

18:01:25 Robin Do we need to manually start the recording.
18:01:32 The record would.
18:01:35 Okay, we're all set. Thanks.
18:01:38 Thank you.
18:01:44 And you see the closed caption.
18:01:48 Yes. Closed Caption is available thank you and Robin if you could just continue to watch for people may be joining because, well, we might have a few coming in still and we might have some who want to join for the second half of the show, or it looks
18:02:14 like they're, They're all here.
18:02:15 Hi everyone welcome to our fields, meeting this evening I'm going to give everybody a few minutes to see if we have a few more attendees join here we'll get started in just a couple of minutes.
18:03:02 Okay.
18:03:05 Well, good evening, thanks for being here with us tonight. My name is Nicole banks I'm the Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and culture, and I'm joined here on our zoom screen by Luis Perez de Maria Tse our Director of parks and open space and Robin
18:03:19 McLaughlin, who is our PRC executive admin right now She looks like a tree but we might get to see her later this evening.
18:03:32 Robin will be, you know, helping us with the the chat this evening and helping take some notes.
18:03:39 So, to get us started.
18:03:42 In our fields discussion the parks and recreation commission established a field subcommittee to discuss the condition of our playing fields, and to explore paths to improve them.
18:03:55 The fields committee has been meeting over the past year, and their work has been very valuable.
18:04:01 We have reviewed the challenges, what groups are facing.
18:04:05 And what we can do to improve and overcome these challenges.
18:04:10 The support groups have participated in many of our meetings and have shared their ideas and their interests, for improving the fields and increasing field availability.
18:04:20 We are here tonight to cast a wider net and to listen to ideas and comments from not just the athletic groups, but also from our neighbors, and other part guests.
18:04:31 We will be starting this evening with a presentation about our fields initiative. And then, and then we will learn more about the McGrath fields that specific location.
18:04:43 After we finished with the presentation, we will take comments verbally or through the chat box so you will have both options, this evening.
18:04:52 If you leave the meeting, and you think of a great idea, we would still love to hear from you, we've set up a project email for all of our fields projects, your comments can be sent to athletic fields at Newton, ma.gov.
18:05:09 So thank you again for joining us this evening at this time I'm going to introduce our Director of parks and open space Luis pres de de Maria Etsy will be taking us through the presentation.
18:05:19 And after the McGrath discussion will take a few minutes break and then we'll come back and the second topic and field location to discuss this evening will be the Halloran Sports Complex at Albemarle fields.

18:05:34 Thanks, everyone, and thanks Louise.

18:05:41 Thank you, Commissioner and Louise press them are easy, Director of parks and open space, and I'll be walking you walking everyone through our fields initiative, and bold sites that will be discussing today on the screen, you'll see the email that Commissioner

18:06:14 banks just mentioned, and this will be posted either later today or tomorrow on our website so folks can refer back to this, the recording, as well as the meeting transcript.

18:06:21 So, on the agenda.

18:06:24 As I mentioned, we're going through the athletic fields projects overview will be discussing McGrath taking a brief pause.

18:06:34 And then discussing Albemarle park or Russ Halloran sports and recreation complex.

18:06:41 So a brief overview of Parks, Recreation and culture.

18:06:46 We manage and oversee nearly 600 acres of parkland with varying recreational interests, which range from aquatic facilities tracks trails and pathways playgrounds chords passive areas wooded areas dog park splash parts parts with historic significance

18:07:12 Parks with historic significance and parks that have but wetlands and waterways, these parks and fields are spread across all villages wards and school themselves.

18:07:20 As you can see in this map.

18:07:22 The bright green is what is considered Parkland, the beige color is public school land, and the light green is conservation land.

18:07:34 So why improve athletic fields.

18:07:38 Our current facilities experience little to no rest time, and which result in over use this image here, you can see the wear of patterns that have emerged out of the extensive use of our fields.

18:07:56 Another reason why we're looking at fields. During the open space and recreation plan which was approved this year by city council in the state.

18:08:08 We did a community survey and playing fields came in a second. under the open space resources and greatest demand.

18:08:20 We also saw for another question that athletic fields came in at third on, you know, importance of resource and this was a survey that was spread across roughly 1300 Newton residents.

18:08:43 So some of our goals for improving fields and parts are to improve quality and quantity of usable multiuse multipurpose field fields, improve accessibility in parts and field amenities established standardized Park construction details so that we can

18:09:00 better manage operation and maintenance post construction.

18:09:06 And then, of course, invest equitably in noon set poetic fields and parts across the city.

18:09:13 And then some of you may wonder, how do we prioritize field improvements.

18:09:19 So here's our criteria.

18:09:22 So we looked at the open space and recreation plan, we look at the city of Newton capital improvement plan or, better known as tip.

18:09:33 We look at, we looked at potential for greatest city wide benefit project sequencing, meaning tackle that demand in bringing in new fields, online first potential for expansion of multi use fields, expanding evening play with lighting improvements and

18:09:53 additions, of course, improve player safety, and then integrated with other projects and apart area, for example, Pat McGrath, as well as the gap cool project.

18:10:08 So, how do we arrive to a viable project design.

18:10:16 We establish project goals by looking at gaining community input This is why we're here today. We cross check those with safety and regulatory guidelines, as well as Parks, Recreation and culture department goals, and that is how we arrive to the project

18:10:38 goals and move toward a buildable project.

18:10:44 Just a brief overview of the phase one capital project distribution for athletic fields, we're looking at the first six sites with the intent of continuing to build that list up as we move through these.

18:11:01 So these include Albemarle forte park or school fields, brown or kill fields, McGrath Park and Bobby bracelet.

18:11:12 Some additional athletic fields projects that are in the work are the looking at installing high efficiency low spillage sports lighting, at the North.

18:11:27 Tiger Stadium.

18:11:29 We're also looking at replacing both artificial all three artificial turf carpets at Newton South High School, as well as North High School, the sort of stagger based on their life expectancy for fiscal year, 23 and then North fiscal year 25.

18:11:49 We're also looking at installing high efficiency little spillage sports lighting on the New South Brandeis road field which is artificial turf.

18:12:02 Also relating for a tape Park, using developer funded mitigation monies and increase maintenance, which include additional seating fertilizing integration, etc.

18:12:15 And here's a breakdown of how we've managed to increase general maintenance. So we looked at increasing athletic field maintenance capabilities in increase the scope of contractual maintenance work, and significantly increased turf management capabilities.

18:12:36 This table here you can see fiscal year, 2021, our budget.

18:12:45 Then, to fiscal year, 2022, which is where we are now, there was an increase in terms of \$125,000 annually. And for turf management that budget was increased \$175,000 annually, and the table shows a breakdown of how these two buckets are sort of split.

18:13:11 So now to get to the exciting part for those who are interested in McGrath Park.

18:13:20 So, McGrath Park is a 10 acre park, formerly a school, the building in the middle here was a former school building.

18:13:32 Some of the existing amenities are two softball diamonds. We have 59 parking spaces three of them are a DA compliant.

18:13:45 One boys lacrosse full size field. Of course with some safety conflicts. And then one intermediate rectangular, excuse me, field at site allows. So, this initial review of the entire site that we've done.

18:14:08 And based on input from some of the athletic groups, we see that there is some use complex here, as well as over here. Some player safety issues where lacrosse and soccer cannot fit a full size field, without, you know, one of the corners going up the

18:14:28 slope here. And then we also looked at areas that may be unusable for fields, or for more standard regulation sides fields, if you will.

18:14:42 So this is, this is the preliminary analysis, and of course, once we hire a consultant which were that's in the works now we will have them take a deeper dive, and then come back to you all with some concepts.

18:14:59 So I did want to highlight.

