points to field & double gates
 - b. Add concrete bleacher pad
 - c. Add concrete walkway against field edge
 - d. Replace perimeter curb and chain link fence & gates

Base Project = \$785,780.00

Base Contract + Alternates = \$944,260.00

Ginny Parker:

- 1) Replace the synthetic turf (shorter fiber height) and add shock pad.
- 2) Alternate to be included:
 - a. Add a 20' high removable ball safety net

Base Project = \$715,383.00

Base Contract + Alternate = \$727,503.00

Note, there was a price to install a field hockey specific turf & E-Layer system for an additional cost of \$375,720.00. This was not selected by the working group.

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PJ Romano:

- 1) Replace the synthetic turf (System B – TPE, was chosen by the group over System A – Organic and System C – Envirofill) and add shock pad.
- 2) Alternate to be included:
 - a. Add concrete bleacher pad

Base Project = \$964,853.00
 Base Contract + Alternate = \$988,588.00

Recap:

Staples Stadium w/alternates	\$1,984,293.00
Wakeman B w/alternates	\$944,260.00
Ginny Parker w/alternate	\$727,503.00
PJ Romano w/alternate	\$988,588.00
Total Contract w/alternates	\$4,644,644.00
Construction Contingency (7.5%)	\$348,348.30
Project Construction Total	\$4,992,992.30
Milone & MacBroom Fees (not yet appropriated)	\$67,000.00
Appropriation Request	\$5,040,350.98

Tentative Schedule:

Board of Finance (First meeting)	March 25
Board of Finance (Second meeting with vote)	April 3
RTM	4/23*
Board of Selectmen	TBD*
Anticipated start of construction	May 31
Wakeman B completion (90 days)	August 29
Staples Stadium completion (120 days)	September 28
Anticipated start of construction on Ginny Parks and PJ Romano Fields	Summer 2020

* Meeting dates being finalized

Parks and Recreation Commissioner Questions/Comments:

Charles Haberstroh asked if the total dollar amount of the Appropriation was correct, as there were two different dollar amounts for the chain link fence at the Staples Stadium. Dan Kroeber confirmed that the total Appropriation Request of \$5,040,350.98 was correct.

Charles Haberstroh asked why the contingency is at 7.5%. Dan Kroeber said that a lot of the cost is tied to the product itself (turf, surface, etc.), and those are set numbers. The contingency comes into the actual site work, where they may come across something unforeseen. Charles Haberstroh suggested for the Board of Finance presentation, could Dan Kroeber separate out the amount where we would need a contingency on, and do a specific percentage on that risk, rather than on the whole amount?

Edward Iannone asked Dan Kroeber if he could review the current fields vs. the proposed fields, specifically regarding the padding. Dan Kroeber responded that the existing fields are approximately 10

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to 12 years old. The infill is a combination of sand and SBR rubber. SBR rubber provides some resiliency when athletes fall on the field and provides some safety factors. When we switch over to TPE or any of the other infills being considered, they don't have the same resiliency factor that rubber has. These new fields require a shock pad which has a warranty of 24 years. It is designed to last for 3 cycles of turf replacements, as the typical synthetic turf carpet lasts for 8 years. The biggest benefit is safety to the athletes. If fields are not maintained, it can get very compacted. As fields get compacted and harder, the G-Max rating gets higher. When a G-Max rating is 200 or higher, the athletes are likely to get a concussion. Brock (the manufacturer of the shock pad) guarantees that their shock pad ratings will never get higher than a G-Max of 120.

Charles Haberstroh asked if any of the other FCIAC fields have the same infill that we have and how does it relate to our competitiveness? Marty Lisevick responded that most schools in the area have at least one artificial field and most of them are crumb rubber. Yesterday, when they visited Greenwich Academy, which has the same surfaces, the athletes were very impressed with both the fields.

