

Programs & Services Committee Report

City of Newton In City Council

Wednesday, March 3, 2021

Present: Councilors Krintzman (Chair), Humphrey, Ryan, Albright, Wright, and Baker

Absent: Councilors Noel and Greenberg

Also Present: Councilors Norton, Leary, and Markiewicz; Justin Traxler, Newton Athletic Fields

Foundation; Byron Dunker, Parks and Recreation Commission

City Staff: Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer; Nicole Banks, Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Culture; Carol Stapleton, Rec Program Director; Luis Perez Demorizi, Open Space Coordinator; Sheila Butts, Permit Specialist; Nathan Giacalone, Committee Clerk

#61-21 Request for response to resident petition calling for investment in athletic fields

COUNCILORS NORTON AND LEARY requesting a response to the 1000+ petition by

Newton residents calling for investment in Newton athletic fields.

Action: Programs & Services Held 6-0

Notes: The Committee was joined by Commissioner Banks, Ms. Stapleton, Mr. Demorizi, Mr. Yeo, and the petition organizer, Mr. Traxler.

Chair Krintzman introduced the item, saying that it was docketed to respond to a petition signed by over 1000 Newton residents calling for improvements to be made to the city's athletic fields.

Commissioner Banks began with a brief summary to describe the efforts the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department (PRC) has undertaken on this effort. It is a subject she said has been discussed since she was appointed in early 2020. Commissioner Banks said that PRC is responsible for over 75 acres of athletic fields. This includes three synthetic turf fields between both high schools as well as six systems of field lighting. A fields subcommittee has been meeting since October and has been exploring solutions to the field quality problem. It has been making good progress and she said she would highlight some of the identified problems and solutions.

The first example described was that many fields lack proper irrigation. These fields could use a well or tapping into nearby city buildings for water if possible. Another problem identified was poor turf quality, such as bare spots, wear patterns, and weeds. A third challenge is field overuse, which directly relates to turf quality. Typically, there is no opportunity to rest fields, however the

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pandemic has made this possible. Possible solutions to mitigating overuse include adding fields at new sites and improving those of too poor quality to be used regularly. One example would be targeting Oak Hill for improvement with some possible layouts allowing for three full size multi-use fields. Other similarly underused fields could be repurposed to achieve more multi-use space. Light systems combined with artificial turf will also reduce the overuse on grass fields.

The Fields Subcommittee has also been reviewing funding. PRC had to level fund its city budget appropriation last year due to COVID, but Commissioner Banks said that this year the department is hoping for an increase. Another option to raise more revenue is to increase user fees to current market rates. The youth sports groups can also reexamine their fee structures, such as whether it would make sense to charge fees based on an hourly, per season, or per player structure. New rental fees could be implemented by the summer and other fee changes could be in place by the fall. Large projects such as turf carpers and lighting upgrades could be supported through capital funding requests, with CPA funds being a possible support source.

Discussion:

Q: How much revenue would raising the fees generate?

A: Fields are prioritized for use first by schools, then youth athletics so there is not as much rental revenue. Comparing to 2019 as the last year with regular rates, the new fees would not be that large of an increase, but this would be the first increase in about 20 years. Using the 2019 data, the grass fields generate about \$36,000 in revenue per year while the turf fields generate about \$30,000. New fields would about double these revenues.

Q: What did you say the new additions to the fields would be this year?

A: PRC is preparing for budget meetings and fields are an area that the department will be asking for a minimal increase.

Q: What is the percentage of the \$25,000 increase?

A: This would be about a 30% increase.

Q: How do you calculate field maintenance costs and determine priorities?

A: The Superintendent of Grounds Maintenance puts the budget for this together. Irrigation and fencing are examples of the areas that are budgeted for. If there is not enough money in the budget to fix everything that needs it, the department waits for the next fiscal year. The superintendent then takes the budget appropriation and prioritizes with it, emphasizing things like mowing that need to happen throughout the year. Seeding is an example of something determined by need. Sports groups also put money into the fields. The field maintenance budget is about \$50,000 and used for different areas including irrigation and fencing. The athletic field maintenance is budget is \$75,000 with the hope of increasing it in the next budget.

Q: Are there specific projects in mind for the CPA funds?

A: Yes, we are looking at some and pulling them together from several different lists such as capital projects and from the Open Space and Recreation Plan. There are also suggestions being taken from stakeholders. The goal is to bring 2-3 projects forward to CPA in order to bring additional field space online. PRC is currently prioritizing the projects, such as those requested by the leagues. However more preparations need to be done before formal proposals are made.