18:15:02 You know, key athletic and facility stakeholders for McGrath, so the the league's and the groups high in bold, are the folks who hold the most athletic field permit hours, or athletic permit hours, because it does include pickup ball and tennis in the

18:15:25 mix. As you can see it's summer and sort of bit of a downtime from a graph.

18:15:31 And outlined here are some improvement ideas and goals that we've, you know, sort of, threw in here based on again athletic field stakeholder group input, as well as just overall more standard athletic field in park design.

18:15:54 So we're looking at McGrath new accessible perimeter path and seating.

18:16:01 We're looking at potentially removed the reconfigured courts to increase Multi Purpose athletic field space. This is on the Myrtle street side only.

18:16:12 Removed under utilized backstop and infield expanded irrigation to where ball fields may have been removed, improve irrigation efficient efficiency and remote access so that we're, you know, on the sustainable route properly located and design lacrosse

18:16:32 practice wall.

18:16:35 Improve athletic equipment storage improved field perimeter fence and netting, where were necessary, potentially include scoreboards designate an area for seasonal restrooms.

18:16:50 And then of course cap caliper into replacement for any trees that may need to be removed that's part of the design.

18:16:58 And of course we would look at opportunities to increase tree canopy wherever possible, and the approximate budget that we're looking at from McGrath is \$1 million.

18:17:13 And with that, um, you know, here is the overall picture, and

18:17:20 in terms of where we are in the process. We've attained CPA funding for design and engineering work.

18:17:32 We prepared the request for qualifications and advertise bid for designer, which.

18:17:49 Some are do their due tomorrow. Some of the next steps are to select the design firm developed prelim preliminary field designs, based on community input, and then share field project concepts with the public, as well as with other regulatory bodies such

18:18:00 as the Conservation Commission. Parks and Rec commission, and others.

18:18:06 And then with that, I'll leave it open to the floor for questions and discussion, and I'll go back to the aerial image so that comments can be

18:18:19 checked against this.

18:18:24 At least thank you for that great presentation you, you make this so clear and give us such good information to get the discussion kicked off thanks for that.

18:18:35 So we're going to open up the virtual floor, and I just want to make sure that all of our participants are familiar with zoom so if you look at the bottom of your screen.

18:18:46 You should see one box that's called chat. If you type into the chat box, then your comment will be sent to us as the panelists, and we will read those comments out loud.

18:19:01 And either answer them or collect this information to take back as we continue on in the project development for the site.

18:19:10 So feel free to write comments at any time in the discussion and we'll get to them all this evening.

18:19:16 If you'd like to speak. You will also see on the very bottom of your screen the raise hand function, and if you press that, then we will be able to see in our list of attendees that you'd like to speak, and we will make that function available for you

18:19:34 to be able to do so and then we can have a discussion that way as well. So, really appreciate everyone attending. Tonight, we did have quite a good registration for this this evening.

18:19:45 We're happy to get to hear from everybody so we'll open it up now for conversation and Robin I know you're going to help lead us through this people they started.

18:19:58 I have one of Sam figure has his hand raised you want to talk for us to read karma great.

18:20:04 I'm going to allow you to speak.

18:20:07 And you just have to unmute him.

18:20:15 Sam Are you there.

18:20:26 Sam i believe you're ready to speak whenever you're ready.

18:20:31 I do see some comments in the chat. Maybe well Sam gets the audio in, we can read a few of them. This is from a counselor john oliver seasonal restrooms, question mark.

18:20:48 Yeah so seasonal restrooms we are just thought is currently the league's put out porta Johns, you know really along the path or on the parking lot, so that idea was just trying to formalize an area along the pathway, or on a took the way corner of the

18:21:11 field where perhaps you know portable restrooms can be added.

18:21:19 Then the next, next one, Germany, we definitely always short that'd be great.

18:21:26 But like to add that new news ultimate is also a permit holder it McGrath and has been for a few seasons.

18:21:33 Thank you, Bert. I apologize if we exclude you from that list will will certainly make sure that ultimate disk gets in there, apologies for that.

18:21:44 Okay. Does PRC have priorities, or mandatory inclusions in the plan, such as things that must be included.

18:21:54 Ah, yes, I guess, in the sense of mandatory.

18:21:57 Not, not mandatory I guess, but really ideal and best practices. So for example, based on the open space and recreation plan and just general.

18:22:12 You know standards of Park and field design, we would like to incorporate perimeter pathways or walking pathways around fields, so that folks with disabilities are able to, you know, get to certain fields and be able to observe.

18:22:30 So in terms of mandatory that's probably the closest thing other than that, we're, we're here to listen.

18:22:37 Hey, next question is the plan to be turf grass does plan include lights, what is the timing.

18:22:47 Right now, we are not looking at adding lights here, or artificial turf, we are really looking at keeping this area. Area, to be natural grass fields that are irrigated.

18:23:03 So, no artificial turf here and no lights.

18:23:07 Okay. And where is the press while to be placed and how close to cheesecake Brooke, what mitigation plans are in place to avoid impact on the stream.

18:23:18 So, I'm so right now I'm not sure if you all can see my, my cursor, but the location for the wall is somewhere over here, the cheese cake Brooke does run back here, and we're in conversations with the Conservation Commission on that preliminarily, and

18:23:42 we certainly once we get the consultant on board, we will look at ways to work with Conservation Commission and address any medication.

18:23:53 That will be required as part of that aspect of the project.

18:23:59 Next question. Please be assured that we have a history of supporting the recreation fields that McGrath for many years we paid an arborist firm to Punahou trees on the city side of the fence.

18:24:11 The cities fence around McGrath pack or butts cheesecake book for several hundred feet.

18:24:16 What effect would be, would the plan changes to regret fields specifically, improve drainage, in construction of what appears to be a lacrosse practice while with a subterranean foundation have on the ground water in run off to cheesecake book.

18:24:33 Where will the water go. That will be diverted from 10 acres of playing field.

18:24:38 So because you know we're not really adding impervious surface, other than the potential across wall pavement, this is something that we once again, once we had the consultant on board will certainly look at mitigation.

18:24:59 And just best practices to ensure that whatever we're doing here doesn't negatively impact drainage.

18:25:06 On top of that, we are looking to do our best to improve drainage within the artificial turf, and that can be done by, you know, slice seating.

18:25:38 And just a few sort of larger scale turf improvement mechanisms that can help improve drainage

18:25:33 and wouldn't lights make sense for expanding general use of the fields perhaps limited lights, but some areas.

18:25:42 So, I'm it, you know, based on what we've heard so far and what we were looking at. It makes the most sense to light artificial turf areas, because those we've seen tolerate the expanded use that artificial turf brings.

18:26:04 And then if they're lit, of course they use is extended. So,

18:26:11 So we're, I guess we're not saying no to light here. It hasn't been a consideration at this point.

18:26:18 And I think that goes along with Councillor Oliver's next comment, why not consider lights at this facility. I think at this point where we're really listening.

18:26:31 And, you know, flight sort of thing that folks want you know will will certainly take that into consideration.

18:26:40 A new socket desperately needs triplet fields and quality fields right away. And we need it to be compatible with school schedule changes what is the time for current plan to have quality fields.

18:27:06 So, the timing.

18:27:25 We have we've started to put together, you know, a plan to be able to work on the first. I think it was six field locations, over the next we're thinking three years, we're just at the point right now where would be bringing on an

engineer and design

18:27:26 consultant, and obviously at the very beginning of the, the public input stages, as well so you know we're probably a year out from really starting to talk about construction, we're really in the design phases right now.

18:27:42 However, we are going to try to prioritize as we go through all of these fields sites locations that might be able to first add additional field space.

18:27:53 So, I'll give you the example. Next Wednesday we're holding a similar forum to this one. And the first field site that will be discussing his birth elementary fields.

18:28:03 That is a site we know that is currently very underutilized and might be able to add some field space.