Jennifer Fava stated that three infills were reviewed by the working team, which determined their choice, which was the TPE infill. They were: TPE, Envirofill and an organic infill. Envirofill was ruled out due to the significant cost. Also discussed was the organic infill. There was concern regarding potential need to water the field, and how much or little water would be needed. Also, discussed was how fast it would degrade, due to it being a natural compound, and how often the infill would need to be replenished. There were concerns about weeds, and other organic matter growing in the infill, along with the additional maintenance which may be needed with this type of field. Jennifer Fava also stated that she has spoken with several schools in the area regarding their synthetic turf fields to discover the pros and cons for the different infills used. The working group decided on the TPE infill, as it's similar to what our athletes are used to playing on regarding look and feel.

Board of Education Questions/Comments:

Elaine Whitney is in support of the add-ons for the field, as they add value and maintainability, increase accessibility and are cost effective. Also, she is in support of the permanent lining of the Staples Field for both girls and boys sports.

Elaine Whitney asked about the range of utility regarding the Ginny Parker Field as it relates to the proposed baseline field vs. the potential upgraded field with other sports. Dan Kroeber stated that the system there now is better suited for all purpose sports. If the upgraded field was used it would be great for girls field hockey and probably the girls lacrosse. However, it is not recommend to for soccer, boy's lacrosse or any contact sport. That surface is not as multi-purpose as Staples and Wakeman B.

Elaine Whitney asked about the current use of the Ginny Parker Field and what portion of the time it is currently used for field hockey vs. girls lacrosse vs. other purposes? Marty Lisevick responded that last year's season girl's lacrosse (Varsity and JV) played all of their games at Ginny Parker, with the exception of one game.

Elaine Whitney asked since those two sports are predominately played on Ginny Parker, do the lighting conditions of the field compromise the ability to play both Varsity and JV games on the same day? Marty Lisevick stated that the lighting would affect the playing of field hockey. Elaine Whitney asked if one game could be played at Ginny Parker and one game at the Staples Stadium field, so that both teams could get in a full safe game with lighting? Marty Lisevick responded absolutely, yes.

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Elaine Whitney also asked with this potential upgrade, the field would be great for hockey, but reduce the utility of the field overall. If they improve this recommendation tonight, would there be a window for them to reevaluate and weigh in on a potential upgrade? Jennifer Fava stated that if we were looking to go to the field hockey specific, there are other items that we need to look at. There was discussion last time of watering the field. The field can be played on without watering, but we don't know if that's what people are looking for. We have time before the field begins construction to have some discussion, even if the fund raising happens. It would also be key that the girl's lacrosse try out that field. The girl's field hockey team did take a field trip and tried the field out, but not sure if the girl's lacrosse has had that opportunity. If water is being considered, do we have the capacity to get the water to the field? We should come back and have further discussion before that decision is finalized. Elaine Whitney wanted to clarify that tonight the Board of Education would be approving a request of our funding bodies for the base recommendation and have an opportunity to have another discussion (more vetting, etc.), before there would be a potential upgrade to that field and notify the funding bodies that that is a possibility, but there is no authorization to it until we have a subsequent meeting. Jennifer Fava responded that it has been made explicit to them that the additional charge would not be on the town, or the taxpayers. It would be a fund raising effort.

Elaine Whitney inquired about the visiting bleachers. Is there a benefit to the bituminous walkway on the other side of the track or not, because of the fencing and does it make sense to add any additional lighting? Also, Elaine Whitney wanted to confirm that the goal posts will be replaced at the Staples Stadium and be repurposed at the PJ Romano field? Dan Kroeber said that Milone & MacBroom did review the walkway area and the fence, however after speaking with Laddie Lawrence about how the track operates regarding the javelin runway, a fence could not be put there. There will be an access point through the track and around part of the fence. Edward Iannone also pointed out that the handicapped ramp is serpentine on the right side of the bleacher.