Q: Does the proposed fee increase make enough of a difference in the maintenance budget? Would the budget increase allow for a lighting upgrade?

A: The lighting upgrade is needed as some of these systems are approaching the end of their life. Using a holistic approach, the goal is to raise amenities like lights to a better standard, but it is up to the city to improve the maintenance funds. It also depends on what level of quality the goal is. A lighting upgrade at Forte Park could be funded with mitigation funds from the abutting developer. Partnerships could help bump up this and other projects.

C: CPC funds are supposed to be for new needs and not replacements, so be careful when anticipating which of these applications will be successful.

A: These are renovations, not maintenance projects. Many Massachusetts communities use CPC for renovation projects of medium and large size.

C: Field quantity is also a problem along with field quality, demonstrated by the high use and all-season sports. The city should be thinking about creating more green space, such as at sites like Crescent Street and the Waban Park Reservoir. These should not be thought of as opportunities to build more parking lots or city buildings in the future.

C: The fields are in such poor condition due to decades of underfunding that it will take years to improve them. There is no need to worry right now about getting them to the top quality, but rather within the next two to three months there should be 2 potential CPA projects with achievable goals.

Q: How is PRC calculating the requested maintenance budgets of the fields?

A: Using industry standards, the cost is between \$3,000 and \$5,000 per acre. PRC is trying to benchmark with other communities to see how Newton compares.

Q: What is PRC currently spending on field maintenance?

A: The department currently spends about \$1,000 per acre, and other areas budgeted for include irrigation, contractual work, and supplies. User fees are another important funding aspect of this budget.

Q: Should non-Newton based groups be allowed to continue using the fields considering the overuse? Is there a better way to charge them if the current fee system is not enough?

A: Tier 5 fees are hourly and can also charge percentage of the clinic program's revenue. There should be a fee structure for these clinic programs as well. PRC will retain the ability to close fields temporarily due to factors like weather and overuse to meet the goal of resting fields.

After the Councilors were finished with Commissioner Banks' portion of the meeting, Mr. Traxler presented on the fields petition itself.

Mr. Traxler began, saying that he has lived in Newton for 20 years where he has raised his family. He is currently the president of Newton Girls Soccer (NGS), the largest all female soccer program in New England. About two years ago, Mr. Traxler said that he realized something needed to be done about the poor condition of Newton's athletic fields. He explained that in the 40 years of

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NGS' existence, Newton athletics have changed dramatically with the addition of more athletes, more seasons, and longer seasons, all with far more organization than in the past. Recognizing the need for community support, Mr. Traxler helped launch the Newton Athletic Fields Foundation (NAFF) which now represents about 3500 athletes.

The conditions at the athletic fields are rough, Mr. Traxler said. He continued that the soccer program commissioned a recent study of non-high school fields which ranked most at D with a few earning a C. To fix this, a targeted maintenance budget of \$5,000 per acre is an appropriate goal. With 30 diamonds in addition to the 45 acres there is quickly a \$300,000 shortfall. Many fields are unsafe, often containing more weeds than grass leading to a low playing quality. The recommended use for a field is 15-20 hours a week, and due to insufficient capacity Newton far exceeds this, leading to greater maintenance needs. This low capacity also pushes fields to the extent of their sites to the point where play areas overlap, reducing their usable capacity. Some of the increasingly popular sports such as lacrosse further increase the maintenance needs of the fields. The climate is a bigger problem today than it was before due to increased rain and temperatures. Irrigation for the fields will be critical going forward.

Mr. Traxler said that so much work needs to be done that the city can't go wrong no matter what project it picks first. He complemented the new lighting system at a certain field as being high quality with no spillover lighting either. There are plenty of options for the fields such as upgrading the lighting and installing new turf as grass alone will not be enough to meet Newton's needs. The estimated cost is around \$5-10 million, but this will be spread over 5-10 years.

Mr. Traxler closed his presentation saying that since 2012, the CPA has been available to help with projects such as Highlands Park, but also that more needs to be done. To begin this process, more contained projects of lower cost could be prioritized first. Thousands of athletes and residents want this commitment and would be thankful for it.

Discussion:

Those in attendance thanked Mr. Traxler for his presentation and the work in bringing this petition forward.

C: The state of the fields is no longer a crisis, but a chronic emergency. Prioritizing the swing space concept could also help. How much of this funding will come from taxes and fees? There will a sharp pinch when making up for the decades-long delay.