18:28:10 If we were to start with a project like that. First, we think that we could, you know, develop additional fields and have a place well other fields go under construction.

18:28:21 Another option that we're looking at. As we go through the fields project lists and look at how to prioritize these sites.

18:28:30 We're looking at things like lights as a way to expand field inventory and access with a, you know, simpler infrastructure project of light installation.

18:28:45 So, in addition to the six fields that are sort of part of this plan. We are also working at as, Luis just mentioned, our artificial turf fields feasibility of lighting, those to artificial turf fields that are not currently lit.

18:29:00 So that's the Brandeis field at the South High School, and also the field at the North High School, that would add, not new field inventory but additional time on on fields that would help alleviate some of the pressure of, you know, the school time change,

18:29:20 as well as youth sports and school athletics just seeing an increase in number of athletes and number of, you know, amount of practices and games that are played in all of those leaks that have left us, you know, sort of with a field shortage of inventory

18:29:37 and being able to provide for all of those needs.

18:29:40 So those are some of the things that we're considering. We're also looking to move as efficiently as we can, through this process.

18:29:49 That's where we are bringing on and design an engineer firm that can look at all of these projects together. And as we make that prioritization list together as a community, we'll be able to be flexible and work on certain aspects.

18:30:04 First, before you know bringing on other large more capacity construction projects maybe at a later time.

18:30:12 The next is a climate late at a field that is surrounded by residences would be a real concern, the Warren apartments were a tad to reduce ambient light from its own fixtures.

18:30:25 Then the next is a question, out of all the choices available why prioritize across wall.

18:30:31 So, I believe the previous comment was from Kathleen thank you for that comment. And then the next one, from Joanne, you know the lacrosse practice wall because this field is one of the primary users or the largest users of this field is the lacrosse

18:30:54 youth lacrosse leads.

18:30:56 This is a request that they have made, and it need that they've established. So we're just, you know, we've taken that input.

18:31:06 That's why the lacrosse world appears at this particular site.

18:31:13 As an idea. Cool.

18:31:17 I see no hands raised, or any other comments at this moment.

18:31:22 So could I just go back to, I think it was actually the first comment from counselor all over.

18:31:28 So could I just go back to, I think it was actually the first comment from Councillor Oliver, just wanted to talk a little bit more about you know if if the sport groups and other users of this facility are interested in having seasonal portable toilet

18:31:39 available for restrooms. We're thinking you know we want to have that located in this design. So that's easy it's easily accessible for maintenance vehicles that need to get to that for cleanings and wouldn't need to come on to the grass turf, and over

18:31:57 much of that we also want to make sure that that gets placed in a way that is accessible right along and accessible pathway, with a good transition there and just have that area highlighted so that that was the point of having the seasonal restrooms listed

18:32:13 on the options list for this for this particular site.

18:32:27 Okay. Where is lacrosse well to be placed in how close to cheesecake Burke, what medication plans are in place to okay that was already question, sorry.

18:32:48 Right. What are the dimensions of the cross while that is something that we still need to figure it out. It hasn't been designed or, or any of that. That's why the engineer or the landscape architect that will.

18:32:52 We're bringing on board would, would take a look at. And we would certainly share that information. Once we have them on board and they've looked at this, right now we don't we don't have that info.

18:33:06 Okay. Quick question if you are not talking triple Eight's here could this project be completed sooner than three years out, possibly 12 months or be online in Fall 2022, is that a possibility.

18:33:19 So, that's a pretty tight schedule Luis you may be able to add a little bit more on to this.

18:33:26 It really you know some of this depends on how we phase these projects out, and which ones we determine will be the first to come online, and we don't know that yet so you know i'm i'm sort of guessing that you know lights and Burke could be good options

18:33:42 for us as a starting point, but we want to hear all this feedback and get the designs and get the cost estimates before we make those decisions.

18:33:52 You know, it can certainly be done faster than three years, but all of these projects will go through our procurement process. So, currently we're in the procurement process to get our design and engineer firm, which will allow us to have each of these

18:34:07 sites, designed to take all this feedback. Feedback into account. Put that on paper, we will hold public meetings, public hearings to make decisions before we have a final design plan in place.

18:34:21 And then the next steps would be once we have those in place and we know which sites we're moving forward with First, we would need to request a funding source.

18:34:31 So currently we are being funded by the CPA funds so that if that was a funding source that would take, you know, a visit back to them and let them know what the construction project components would look like what those cost estimates are.

18:34:47 Once the funding is received it would be approved by our city council, and then we would move through the procurement process. So there's, you know a lot of steps that need to happen and we certainly want to move as efficiently as we can but we don't

18:35:02 want to rush the project we want to really get this public input we want to make good decisions for these fields and we want to develop them in a way that they're going to be long standing, you know, well built, fields.

18:35:17 So what I mean by that is you know good drainage and irrigation and things that can really handle the wear and tear that we will be putting on these fields, because they currently receive that kind of high use intensity, so I don't think I can give you

18:35:34 an exact timeline this evening from the graph, but it certainly could be less than three years, but fall of 22 is probably outside of the realm of what could be done.

18:35:49 That's it. Just to add to that Commissioner, just to kind of bring the the CPA funding requests into perspective for some folks from start to finish, is roughly a four month process.

18:36:04 So, you know, even if we took three months to design review and get all the approvals we need that still puts an additional four months of CPA funding request, along with a couple more months, as part of the procurement process.

18:36:22 And then we get into what's the best seat, and then we have to evaluate the construction season is it spring.

18:36:31 Start of construction is it fall so there. There are a lot of moving parts that that we don't have all the details of as the commissioner mentioned

18:36:41 a comment about the space this big needs permanent bathrooms around.

18:36:49 So I can speak to that a little bit so so permanent bathrooms would have quite a bit of infrastructure involved in those so we'd be water, sewer, and we would also need to provide staffing for cleaning and access of those facilities.

18:37:06 We have a lot of parks in the community that do not have year round bathrooms and you know we found, especially for the, for the sport groups and uses like that the portable units have been a good compromise with that.

18:37:21 So it's, it's something to consider. But that is certainly a large undertaking.

18:37:28 For a permanent bathroom would add a lot to a project like this. Yes and, both from an infrastructure standpoint, but also the cause if we're approximating million dollar project here, permanent bathrooms we eat at that quite a bit.

18:37:45 So, we, we have to, you know, sort of balance. Construction budgets as well.

18:37:53 OK, the next question why not consider putting the cross while new one of the tennis courts, rather than you the stream.

18:38:02 You know, we were open to different locations, as, as was shown, if I can get to that slide.

18:38:15 This six bullets seventh bullet, six bullet, sorry.

18:38:24 Properly located in design across practice wall.

18:38:25 You know that back area near the cheesecake broke was sort of a good location because it's far away from Warren house but we certainly are open to looking at other options so long as the wall doesn't conflict with other fields uses, but will, we're certainly

18:38:44 open to looking at other locations within the field area.

18:38:52 Okay, um, is public. Voice of customer being considered from the goal

regarding turf and lights. If not, could it delay the process, given that public hearings are in the middle of the process you just explained.

18:39:09 Sorry Robin, would you mind repeating that one is, is the public being considered from the go.

18:39:16 Regarding turf in lights. If not, could it delay the process, given that public hearings are in the middle of the process you just explained.

18:39:26 So I think the question is, if the public is bringing forward that they want artificial turf, and lights at the site, would that delay the project.

18:39:39 I think that's the question.

18:39:41 I think it would, it seemed like that was the question and apologies if we're not understanding the question quite accurately, but you know I guess if there's enough input that that's what folks want.

18:39:56 Yes. you know, we redoing a natural turf field and adding, you know, natural grass does have from the construction side does have a longer period of establishment, which could extend the project itself, but the process of approvals, and all of that, with

18:40:20 artificial turf and lights will certainly you know delay the process as we would likely want to hear more from the butters and others as well. And we need to also investigate the best type of artificial turf as well.