Elaine Whitney also asked about long term maintenance cost. Dan Kroeber said that if we went with organic vs. the other infills the board wanted to compare apples to apples. But due to the working committee moving towards the TPE option, which long term is a cheaper product to maintain, to go from organic to TPE was an estimated \$60,000.00 increase. Also, the organic infill would have required replenishment every year to two. Milone and MacBroom's assessment was that there are no cost savings. It is estimated that organic infill would cost an additional \$10,000 to \$15,000 per field, every other year, over the life of the fields to replenish the infill. Not to mention that there would have been additional migration of the infill, which would require more maintenance. In terms of the selection of TPE, there will be less maintenance required relative to the organic infill.

Elaine Whitey asked about the Ginny Parker Field and the potential upgrade for field hockey. That is a big price ticket, but amongst the bidders, was there any significant difference? If we were going to go to the higher end, was there any major difference in the vendors? Dan Kroeber stated that there was a small difference. DeRosa Sport's was \$375,000, and Applied Landscape Technologies (2nd bidder), was \$320,000. The cost would increase significantly if we went with another company for that type of field.

Jeannie Smith thanked the working committee for all their efforts. She is really thankful for the shock pad, which will bring more safety to the athletes. Parents have asked about restrooms and is there a possibility to create permanent restroom facilities at Staples? Jennifer Fava said it was discussed briefly, however it is outside the scope of the replacement of the track and fields. However, the concrete pad being created will have space to place the porta-johns on.

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Mark Mathias stated that two fields are being completed this summer and two fields will be completed in 2020. Are the costs locked in? Dan Kroeber confirmed that the costs are locked in through completion of the project.

Mark Mathias also inquired whether there was a state reimbursement or any reduced costs due to lower maintenance for these new fields. Dan Kroeber stated that he didn't know of any state funding that would be available, due to the field being replaced. In terms of upcoming maintenance compared to the current maintenance costs, specifically regarding the track, you won't have to repair the cracks that keep surfacing. A new track will require less maintenance. In terms of the fields, they will require similar maintenance to what is being done today.

Parks and Recreation Commissioner Questions/Comments:

Charles Haberstroh asked when the field hockey team visited Greenwich Academy, did they play on the enhanced field or the field that is being proposed? Dan Kroeber stated that Greenwich's field is similar to the one being proposed, not the enhanced. Marty Lisevisk stated that two Captains who visited the field were very impressed with the field.

Charles Haberstroh requested that in terms of the funding bodies, he would like to recommend that the current maintenance dollars be broken out and create a projected maintenance cost moving forward for the new fields. Also, it was questioned why we are working on two fields for this summer, and two field in 2020? Why not complete one field this year and three fields next year? Jennifer Fava stated that these fields need to be replaced. They will not pass the G-Max testing much longer, along with the fibers wearing down. The two oldest fields (12 years old) will be replaced first and then the following two fields. Also, the Staples track requires the longest time, due to the pouring and curing of the asphalt. This will always be the case, no matter the timing. We have tried to expedite this schedule, which is why we are having all these expedited meetings. The original meeting schedule started work mid-June or later, this expedited scheduled gives us an estimated three week jump on the timing.

Elaine Whitey mentioned that we are expediting our processes, but the spring track season is the critical constraint at this end. Is that correct? Jennifer Fava stated that we are trying to accommodate lacrosse and football schedules as best we can.

Elaine Whitney asked about the spring Lacrosse and the fall football schedule, and whether the coaches are comfortable with the timing? Marty Lisevisk said he has great flexibility from Coach Koshansky and Coach Lawrence regarding the schedule.