A: \$300 is currently charged per athlete, but they do not contribute to maintenance budget. Newton Public Schools relies on the PRC budget to cover the fields. Some groups are directly contracting for field maintenance and they are trying to formalize this arrangement. It will not take much per player to move the needle in the right direction. Every youth program provides scholarships no questions asked to those in financial need.

C: This seems like a multi-tiered problem and solution. Where will money come from to start raising the bar? Commissioner Banks should give the information for the plans moving forward.

Q: We need more turf fields to meet our goals. What do they cost?

A: Currently a new field costs about \$2 million and replacing one costs about \$700,000. The

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longevity of a turf field is about 12 years. Turf fields do not need to be rested so they allow greater use with less maintenance. Forte Park is a top contender for an artificial turf field. Other considerations are the type of materials to propose, the cost, and the right time. It is also important that the city continues replacing the turf carpets it already. It is likely a five-year timeline for a new turf field appearing in the CIP. While the CPA can be used for components of these projects, it cannot cover the cost of the turf.

Q: CPA funds can be used for refurbishing and capital projects for the fields except for the turf itself. When a CPA project for the fields comes forward, who would be sponsoring it and what would the timeline be? It seems like there is money currently waiting to be spent on a good project.

A: The Burr School field is high on the priority list because it cannot currently be used for multipurpose space due to significant quality issues such as a lack of irrigation and it could fit two full-sized fields. This could carry the displacement from other fields as they get worked on. This and a few other projects could be 100% funded by CPC, but there is not yet a timeline in place.

Q: Could these projects be funded through bonding?

A: Any project can use bonding, but all capital projects have been shut down due to COVID. Hopefully this can be done once the budget environment improves.

C: The city needs a well-organized plan with milestones and the goals it plans on working towards. There is room for some debt and the city can afford to borrow in the single digit millions.

C: The costs presented so far have all been for basic maintenance, and the city currently falls well below these numbers.

Mr. Groshek of Newton Flag Football(NFF) spoke and said he has worked with Mr. Traxler on the petition. Addressing the proposal to switch to a per-player fee structure, he said this would more than triple expenditures for NFF. Since NFF uses a small number of hours but a large number of players, this proposed change would endanger the viability of the organization. Consideration is needed for groups in a similar situation.

A: There is no formal proposal on the table for this issue yet.

C: It may be better to bond now rather than wait for after the pandemic as interest rates are currently low.

Mr. Dunker, spoke, saying that the eminent domain used to acquire Webster Woods was funded via bonding and that this strategy could be adapted to the parks issue.

C: Drastic fee increases are not a good idea, especially if there would only be a small revenue boost. Nominal fees, even with available assistance keep some families from participating as they do not want to ask for the help.

C: When changing the fee structure, those who will need assistance should be kept in mind. **A:** If a per-person fee is chosen then it would need to be budgeted in groups. Much consideration

will be put into this approach as the objective is greater revenue for the fields.

C: Regarding the CIP issue, the currently low interest rates could A new turf field multiplies its availability and the idea for a new one should be kept upfront.

The Chair said that people have been talking about the financial need of the fields for years. In the past the solution may have been to conduct a study about what to do, but things are past that point and the city needs to move forward with immediate needs while conducting a study, especially if the bonding needs to happen sooner. The hope is to generate a letter detailing these objectives and strategies to be submitted to the Mayor's Office in advance of the budget.

C: These fields initiatives should be viewed as community investment rather than expenditures.

C: There should be a timeline with the dates of deliverable goals produced within 60 days, if possible. This will help with short-term action.

C: After discussions between councilors to determine issues with respect to the budget, it seems that the councilors are united in wanting to see action taken with the CIP. The sense of the meeting seems to be to send a resolution to the mayor and to ask for the city and the CPA to bond where appropriate with increasing the maintenance budget as another goal. While not at a point for specific requests, the conversation should begin to focus on the general plan.

A: City bonding is not a separate funding source. Due to the continuing COVID emergency numerous projects have been put on hold, but bonding remains a valuable tool to use. There are plans to bring some projects before the CPC this year.

The Chair recommended a motion to hold as draft language for the letter/resolution would be provided at the next meeting this item is discussed at. Councilor Humphrey moved hold which carried 6-0.