18:40:39 And Lisa if I could pause here for a minute. Robin I see one hand up like and I wonder if we can try again to see if we can get voice comments here. Okay.

18:40:50 All right. Yep, was the last question, it was mine. So, as I understood the process

18:41:01 that that you just went through was that you get the design engineering firm you, they come up with a design proposed and there is public hearings then final design request finance sourcing approved and procurement process.

18:41:19 So indeed, my question was that if if we in fact, and need turf, as a, as a first go turf and lights

18:41:35 for both the medium long term.

18:41:40 And, and that, and we represent the voice of our customers, in this case and youth and youth soccer.

18:41:48 And the first time that the public hearings are happening and you know not considering it from the goal from the design and engineering firm considering that option.

18:41:59 We do say that, you know, as you answered it could delay the project and it has it's not directly linked to the fact that turf itself might take a little bit longer as a project.

18:42:11 It appears to me that that would be the first time that you might hear in volumes and consider that, for the first time that that's what

18:42:23 we need. In fact, to make this our, our sports of success and sustainable over time.

18:42:33 Sure, thank you for that question. I think I can fill in a little bit more information on some of the discussions I described in my introduction, which has been our field subcommittee meetings.

18:42:45 So, we have also been discussing artificial turf, and lights, as part of those discussions and trying to think through where the best sites might be to recommend those.

18:43:00 So we will have some sites that are on the list, one that has been brought up his forte. Another one that has been brought up is Albemarle that, you know, have been recommended if not for artificial turf, and lights in the first round,

maybe being able

18:43:19 to be built in the way that those could be a future expansion.

18:43:24 Certainly as we go through each of these projects we may hear input that you know the grass is wanted for artificial turf and lights, and then that would be something we would want to consider that public comment and make some decisions.

18:43:41 Early on, before we go through that design process.

18:43:44 And you know that would include having some public hearings speaking to the neighbors.

18:43:51 Looking at late data, all of that information. Before we made a recommendation on on doing that so I think my answer is that we have considered it for some sites.

18:44:02 But if there is, you know, a need or a want to consider it for other sites we would, you know, want to have that discussion early on and, and make some of those decisions before we get into full design.

18:44:15 Also, you can add anything to about, you know how far the design gets when it goes for the public comment.

18:44:25 I'm sorry Commissioner were you asking a question to me, well just, you know when we take something forward to public comment, it would be designed out, you know, sort of, conceptually, certainly enough to provide a cost estimate, and have some debate

18:44:42 and discussion about it, but it wouldn't necessarily be the full design completion at that point. Right, right. Yes, that is correct, another sort of aspect to artificial turf, is that we are relying heavily on CPA funding, and part of the stipulations

18:45:02 of the CPA funds, is to, You know it doesn't include the carpet itself. So that's where you know some of the league's and and and groups might be able to help and fundraise if, for example McGrath is one of the places identified for artificial turf by

18:45:22 the community.

18:45:28 Ok ready for a comment.

18:45:32 Newton lacrosse continues to have hundreds of youth athletes in our program, and this is the only field that the tongue has dedicated for us. It's great to see that a multiplex lacrosse field in a lacrosse while will still are still part of the designing

18:45:45 plan.

18:45:48 And then comment that there might be a need to expand lighted fields Albemarle and forte have lights today.

18:45:57 Okay, next is a question. Will you commit this full transparency, dedicated project web page, publish publish every design iteration, collect public comment continuously.

18:46:11 Yes, we will we will be posting this as we go along.

18:46:18 You know, once we move from, you know, sort of conceptual design to construction documentation for any of these, we still are receptive and open to public comment but there are certain details of construction that will certainly be, you know, Parks and

18:46:36 Rec.

18:46:38 You know some decisions being made internally but yes we would be sharing as much information as we can, and continue to collect input and talk to neighbors residents and stakeholders.

18:46:58 Hey, I don't see any hands up or any other comments or questions so there

any comments or questions.

18:47:09 Okay, it says when you allow consultants and city staff to get too far down the design process without frequent public input, a project can go in the wrong direction in time and money is wasted.

18:47:23 This is, I can answer that this is why we're here, you know, We're.

18:47:29 We need a consultant to design this, and we certainly need city staff to oversee the projects, but we'll certainly be in communication with, you know, with the public throughout the design.

18:47:44 And I'll just add that all of these projects will be under the purview of the parks and recreation commission. And so that is where we will hold you some public information, as well as the public hearings for these projects, so that we, you know, have

18:48:01 that vote of approval to move forward at a different design stages, so you know that that's where we will be hosting, those type of decision making public sessions,

18:48:21 believe that's it procurements. Excellent. Well, thank you everyone so much. These were great comments I think we, we heard some things tonight that you know we've we've had some feedback that we've received on some of these and we heard some new things.

18:48:37 It's great to have our community really engaged in this process right from the get go so appreciate everybody's time, I know that you know it's a dinner time for many and there might be another Red Sox game on tonight it feels like all of our meetings

18:48:52 have been trying to vie for people's attention over that.

18:48:57 But certainly a lot of folks who really care about these amenities and want to see them be improved and be well utilized by the community going forward so appreciate that just want to remind everybody if you are going to be signing off and not staying

18:49:13 on for the second portion please keep our email address in mind if you think of anything else to email in will be continuing your will, will be collecting those throughout all of our discussions and so you can send that in anytime.

18:49:32 And for those who would like to stay on for the second part of our presentation this evening.

18:49:40 We're going to take a quick break here, maybe five or six minutes.

18:49:49 And we will be back on to discuss all tomorrow you'll hear a little bit repeat in the presentation from Luis just to make sure if we do have new members joining us.

18:50:00 We want to catch them up to everything we've heard.

18:59:16 Luis you got logged back in, hopefully, zoom will be more on your side.

18:59:22 The second half.

18:59:24 It looks flawless to me so whatever was happening you were.

18:59:29 It was on my side.

18:59:32 Okay.

18:59:38 Right. Good evening everyone and welcome back to our fields meeting.

18:59:45 We have just restarted our recording for this evening.

18:59:49 And we will be starting on the second part of our presentation so thanks to everyone for joining us tonight.

18:59:57 If you are staying on with us, you've just heard our presentation, and some really good discussion about some design options and details for McGrath fields.

19:00:10 At this time, we're going to move on to our discussion of the Halloran sports complex that Albemarle. And again, I'm going to introduce Luis Perez de Maria Etsy, who will be giving us a brief overview of the fields projects as well as some details about

19:00:40 and ideas for Albemarle. And, again, for those of you who are just joining if you don't know me I'm Nicole banks commissioner of Parks, Recreation and culture. And we are also joined tonight on the panel by Robin McLoughlin, who is our parks, recreation

19:00:45 and culture admin exec, and she is helping us take some notes, and make sure that we don't miss any of the great comments that come in tonight so with that we are at seven o'clock, which is about what we estimated for starting the second part of the meeting.

19:01:03 So Luis when you're ready I'll turn it over to you for the presentation.

19:01:08 Thank you, Commissioner and Robin, would you mind, I guess. When I got when I logged out log back in I can't share my screen, do you mind having me. There we go.

19:01:24 All right. Thank you, Commissioner.

19:01:27 I am Louise Preston breezy, Director of parks and open space for the parks, recreation and culture department.

19:01:36 Welcome to those who just joined us and welcome back to those who were at the previous meeting. So today we've. This is the first meeting to discuss McGrath and Albemarle just discussing the graph, now we're going to go through an album.

19:01:54 And there's my Oh, sorry.

19:01:59 I'll leave it alone. Alright so I'm going to go through the athletic fields project projects overview, and then we're going to skip over to two items four and five, since we discussed two and three.