Public Questions/Comment:

Ian Tapsall, Staples High School Field Hockey Coach wanted to thank everyone here tonight. He has attended the meetings and is impressed with the efficiency of these meetings. Ian would like to pursue the higher performance field hockey turf. The type of surface wanted is the same type that Trinity has for both lacrosse and field hockey. It is also the same surface that the University of Maryland has. They are ranked 19th in the nation. Staples Field Hockey had a 23 game winning streak, and they haven't lost at Ginny Parker in two and a half seasons. The reason they don't lose at Ginny Parker is the way the field is set up over the years, it's become very flush and very fast. They need a very fast, very tight field, and are more concerned about ball speed, than any other sport. Tonight the lacrosse and the field hockey booster clubs are meeting to discuss the \$375,000 that they need to raise and they are hopeful they can raise that money. Is the \$375,000 an approximate number? Can we make sure that's the correct number? Concerned that DeRosa Sports hasn't completed an official field hockey project. It's important that this

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turf be laid properly. In terms of usage for the field hockey lacrosse turf, we have a town program with 175 members, PAL lacrosse uses it and Ginny Parker is always used.

Mitch Thaw, 53 Maple Avenue North had questions for Elaine Whitney. By putting the women's lacrosse lines on the football field, is the plan to migrate more women's games there? If that is the case, is Ginny Parker field getting enough usage? Do the other FCIAC fields have the women's lines as well? Is there a reason if they do or don't? If they don't, is it because it makes it more difficult for the other participating sports playing on the field? In regards to adding the sand pit, is there a sand catcher there?

Sarah Manning, 24 North Avenue wanted to say thank you to the town for prohibiting the use of toxic crumb rubber on our town fields. It is not just the infill that is a concern, these fields have not been proven safe and come with many known hazards to human health and the environment. There are no studies showing that coconut is safe. The blades in the sublayers are a problem, not just the infill. Children will be inhaling the fine particle dust regardless of the infill used. The dust contains numerous chemicals known to be toxic, including lead which has been found in numerous samples of synthetic turf field carpets, even as the industry promised to stop using lead to dye the plastic grass. Would like to see natural grass used in our fields. Pro soccer players and pro baseball players refuse to play on synthetic turf.

David Lyme, Staples High School Rugby Coach wanted to make sure everyone understood that there are 85 kids in the Rugby spring program, we use the field every day. The Staples field is like playing on concrete. We had four concussions last season, of which three were due to just hitting the ground. The fields need to be replaced now.

Michel Cammeyer, Westport Soccer Association is in full support of replacing the Wakeman B field. He would also like to mention that U9, U10, U11 U12 will now be able to use the fields.

Dan Woog, Staples High School Boys Soccer Coach wanted to thank everyone for their dedication to this project. Anyone who has been to the Wakeman B field knows that it is used continuously and it needs to be replaced. It gets a tremendous amount of use and it is in very bad shape.

Michelle Howard, 199 Bayberry Lane wanted to say thank you for expediting the process.

Dan Kroeber, Milone & MacBroom Engineer responded to the public's comments.

- 1) Is the \$375,000 a solid number for the Turf & E-Layer system? Yes, it is. At the last meeting the bids were not back for review. The surface was part of the bid and it is a good number. We need to keep in mind if we need to upgrade the water service, which hasn't been looked at. The surface doesn't specifically require water, but it may be determined that water should be used to get the maximum playability of the surface.
- 2) DeRosa Sports is a general sports contractor. They do not install the turf. The turf that they are providing comes from Field Turf. Field Turf is one of the biggest names in the synthetic turf industry. They install various turf fields. Their product is called Field Hockey Gold, it is similar to the product used at Trinity. Field Turf will be doing the installation. DeRosa Sports will be laying the stone base below the pad and turf. Their surface work is phenomenal.
- 3) Regarding the football comments. The Staples Stadium will have more flexibility by lining if for girl's lacrosse. Should Ginny Parker not be available, there is the flexibility to go to the Staples Stadium.
- 4) Regarding the sand pits and do we have sand catchers? A sand catcher is a 2ft grated system outside of the sand pit that catches the sand when it splashes. In this case, there was no room to install the sand catchers.