#78-21 Reappointment of Marjorie Butler to the Election Commission

<u>HER HONOR THE MAYOR</u> reappointing MARJORIE BUTLER, 33 Andrew Street, Newton Highlands, as a member of the ELECTION COMMISSION for a term to expire on March 31, 2025. (60 days: 04/30/21)

Action: Programs & Services Approved 6-0

Notes: Councilor Ryan moved approval which carried 6-0.

#79-21 Reappointment of Jan Huffman to the Election Commission

<u>HER HONOR THE MAYOR</u> reappointing JAN HUFFMAN, 27 Indiana Terrace, Newton, as a member of the ELECTION COMMISSION for a term to expire on

March 31, 2025. (60 days: 04/30/21)

Action: <u>Programs & Services Approved 6-0</u>

Notes: Councilor Humphrey moved approval which carried 6-0.

#80-21 Reappointment of Sandra Lingley to the Commission on Disability

 $\underline{\mathsf{HER}\,\mathsf{HONOR}\,\mathsf{THE}\,\mathsf{MAYOR}}\ \mathsf{reappointing}\ \mathsf{SANDRA}\ \mathsf{LINGLEY},\ \mathsf{1938}\ \mathsf{Washington}\ \mathsf{Street},\ \mathsf{\#5},\ \mathsf{Newton},\ \mathsf{as}\ \mathsf{a}\ \mathsf{member}\ \mathsf{of}\ \mathsf{the}\ \mathsf{COMMISSION}\ \mathsf{ON}\ \mathsf{DISABILITY}\ \mathsf{for}\ \mathsf{a}\ \mathsf{term}\ \mathsf{to}\ \mathsf{expire}$

on December 31, 2023. (60 days: 04/30/21)

Action: <u>Programs & Services Approved 6-0</u>

Notes: Councilor Krintzman moved approval which carried 6-0.

#81-21 Reappointment of Matthew Volpi to the Commission on Disability

HER HONOR THE MAYOR reappointing MATTHEW VOLPI, 44 Oakmont Road, Newton Centre, as a member of the COMMISSION ON DISABILITY for a term to

expire on April 30, 2024. (60 days: 04/30/21)

Action: <u>Programs & Services Approved 6-0</u>

Notes: Councilor Krintzman moved approval which carried 6-0.

The meeting adjourned at 9:02pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Josh Krintzman, Chair

For the Love of Sports Fix Newtons Fields!

Presentation to Programs & Services Committee



Newton Athletic Fields Foundation (NAFF)

Organization advocating for improvements to Newton's athletic facilities with a focus on Multi-Purpose Fields (rectangles)

Launched to bring a voice to the thousands of residents who believe athletics are a critical part of our community and are continually underserved

Gathered 1,000+ petition signatures last Fall (See Appendix)

Backed by the following Newton Youth Athletic Programs

















With a combined membership of approximately 3,500 athletes

Challenge: Poor Field Quality

Field quality and availability are low

- Insufficient maintenance budget result in persistent quality issues
- Fields often closed due to flooding







Challenge: Insufficient Field Capacity

Newton's Multi-purpose field capacity is insufficient

- Sports using multi-purpose fields (soccer, lacrosse, flag football, etc) have grown significantly while field space in Newton has remained relatively constant
 - Currently 4,000+ athletes use these fields every Fall & Spring
- Many programs are constrained to a single facility
- Excessive use further degrades quality
- Majority of fields "overlap"

Trends over time

	-	Maintenance/ hour of play		Field Capacity/ Player	Investment/ Player
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Solution: Next 30 Days. GET GOING!!!

Identify 1-2 CPA Eligible projects and present them to the CPC

Dozens of High Value Projects have already been identified

- Re-construct dilapidated fields
- Build new grass fields to create "swing space"
- Install additional lighting & upgrade antiquated lighting
- Evaluate potential synthetic turf projects







Solution: Next 60 Days

Hire consultants to develop a 3 year plan

Newton does NOT have the resources available to develop the multi-year, multi-million dollar program we so desperately need

Project	2021			2022			2023					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Develop 3 Year Plan												
Design New Grass Fields					-	+	+	+	+	4	+	+
Construct New Grass Fields			7		Ç							
Design Turf Field 1							+	1				+
Construct Turf Fleld 1												1
Re-construct Field 1		1			+			-			-	+
Re-construct Field 2											1	
Re-construct Field 3				i i								
Design Turf Field 2							1					
Construct Turf Field 2							-					
Lighting Upgrade 1												
Lighting Upgrade 2												
New Lighting 1										Ž.		
New Lighting 2) <u> </u>		
Fundraising												

Representative Road Map

Develop Funding Plan

- Use CPA for athletic fields projects
- Only one CPA athletic field project over \$100K has been funded since 2012 (1)
- Create new funding models: Sponsorships, Bonds tied to CPA funding, Fees
- Increase funding for maintenance by \$100K from \$75K to \$175K
- (1) 2012 amendment to the CPA broadened the law to also allow for the **rehabilitation of existing**, **outdoor recreational facilities**.