19:02:13 So an overview of Parks, Recreation and culture we oversee nearly 600 acres of parkland with plenty of recreational interests that include aquatic facilities to trails to playgrounds to cords wooded areas dog parks.

19:02:33 Splash pads and parks that include wetlands and waterways. These are spread across all villages wards school zones.

19:02:42 So why improve athletic fields, simple answer is current facilities experience little to no rest time, and are overused. This is an image of one of our athletic field, and you can see the extensive wear pattern here.

19:03:02 Another reason for tackling athletic fields, is we've heard quite a bit on the need from the athletic stakeholders and we also heard from roughly 1300 residents as part of the open space and recreation plan, and one question that was as of open space

19:03:21 resources in greatest demand, playing field came in at second.

19:03:30 And then, on how important our resources to residents athletic fields came in there.

19:03:40 In that survey.

19:03:42 So some of our goals that we've established, is to improve quality and quantity of usable multi use Multi Purpose fields, improve accessibility in parts and feel them out.

19:03:56 Amenities established standard Park construction details so that we can better manage operation and maintenance.

19:04:05 Post construction, and of course invest equitably in new and set plastic fields in parts across the city.

19:04:13 So I'm going to go over how we prioritize the fields.

19:04:18 So we look at the open space and recreation plan we look at the city of Newark capital improvement plan or otherwise known as tip.

19:04:30 We look at the potential for greatest city wide benefit.

19:04:34 We look at Project sequencing, so prioritizing new fields, being brought online first.

19:04:42 So essentially one second expand our availability of fields.

19:04:49 Potential expansion of multi use fields, expanding evening play player safety is a big one as well as well as you know integrating with other projects in a park.

19:05:01 We talked about the Pat McGrath, and then for Albemarle would be the gap pool project.

19:05:08 So how do we arrive to add a viable project design.

19:05:14 We established project individual project goals, and we,

19:05:19 you know, compile community input. We also mix in parks, recreation and culture goals, and we also bring in safety and regulation, regulatory guidelines into the mix, and that's really how we get to a project goal for any particular project.

19:05:43 So phase one, we're looking at these six sites to improve in the next three years and beyond. So we're looking at Albemarle for tape Park birth school fields, brown old killed fields McGrath Park and Bobby bracelet.

19:06:01 and you can see in the map here.

19:06:04 The bright green is Parks and Rec areas are Parkland light green is conservation land and beige is school department land. And of course, parts. As stated earlier, do overlap with some conservation jurisdiction, as well.

19:06:28 Some additional athletic field projects in the works.

19:06:32 projects in the works. We're looking at the feasibility for high efficiency little spillage sports lighting at the North High School Tiger Stadium. We're looking at replacing the carpets at Winkler stadium and Brandeis road field, and Newton South High

19:06:52 School, looking at a feasibility for high efficiency sports lighting for Newton South High School Brandeis road field. And then, artificial turf carpet replacement at Newton North Tiger Stadium.

19:07:09 Looking at fiscal year, 25 for that one. Then of course we lighting for take part. using developer mitigation funds and increase our maintenance budget.

19:07:22 Here's an overview of our maintenance budget.

19:07:24 This is broken down into turf mowing and turf management, and in order to increase athletic field maintenance can capabilities, the scope of contractual maintenance work as well as increased turf management capabilities.

19:07:40 The city has increased.

19:07:43 These two buckets.

19:07:46 On the turf modeling and turf management turf monitoring has been increased by \$125,000 annually and turf management has increased by \$175,000 annually, and the general description here shows a breakdown on how these two buckets are, you know, further

19:08:11 broken down.

19:08:14 My apologies I went to the beginning. So Jesus, this is making you all dizzy, just going to go all the way to help him borrow.

19:08:25 Our Albemarle Park.

19:08:28 So here's a nice area you can see the pool. Courts fields in the background, old Torres man or new an early childhood program as well as FHA Middle

School, and then fascinated in the foreground, and their fields.

19:08:46 So, Russ Halloran sports and recreation complex, including Avery woods, which is this area right here is 24.9, acres, almost 25 acres.

19:09:02 And the existing amenities include playgrounds Zeebo got pool.

19:09:08 A few couple of little league field, a baseball field t ball fields multipurpose, it is currently lit.

19:09:19 It has some space for soccer fields basketball tennis lights irrigated.

19:09:27 It's got some walking pads. The Fourth of July fireworks occur here. There is also a snack shack and a ticket booth.

19:09:35 Adjacent to Murphy field, along with batting cages, and there are roughly 180 parking spaces, 10 of which are a DA compliant.

19:09:50 So generally speaking, this is the data we have today.

19:09:54 I want to apologize if we've excluded any groups, but feel free to reach out to the athletic fields at noon me. com, email, if you feel like you are not represented in these numbers.

19:10:09 So, if you looking at these.

19:10:14 We can see Albemarle is extensively used with over 1000 hours in the summer, and over 2000 permitted hours during the spring and the fall, some improvement ideas and goals that we've you know looked at is developing a multi phase multi year improvements

19:10:39 plan for this site.

19:10:41 Looking at some reconfigured amenities to increase multipurpose athletic field space, improve the accessibility, by way of perimeter pathways and such, replaced existing sports lighting that are at end of life.

19:11:00 Assess Park program and use needs that include the gap pool project school uses as well as cultural events and other recreational amenities and programs here in improved Safe Routes to School, improve shade and tree canopy coverage, where possible.

19:11:23 And of course, improve athletic field amenities such as dugouts batting cages scoreboards, these, these would certainly be included with some private funding from some of the leads.

19:11:36 And then of course we would be assessing the feasibility of artificial turf in this area.

19:11:42 And we are looking at a phase one construction budget of approximately 3.2 million.

19:11:51 And so here I will actually go back to the initial analysis. So we looked at. We're currently going through the gap pull project.

19:12:03 And we also looked in general at the field layout, have identified some areas of us conflicts for example here, the baseball field.

19:12:15 And the football soccer and lacrosse field as you can see the outfield and the rectangular fields are sort of encroaching on each other.

19:12:24 And then we see some areas where space can be utilized in a much better fashion to again really make this area more efficient from an athletic standpoint.

19:12:38 And then of course we have this back area near the soon to be knowing noon. Early Childhood program.

19:12:47 And this this area of Jason to what is known as Murphy field here is certainly not being used for athletics, or anything much more than the equipment that comes for the Fourth of July celebrations.

19:13:05 So we're looking at the site in a holistic manner,

19:13:11 bouncing back.

19:13:13 For those who weren't around in the last presentation completed steps that we've taken so far we've attained Community Preservation Act funding for design and engineering work.

19:13:26 We were we prepared the RFQ and advertise a bid for designer.

19:13:33 And then the next steps, of course, is selecting a design firm or firms that can help us through these projects coordinate with pool project with the pool project leadership team.

19:13:50 Preliminary field design and layout, develop based on community input. Then of course share field project concepts with the public stakeholders, and other regulatory bodies.

19:14:03 And with that, I'll leave it open to the floor, and I'll go back to the aerial Albemarle.

19:14:15 Great. Thanks, Luis another great presentation I don't think we ever get tired of these.

19:14:32 We'll see you next Wednesday for two more.

19:14:28 So great presentation, a lot of good details given here about, you know, the field layout currently. I think this is a really interesting project because we are looking comprehensively at the park space, as well as we are undergoing a design and rehabilitation

19:14:48 project for our gaff pool.

19:14:51 So it's really good to have those two projects, tied in and working together on those to have the most flexibility that we can with this space.

19:15:02 We're calling it a recreation sport complex because it does have so many recreation opportunities, packed in here so I'm really excited to be able to make some improvements here.

