

From: [Tartaglia, Michael](#)
To: [Tartaglia, Michael](#)
Subject: Artificial Turf
Date: Friday, September 27, 2024 12:07:50 PM
Attachments: [FINAL ltr to P&Z re Artificial Turf.pdf](#)

Dear Planning and Zoning Commissioners:

Earlier this year I sent you a letter detailing the hazards of artificial turf. Besides the risk of PFAS and microplastic contamination, one of the main risks described in the letter is the increased risk of flooding due to the compaction of the soil and the addition of a membrane. For your convenience, an additional copy of the letter is attached.

In fact, the Town of Wilton experienced that precise problem a few weeks ago when its artificial turf field (and surrounding facilities) were flooded following a storm that dumped significant rain around the state. According to the [Town's athletic director](#), the field was "a lake" with mud and logs and coconut infill everywhere—and with water under the turf and "bubbling" up in spots. The cost to repair is now estimated to exceed \$200,000, and that does not include the cost of fixing the track which was also damaged. Moreover, according to [the latest report](#), the field will not reopen for at least another week. Lest you think that this is an isolated event, you should note that this was the second time in three years that the field was damaged by heavy rains and rendered unusable. Indeed, following a storm in 2021, the field was closed for six weeks. Climate change is clearly wreaking havoc with these fields and creating significant drainage issues.

The purpose of this letter is twofold:

1. To once again emphasize the drainage and other risks associated with artificial turf; and
2. To ask that P&Z impose a moratorium on the use of all types of artificial turf in Westport, including the new field(s) to be installed at the new Long Lots Elementary School. That neighborhood is already plagued by drainage issues, which will no doubt be exacerbated by the proposed removal of the Community Gardens (which currently acts like a giant sponge) and the increase in impermeable surface, especially during construction.

We were lucky a few weeks ago—at least compared to Wilton, Southbury, and other towns—but our luck is bound to run out at some point and it is not fair to ask the neighbors to assume the increased drainage risk associated with this product. Nor is it fair to ask residents to drink contaminated water or breathe microplastics—just so that athletes can get more playing time—a rationale that I note may no longer hold water (pun intended) given the post-storm downtime associated with these turf fields.

I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Valerie Seiling Jacobs

VALERIE SEILING JACOBS

11 Compo Parkway

Westport, CT 06880

203.222.8867 (H)

860.490.7800 (C)

valeriseilingjacobs@gmail.com