Appendix

- 1. NAFF Petition signed by 1,000+ Newton Residents
- 2. Feedback received from NAFF petition drive
- 3. Letter to Mayor Fuller from NAFF























For the Love of Sports, Fix Newton's Fields

Petition to Improve Newton's Athletic Fields

We, the undersigned, believe that athletics are integral to the well-being of our residents and that Newton's decaying and outdated athletic fields require urgent attention after decades of under investment.

Newton needs a multi-year athletic fields improvement program to:

Rehabilitate fields in disrepair Construct artificial turf fields

Increase maintenance to support usage levels

Configure and allocate fields based on demand (not history)

Install additional field lighting

We seek a formal commitment from the Mayor's office, City Council and Parks, Recreation & Culture (PR&C) department to:

Allocate capital and operating funds

Commit to a multi-year plan (dates, deliverables, budget, resources)

Charge market-rate rental fees and direct them to field maintenance

Commit Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds annually

Dedicate the required resources to both deliver improvements and maintain existing fields

Your support will be shared with the City to demonstrate Newton's broad support for athletics.

Newton is overdue for some improvements on this front. Alec S.

As a parent of two children who play sports, I have observed that **Newton fields are significantly below par, when compared to other towns in Middlesex and other counties**. I hope that Newton can allocate funds to improve the conditions. Thank you. Alisa K.

As a parent who has coached baseball and soccer, I've put in multiple days raking, removing debris, weeding, and filling holes, I can say that the condition and quality of our fields is below average to poor. This weekend I practices baseball with my 2 sons at Roche field at Albemarle. Both kids took "dingers" off ground balls that popped up and hit them - one in the mouth and one in the forehead, and we had 1 twisted ankle for running and stepping in a hole. At Lyons, right field is flooded and soft and is basically a hazard. Both boys are hoping to play flag football this fall, and we're enrolling our daughter to Girls Soccer. Please prioritize investing in our fields - quality and safety from design to maintenance. Thank you! Matt S.

I coach for my daughters teams and as both a mom, young women and an educator, it is paramount we sustain and support maintaining fields so that all children/ community members can appreciate the outlet given by partaking in and leading sports activities. Green spaces and fields slated for games promotes a healthier community. Please don't neglect our fields! Please ensure equitable distribution of field time as well. Julie L.

I have been playing ultimate on Newton's fields year round for 14 years. It's been a **constant struggle to find adequate field space** for our team and I would really like to see more fields available and improvements made to the existing ones.Marc S.

I'm a coach for Newton Girls Soccer. The field conditions for games have ranged from fair to dangerous, uneven surfaces that can lead to knee injuries. There were holes so big at Oak Hill we've had to put cones in them. Please do something to fix the fields! David C.

I've coached Soccer and the fields overall are in bad shape. Our practice field in Upper Falls was mostly weeds and dirt. People used the playing field as an off leash dog park so our girls were stepping in dog feces and aggressive dogs would chase the girls during practice. The game day fields at Brown/Oak Hill are uneven with holes in the field and very poor drainage. One hole was so deep we stuck a road cone in and you could just see the tip sticking out. Even if it rained days earlier, there would be standing water on the field. For such an affluent town that prides itself on being family friendly, it seems very little is spent to maintain or improve the fields. The surrounding communities in Brookline, Wellesley, and Needham all have much better fields than Newton. Michael V.

Lights are especially crucial in Fall and early spring for practice. Elizabeth N.

Newton parks and field are not maintained nor is the necessary funding allocated to maintain them to even an acceptable standard. When compared to surrounding towns, most of Newton parks and fields are in a poor conditions for athletics. There are frequent letters to the Tab on degrading conditions of tennis courts, basketball courts, etc. Albert O.

Our fields should be far better condition than they are. Nearly every other town and city we travel to has super fields. Newton's fields are way overdue for a makeover, and in fact, should receive significant upgrades. Amy D.

There are not enough fields and fields need help. This is pretty obvious to anyone who has walked around a Newton field. Kids have gone through seasons barely practicing to "preserve the fields". So what is the point if they cannot even play on these fields! Alex K.