19:15:15 We're going to open up the floor to some comments and discussion, and we'll try to answer questions or be taking those questions forward as we work with our design firm that will be bringing on board.

19:15:28 We have a couple of ways that you can participate this evening. Everybody should see at the bottom of their screen.

19:15:34 A couple of buttons one of those features is the chat function. If you write a comment into the chat function, we will be able to see it. And we will read those out loud.

19:15:46 So the whole group can hear and you know if it's a comment have that brought into the record here and if it's a question again we'll try to answer it.

19:15:54 If you prefer to speak, and we can bring you in to be able to have a speaking discussion with us, you would just hit the raise hand virtual hand raised button, and we will work to pull you into the conversation here.

19:16:11 I did mention that we're looking at this location holistically. We do have a friends of group friends of Albemarle that has started up. They've already been working with us, as we've undergone our first information meetings on the gaff pool project, and

19:16:28 I think I see that cedar Pruitt and Jacqueline Freeman are both here tonight. Cedar and Jacqueline, feel free if you'd like to step in and have a discussion with us at some point and if you could please add in any information on how to join the friends

19:16:45 of Albemarle group. This will be an important group to, you know, keep up to date on everything that will be happening in this area. They're going to help with fundraising supporting these projects and getting the word out to everyone so appreciate both

19:16:59 of you being here tonight.

19:17:02 With that Robin we can.

19:17:04 Okay, I didn't get started by just gave cedar, the option to speak so see to whenever you're ready for everybody. My name is Tina Pruitt, and along with just Jacqueline Freeman and Megan animal.

19:17:18 We are the board of friends of all Memorial, and you can find us at friends of all memorial.org.

19:17:25 Please join it's free and easy to join We have hundreds of residents from across the city of this organization now and half of city council. And I just want to take a moment and say that we are really excited and and invested in these changes it's great

19:17:41 to see with this presentation, you know it's it's the right time to consider how to best use this space. And you know, it's a really treasured asset for the, for Newton it's very special and the whole community loves it and we love it and if you're every

19:17:59 day. You know, so, you know, we were hearing a lot about turf we're hearing a lot about lights. We know that we need to make it safe for people to walk and bike.

19:18:07 We know that schools are all around this area and that we must make it as safe as possible for children to use the space, and to be able to get there without being in danger.

19:18:16 So, lots of priorities, and we're really excited to hear what people say and I really encourage people to use their voice and advocate for this space so important things.

19:18:27 Okay, I'm gonna give Jacqueline Freeman, the option to speak.

19:18:33 Jacqueline you have to go.

19:18:37 Okay, I think I did it has already come to me.

19:18:40 I want to thank you for having us. And for having this meeting.

19:18:44 And I think that I love all the ideas at the beginning stage of a project like this, because we can really consider everyone's priorities and look at the face and reinvent it.

19:18:58 And my, my opinion right now would be, while we're doing that and kind of starting literally from the ground up, would be to also look towards the future.

19:19:07 And make sure we're maintaining it, whether that means we're turning it into church, or were regretting things, the condition of the field, really affects how often we can use them, whether we can use them each day as a longer day because the lights are

19:19:25 Each day is a longer day because the lights are working, or the seasons are longer because they're on turf or they're really well graded field. I think that's going to help us get as much use out of our eventual final product as possible, so I can't wait

19:19:41 to hear everyone's ideas, and thank you again for having us and for doing this.

19:19:49 Mike you have your hand raised. I'm going to give you the option to speak.

19:19:54 Just unmute.

19:19:58 Hi there, this is my Cali, I'm a West Newton resident. My daughter goes today. And I'm also Chair of Newton's transportation advisory group. Thanks again, we'll hear lots of accolades about both the presentation and the project it's a great time to do

19:20:14 it. And there's so much stuff happening there with the school and looking

at transportation and and other pieces and I guess I would like to extend it even more and echo what what cedar said, the easier, we can make it for kids, adults, families, spectators,

19:20:37 people from outside to get here safely and not in danger the safety of others unintentionally by, you know, whether it's, it's, you know, bad parking situation or a massive people coming in.

19:20:53 We can make this an inclusive space for everyone and I also wanted to add that your the emphasis on accessibility for such a large space is really commendable.

19:21:05 You know, that is something that our many of our parks don't have and I think it cuts off a lot of people from an opportunity to both participate and be spectators and.

19:21:17 And so I really want to say that but the the sort of the bigger step is, we know that no matter how much parking you put in a spot like this it will never be enough for some of these really big sporting events that people really want to have and do that

19:21:30 welcome and other people and I think it's also a chance to think about how we could have parking at other locations and bring people in, in a way that allows people to buy can walk safely as well, all together.

19:21:43 And so it's different from this I think it could be handled centrally but senior looking at a bunch of bunch of other different Park projects thinking about that might be a good time to it.

19:21:53 Thank you again.

19:21:56 Thank you, Mike.

19:22:02 The question. They are currently five baseball, softball diamonds at Halloran is the design committee considered removing one or two of them are moving them within the complex in favor of rectangular multipurpose fields.

19:22:14 I can answer that one.

19:22:17 We are looking at all options at this point, you know as cedar mentioned earlier, you know, this is really an end the commissioner as well. This is really the time to reimagine this area.

19:22:32 There are a few fields that that we likely will not touch.

19:22:38 We will certainly not be looking at.

19:22:41 Murphy field here, but the idea is to make this, particularly the area between crabs and the pool, more efficient so we were considering either removal or moving repositioning whatever our designer, as well as the, you know, what we get from public input

19:23:04 when we share these concepts, what the what the public input will be. We're going to look at as many options as we can to make this area, more Multi Purpose multi sport friendly.

19:23:21 Hey, next question Will this recording the zoom recording be posted if so, where.

19:23:30 Yes, this will be.

19:23:32 All of this will be posted, and we will be posting it on the main Parks, recreation and culture department page.

19:23:42 On the city of new web page.

19:23:45 Okay next comment the slide you showed earlier showed very high community interest in use of open space for bike paths, please consider adding a two way bike path on Parkland to provide pleasant easy access to the park, that can be extended is part of

19:24:00 another project to the Charles River.

19:24:03 Thank you for that car engine.

19:24:18 Okay, well the gaff pool project potentially change the footprint from what it is currently.

19:24:41 a whole, including gap pool. I'm not sure how much space, we would be able to allocate toward gab pool, but it's certainly something that we're, we're looking to assess and figure out.

19:25:08 any more comments comments I don't see any hands raised at this time.

19:25:13 Oh, this one, like,

19:25:17 okay, make your regular. Yeah, I already commented I just wondered if you could elaborate on how because they uses that as their school.

19:25:29 You know, facility as well, how you're going to work with day specifically on their needs.

19:25:36 We would certainly be including school department staff school committee, we will we will be talking to a butters to this park as well which include day.

19:25:56 So, so we will certainly be in contact with the school.

19:25:55 As we move through this we're not going to design this or work in a vacuum.

19:26:00 Thank you.

19:26:14 Ek Shanahan you had to speak just unmute.

19:26:10 Oh hi I actually just posted on the comments but I can speak as well.

19:26:14 So, I would you know recently at a game, and over at the album Warfield, and it is in such poor shape that it's, it's laughable how poorly, it's been maintained and I was wondering just for my own sake like is the maintenance of the fields themselves

19:26:37 currently being funded as part of the city budget.

19:26:59 You know the maintenance, the maintenance is a big problem like, you know, regardless of repositioning or moving or, you know, Whatever may happen in the future.

19:27:10 I mean these poor kids have to play in the dark, and the lights aren't working a lot of the times, so I'm just wondering how that is currently working right now like who's supposed to be taken care of the lights that have been blown and you know who's

19:27:27 supposed to be. I mean I know who's doing it currently but you know there's a there's a flooding issue at this field, all the time. And the kids themselves have to stop it up with these matte sponges and that seems

19:27:45 outrageous that that the kids who are in the middle of a game have to stop up the fields.