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- 5) Regarding Sarah Manning's concerns about environmental health and safety. Milone & MacBroom makes sure they are aware of all research that is available regarding health and safety. They often get asked about the safety of these fields. The State of Connecticut and Department of Public Health has completed a study and they have said that these fields are safe. There have been studies in California, and all across the country that have been done by state governments, and it has been determined that synthetic turf is safe. With all the studies that Milone & MacBroom have completed, they have not found any direct correlation between cancer in children and synthetic turf. Also, there is no peer reviewed studies that they are aware of that connects these fields to cancer in children. They have heard those discussion points on many occasions, but they are not aware of any scientific connection.
- 6) In terms of lead. There was a lead issue in synthetic turf during the first generation of turf (about 12 years ago). They did find that the fiber itself had a higher lead content than is acceptable. Industry doubled back, reviewed how they were making the fiber. Milone & MacBroom requires that companies provide the amount of lead content in their product and it needs to be below the threshold for Milone and MacBroom to use their product.
- 7) In terms of playing on natural grass. Everyone would agree that natural grass is a great surface. However, the issue is when it rains, the field can be out of play 2 or 3 days before the field drains. This causes either delays or cancelled games, along with rescheduling of games. That is why people turned to synthetic fields. The reliability is that you can always play when it's raining and after it stops raining. The consistency of the surface is also reliable, and helps prevent injuries. Regarding pro baseball players refusing to use synthetic turf is false. There are many synthetic fields, such as the Arizona Diamondbacks. They just converted their stadium to synthetic turf this year. Any field inside a dome is synthetic turf. The statement that pro soccer players are refusing to play on synthetic fields due to cancer concern is probably more based on the playability of the fields. The rollability of the ball on natural grass is the best.
- 8) Regarding the rugby comment. With the addition of the E-Layer and shock pad beneath the field, it will result in a more consistent surface. There will be more flexibility for the U9, U10, U11 and U12 teams to play.

Board of Education Questions/Comments:

Elaine Whitney stated that it is great to have this joint meeting with the Parks and Recreation Commission. She is in agreement that the fields should be lined for girl's sports as well as boys. Ginny Parker should be made for multiple sports.

Parks and Recreation Commissioner Questions/Comments:

Charles Haberstroh stated that when his children were growing up they played at Doubleday before it was a synthetic field and it was laden with goose droppings.

Edward Iannone wanted to address the health concerns. There are other risks concerned with not being active. Obesity rates among teenagers (12 to 19 year olds) is approaching 20%. Type II diabetes rates rose 6% last year among teenage girls. These are real concerns. We need synthetic turf fields for our athletes.

Steve Axthelm wanted to express his thanks to the working group for the incredible diligence of looking into all the options. He is particularly pleased about the attention regarding concussions.

Edward Iannone made a comment about the field hockey field. The improved field (option 2), has a very, very short pile. You need to play in sneakers, as you can't wear cleats. Players sometimes don't

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have the proper shoes and will be sent home, which would be of concern. You can't play on that turf without the proper shoes, and this may pose a problem for visiting teams.

Upon a motion by Elaine Whitney, seconded by Jeannie Smith, and passed 4-0 it was

RESOLVED: that the Board of Education supports the replacement of the synthetic turf fields (2019 – Staples Stadium Field and Wakeman B Field, 2020 – Ginny Parker Field and PJ Romano Field) and the Staples Stadium Track (2019) as proposed, including all alternates, for a total of \$5,040,400.00 as discussed at the meeting of March 13, 2019.

Upon a motion by Edward Iannone, seconded by Steve Axthelm, and passed 3-0 it was

RESOLVED: that the Parks and Recreation Commission supports the replacement of the synthetic turf fields (2019 – Staples Stadium Field and Wakeman B Field, 2020 – Ginny Parker Field and PJ Romano Field) and the Staples Stadium Track (2019) as proposed, including all alternates, for a total of \$5,040,400.00 as discussed at the meeting of March 13, 2019.

Upon a motion by Mark Mathias, seconded by Jeannie Smith, the meeting adjourned at 9:35pm.

Upon a motion by Steve Axthelm, seconded by Edward Iannone, the meeting adjourned at 9:35pm.

Respectfully,
Debbie Detmer, Recording Secretary