Too long has the City failed in their stewardship of the City's assets. You have no problem bending over backwards for developers, but your duty should be to the residents. Seth A.

Two priorities in my opinion. Add a turf complex for city of Newton. I cannot understand how a city this size does not have at least one municipal turf field. In addition, update the town pool. This means fix its leak, renovate and add a bubble/cover. Lars D.

We have the tax money, please spend some of it on the improvement of sports fields and equipment for children. Jake T.

We have traveled to many towns across Massachusetts for our children's sports and we have seen what other towns have to offer. It is embarrassing when we return to Newton and see our facilities. A town with such resources owes more to our children. Britt B.

Any decision maker should take a look at our neighboring towns and cities and compare their soccer facilities with ours in Newton. I think you'll come to a quick understanding that Newton's athletic fields, particularly when it comes to soccer, is an embarrassment. Given the number of children and families in Newton compared to our neighbor's, then this becomes quickly apparent that Newton's field management, quality and availability have been severely neglected over many years. Carl P.

Our fields and parks need attention! Our fields are an embarrassment esp when compared to the condition of the fields we play when when at an opponent's home! Kim B.

In these days where outdoor activity is the only option, and days get shorter, **Newton Youth Sports needs** more lighted fields for sports. Ron F.

I wholeheartedly support the goals of this petition. The events of the past six months only amplify the need for maintaining and improving our open spaces for the use of all the residents. **Ensuring safe playing surfaces also ensures equity in access to sports for a city that purports to value equal access.** Fileen O.

This is critical to the physical and mental health of our kids in Newton - I view this as a minimal requirement/request of the City. It impacts thousands of our kids now and going forward. More than ever, we have to prioritize making our Newton infrastructure work FOR our kids, not against....please support this initiative! Linda L.

I am a lifelong resident of Newton.....47 years and counting. I have (3) sons, and many nieces and nephews which have depended and relied on the public fields throughout our city.

I find it to be disturbing, that our city leaders seem to be less than enthused to improve our public fields. I am however optimistic, and hope our "city leaders" will invest the time and the resources to improve our current state of athletic playing fields. Eric B

December 12, 2020

The Honorable Ruthanne Fuller Mayor of the City of Newton

Newton City Council Newton Parks and Recreation Commission Newton Programs and Services Committee

Dear Mayor Fuller,

I write to you on behalf of the Newton Athletic Fields Foundation (www.FixNewtonsFields.com) to seek your formal commitment to Fix Newton's Fields. Leaders in Newton's Athletic community have been voicing concerns for years about the dangerously sub-par conditions,inequitable management of and dire need for action with Newton's athletic fields. Despite repeated attempts to convey the message and collaboratively address the issues (discussions with you, members of your administration and members of the City Council, attending both committee and public meetings, hiring consulting firms to provide expertise and providing inputs to the OSRP) negligible progress has been made.

Since the voices of our Athletic Program Leaders have been ignored,we have engaged members of the community to bolster our support. **To date, we have 1,000 signatures on the attached petition asking you to "Fix Newton's Fields"**. Also attached is a selection of the 100+ comments we received from Newton residents. The message we received was unambiguous: Newton is a laggard in athletic facilities.

In a time when most of our children spend their entire school day in front of a computer screen, athletics is one of the few available outlets. Athletic fields are by far one of Newton's most utilized resources, yet the needs of athletes and the benefits of sports do not garner any attention in comparison to other programs and projects in our city.

The City's lack of commitment is clear in the recently published Capital Improvement Plan that had no funding for multi-purpose field projects. It is also demonstrated by what appears to be a refusal to bring athletic facility projects to the Community Preservation Committee (currently managing \$10M in funding) where athletic facilities are statutorily permitted purposes.

We look forward to your formal response on the specific steps you will take to ensure a plan is authored and a date by which we can expect it's delivery for review.

Sincerely,

Justin Traxler
President Newton Girls Soccer
Founder Newton Athletic Fields Foundation

John Stephans President, Newton Youth Soccer

Larry Casillo President, Newton Youth Lacrosse

Sam Figler Member, Newton Park and Recreation Commission Director, Newton Youth Lacrosse

Nancy Sweatt President, Newton Girls Lacrosse

Fran Yerardi Founder, Girls LAX Newton

Eric Busa Director, Newton Mustangs Football

Burt Granovsky Head Coach, Newton Youth Ultimate

Jacob Groshek Founder, Commissioner Newton Area Flag Football