19:27:55 So I would like to have an answer as to is this part of like a deficit in the funding or was this, always,

19:28:20 always, like, is this the owners a maintenance of the field like on the specific league.

19:28:12 Newton Little League.

19:28:15 Hi, thanks for that question i can I can talk about when Luis Do you mind taking us back to your slide that talks about the budget, the parks, recreation and culture department has a grounds maintenance division, and that is the entity of the city that's

19:28:32 responsible for all of our athletic fields.

19:28:35 So the, the mayor has recently just in this last budget made a significant increase to our maintenance budgets, and those are the numbers that are presented

here.

19:28:46 So this is something that we definitely recognize you know has been underfunded and have the support of the mayor and the administration to start putting more budget funds toward these fields.

19:29:01 So this was the first step was taking a look at what our operating budget has to provide for the maintenance of the athletic fields.

19:29:11 The second step which we're currently working on here is to take a look at how to prioritize making some larger improvements to our fields.

19:29:22 And those include taking a look at systems that are at the end of life, such as the lights that you mentioned lights it Albemarle that system is, I think, over 50 years old.

19:29:35 Is that right, Louis.

19:29:36 It is closed 46.

19:29:40 So you know, it is beyond, and typically that would be 10 years maybe 20 at best. Yeah, these light systems are commercial grade, they have you know great longevity 2530 years I think you would have no issue of getting that longevity out of the light

19:29:57 system, we've definitely gotten our money's worth here.

19:30:01 Right. We do recognize that there's issues going on. We have had some testing done on the light systems, there's some issues with the polls there significant infrastructure, you know improvements that would be needed on a system that really is, at end

19:30:19 of life and difficult to invest in. at this point. So, part of this project is going to be as we look at the design and layout for the fields, having this replacement of the, of the light system is very important component of this particular project.

19:30:37 And we're going to you know again try to move that forward as quickly as we can, recognizing the situation that we're in now where the system just as an operating optimally and as we would want to see for for our sports groups.

19:30:51 So I hope that answers your question. I don't know if there's any other portions of that that I can add anything on for you. It does thank you very much Nicole.

19:31:01 It answers my question.

19:31:03 I have one additional question, what is the timeline. So, you know, this season is ending soon so I think these poor kids will, you know, get a reprieve from having to stop up fields and play in the dark.

19:31:18 I think this is the last weekend they have to endure this but I imagine this is not going to be solved by the spring.

19:31:29 And I also imagine this will not be solved by next fall. So what is your best guests and implementing and researching a viable solution in a timely manner.

19:31:42 Sure. You're right. This is going to take some time to get going on so we're at the very beginning stages and we're, we're, you know, working hard to get the conversation started right now to gather this public input, this is a really important for us

19:31:57 to be able to do the very beginning stages.

19:32:01 We are currently looking to bring on a design and engineer consultant that can help us with this project, as well as several other projects that we're going to be taking a look at our intent is to move as efficiently and quickly as we can.

19:32:18 While still taking the time to, you know, really dig in and learn about each of these locations the use needs the challenges that each of them presents and

and move that through and a timeline.

19:32:31 So we have some decisions to make on how to prioritize them.

19:32:35 Some of the things that we've discussed with prioritizing the projects is taking a look at you know any sites that might be able to bring on additional new field space, so that when other fields space goes under construction.

19:32:48 We have a place to move those things that could also include looking at light repairs and renovations or additions of lights to add on additional fields space.

19:33:01 Before we begin construction with Albemarle in particular, as we've talked about a little bit. It's really important that we do a holistic design, and that we also work closely with the gaff pool project to make sure that those two projects are working

19:33:19 closely together on on how this design layout will will work for the community in the future.

19:33:27 You know, am I hearing you right Nicole that there could potentially be a transitional field that this little league can utilize for example Murphy field.

19:33:37 I'm just throwing that out there because that that's a larger space and it seems like it would have room to have lights installed it's possible. I can't think of any other field that's large enough on that side of town but it's that am I hearing you correctly

19:33:52 there could be potentially a transitional space. Until this space is addressed. Yes, so we will need to work closely with our support groups to determine what kinds of spaces would be feasible for that, in particular the baseball groups.

19:34:09 You know we at Albemarle the current project budget that we're showing includes replacement of the lights that are currently there. But we have started discussions with little league.

19:34:20 If there was interested in expanding light systems Murphy field could be looked at, you know, if there was, you know, fundraising opportunity or something like that to help expand to there.

19:34:37 You know will need to stay really close with the support groups, as we try to come up with a timeline here.

19:34:40 You know what other spaces are available to them.

19:34:44 This may even look like some time of needing to rent space somewhere else to get through a construction period to be able to do this. So, you know, we know that we're going to be staying close with all of the school athletics and the youth sports groups,

19:35:00 as we go through this process.

19:35:03 Thank you very much, Lisa, I don't know if you want to add anything on just about, you know, sort of project timeline, in general, And what we're looking at here.

19:35:13 Yeah, I think Commissioner you you pretty much summed it up well you know i know that Albemarle is a priority based on the lighting equipment. excuse me, being at end of life.

19:35:27 So there's there's sort of an urgency there, but we also don't want to shortchange the public process and really getting Albemarle. Right. You know, and so the the project timeline it's really, you know, we're going to do our best to to get these improvements

19:35:48 sooner rather than later but we certainly had to work through a number of things before we we reached that point.

19:35:58 Okay, I have a couple of questions and comments is PRC looking at turfing or recreating the north side of Albemarle the seaside is that said an option for Terfel lights.

19:36:10 So it just the side of budding crap Street to the gaff pool.

19:36:15 So, um, you know, because, so I if I understand correctly so the seaside is the side south of gap pool and the side, the north side is crabs and Albemarle this corner here.

19:36:36 So, for artificial turf.

19:36:38 This has been identified as a good viable site.

19:36:45 And because it's already lit, as well, we would be replacing the lights, not necessarily in the same location because we will be looking at repositioning, but yes we add minimum would be re grading.

19:36:59 If not, artificial turf would be grass fields that are built to spec with you know better drainage.

19:37:09 And, and just built to spec where the turf sets us up for success.

19:37:15 We are also the looking at replacing lights at this field here behind the pool since it is already lit.

19:37:24 So we're part of the phase one is looking at replacing the, the lights that are end up life, and if there's some fundraising, we would certainly look at potentially expanding closer to the Murphy field or morphic field.

19:37:44 And question what is being incorporated into the drainage and field designed to make the fields, resilient to cheese cake Brook overflowing like it did this summer.

19:37:53 So that's something that will have our design engineer, take a closer look.

19:38:00 It is understood that, for example, artificial turf, is a great way to improve drainage, because you know it's got a whole drainage system, a ton of stone underneath.

19:38:14 More than a ton that was just figured, you know, but it's it's one measure where we could improve drainage there.

19:38:23 We certainly can't get away from the flooding, but we'll be working very closely with the Conservation Commission as well. On, on that because they're, they have some jurisdiction, so we'll be working with them and our design, or to come up with solutions

19:38:42 for some of the flooding and training issues.

19:38:47 Okay, Kathleen you have your hand up, you can unmute you ready to speak. Yes, thanks so much.

19:38:54 I'm a member of friends of tomorrow and I want to thank, Jacqueline their advocacy also a member of the Newton fields foundation and I want to thank Councillor John Oliver and Justin Traxler for their work in bringing these issues, you know, to the, to

19:39:09 the consciousness of the administration, people may not know that Parks and Rec is the department that always gets its budget slashed first when there's any kind of fiscal shortfall.

19:39:18 And it's only because of the advocacy of these groups, and all the parents and all the people who run the league's that that we're even getting the attention that this deserves and I wonder if you're thinking big enough, because I see this as an equity

19:39:30 issue, and the ARPA funds that the city's getting are supposed to be about addressing issues of equity and how people have been affected by the pandemic.

19:39:39 And there is nothing that is more important as we come out of the pandemic. Then, improving people's opportunities for recreation and to be outside being unhealthy environment.

19:39:50 It's really an equity and human rights issue. And I think that our money really should be tapped for this, and they're just one last thing and that is, we know from the previous meeting about death pool that there's overwhelming interest in gap cool being

19:40:04 enlarged, and even part of it being made year round, a bigger footprint. If that happens, that would display some field space at Albemarle so I'm wondering if you're considering something as radical as even purchasing more land permanently to create more

19:40:19 field space, because the need is there. And, and we should all be advocating for Parks and Rec to have the budget that they need to maintain these spaces and the ARPA money should be put into this and it should be put into this now.

19:40:33 Thanks.

19:40:36 Thanks Kathleen I appreciate that support. So, you know, as we've, as we've talked about I think that the mayor and the administration are very very supportive of the needs that are being looked at with this, you know fields plan.

19:40:50 So there's been several ways I just spoke about the budget increase that was put in place by Mayor fuller in this last budget.

19:40:59 There is also support for many projects, both with ARPA funds and city funds that have been announced, over the last few months that we're really excited about so you know we're specifically looking at for locations for fields first, and then we're going

19:41:17 to broaden that to six locations for field improvements. But in addition to that, the city and the mayor are supporting other projects, such as looking at lighting for athletic fields.

19:41:29 You mentioned the gaff pull project.

19:41:32 We have a arts outdoor amphitheater that we're going to do a feasibility study for so really just, I think a huge recognition for the parks, the fields, and the important role that those play in our community and the recognition is absolutely there from

19:41:52 the administration and they really appreciate the support of all the friends groups and the residents who have stepped forward to help us with this.

19:42:08 You see no additional comments are hands raised Pope is one, or any of the folks involved in these new project also involved in Highlands. I am guessing there are lots of lessons to be learned having spent millions to create a grass multipurpose field,

19:42:23 which in short order has been rendered virtually unusable and doesn't drain well, the vendors you are considering the same vendors who did that project, as I recall there are a lot of finger pointing between the architect and developer and back

19:42:37 and forth, the managers of the projects prepared to learn from the lessons of Highlands.

19:42:44 I can answer that the highlands is certainly lesson learned.

19:42:51 We, you know, as part of the public bid process we can exclude who wants to propose.

19:43:01 I believe that the designer for the highlands is included in that bid process.

19:43:08 You know, I think that there's, there are a lot of layers of things that, you know, one considers when doing a field, especially when hiring a designer and its experience, but also the project managers on the city side as well as having a good contractor,

19:43:30 the highlands project had some. Traditionally, it was traditionally a poor training area and did have some shortcomings so not to go too deep into that but we are using Highlands, as a, as a lesson learned, we are certainly not looking at replicating

19:43:52 some of those issues that arise from there.

19:43:57 Um, and, can I add a little bit more on to that too so I don't want us to look at the field improvement projects as just you know you improve the field and the work is done.

19:44:12 So, our department is also currently working on several plans to, you know, maintain, athletic fields to improve athletic fields. So the funding that's available the increased funding in the budget is currently being implemented and used by our grounds

19:44:31 maintenance division.

19:44:32 We have just completed our first year of our IPM plan our integrated pest management plan, which is basically very specified treatments for the athletic fields to keep them safe and playable.

19:44:48 We are looking at our athletic fields, especially the ones that have the high intensive use on them, and figuring out ways to utilize the additional maintenance maintenance funds to improve the conditions and keep them as you know, wearable has weekend

19:45:09 for for the use that they're going to get, of course we've got these projects which are looking to add additional fields space, both through lighting, adding evening, play time, as well as improving some field spaces that are currently not being utilized

19:45:27 to their conditions.

19:45:34 And the other piece that we have is our field scheduling. So we have a field scheduler who maintains the calendars for all of the school sports, and all of the youth athletic and adult sports in the community.

19:45:44 So really taking a look at how we utilize our artificial turf fields, how we are utilized our grass fields.

19:45:52 And, you know, eventually, we'd like to be able to put into place, a plan to be able to rest fields from time to time, as needed for the maintenance and upkeep of them so these are all important components that really can't stand alone, they all have

19:46:09 to be done in in integration. And so, we're certainly recognize that those need to be brought forward as part of, you know, taking on these improvements once they've completed.

19:46:23 I do see a comment.

19:46:26 A few questions actually, what will the next steps be, will there be additional public meetings. Will there be any trees planted as part of the project.

19:46:37 Will the playgrounds be impacted at all. So, next steps are to, you know, onboard the designer, based on their qualifications, they will, there will certainly be additional public meetings.

19:46:52 This is just the first of many.

19:46:58 We will certainly be looking at an increasing tree canopy coverage, wherever possible, obviously we have to balance us versus trees, if you will, at a

at an active recreation areas such as this, but our intent is to try to increase tree canopy where,

19:47:32 possible, and the playgrounds, on the south side of the park will not be impacted.

19:47:29 We will, we will be retaining that area, as, as it.

19:47:38 Sorry, go ahead.

19:47:39 Sorry, go ahead, Robert. I was just going to read the next comment to you. You finished. Yes, I am. Okay, you mentioned fundraising by the sport league such as potential Eddie Murphy, we're private funds required for the improvements in the highlands.

19:47:53 You know, that's a good question. I am not sure of the full financials of the highlands. How much was fundraise and how much was all, you know, CPA funds or other funding sources, but we can certainly look back at that and get back to you.

19:48:14 If Kai if you wouldn't mind just sending us an email with that question that we will, you know, make sure to look at, at that sooner rather than later.

19:48:36 Does developer mitigation or ongoing public private partnerships have any part in long term maintenance or field enhancement developer mitigation funds tend to help with improvements in parks and other areas, you know, obviously, if it's a developer that's

19:48:48 near this area, and we're approached on how to use mitigation funds we, we certainly will.

19:48:56 You know, evaluate and investigate that.

19:49:00 But yes, they, they generally do help that sense, as well as public private partnerships know little league.

19:49:08 Pretty much maintains Murphy field on their own.

19:49:15 isn't another question Will you commit to full transparency dedicate project web page post every design iteration collecting published public input continuously.

19:49:33 Yes.

19:49:32 Similar to McGrath. We will continue to, you know, engage the community posts post as many documents as we have available for each project online.

19:49:46 Yeah, we'll just continue working with the community.

19:49:51 Okay, Jen is just wondering if there is a rough time life timeline for completion three years, five years 10 years.

19:49:58 Oh gosh we, I don't think we can wait five or 10 years.

19:50:04 For this, at least for Phase One, the lights certainly will not allow us to wait that long.

19:50:14 The leaves will certainly not want us to wait that long. We're looking at least for phase one to do it sooner rather than later within the, you know, first three years.

19:50:26 Turn Kathleen asked Can you make sure you don't go so far down the path. So consultant towards a flood design, and it's hard to adjust without wasting lots of time and money, taking public input seriously is key to getting it right.

19:50:38 So I will continue working with the community and taking as much input.

19:50:44 Obviously there's a time where we have to, you know, put the project out for construction and bid.

19:50:52 And, but yeah we'll we're, we're open ears, we're going to continue working with the, with the community, and public input.

19:51:11 Cedar is just reminding everyone to join them at friends of albemarle.org.

19:51:23 Right. Looks like we're slowing down a little bit here.

19:51:27 I just want to say thank you to everyone. Louise thank you for putting a lot of time and energy into this presentation this evening. We will be hosting another presentation on athletic fields next Wednesday.