

18:01:24 Yeah, I'm enabling that now you're bringing I'm going to throw it this now. I know it's scary right now is that recording, I think. Yep, sure, record to this.

18:01:40 All right. Do you want me to start.

18:01:42 Um yeah you can go ahead and start letting people in and I will let them know that we're going to wait a couple minutes to have people arrive. Okay.

18:02:19 Good evening, everyone. Welcome. I'm just giving participants a few minutes to get linked into this meeting, so we'll begin in a few minutes. This is the fields community fields meeting for for elementary fields and brown Oak Hill fields.

18:04:13 Alright welcome everybody just giving some attendees a few minutes to join and I know we had some power issues this evening so if your house was anything like mine You had to restart your computer.

18:04:29 So, we'll give everybody a couple extra minutes to get into this meeting tonight's meeting is our community meeting on fields projects, and we'll be discussing first on the agenda, or elementary fields, and second will be the brown oak Middle School fields.

18:04:48 I would like to just invite everybody if you're interested to attend our community meeting on the gaff pool project that is happening tomorrow night at 6pm.

18:05:01 And you can pre register for that by going to parks and recreation Parks and Recreation website, which is [www. Newton ma.gov slash parks](http://www.Newton.ma.gov/parks) and on the front page there is a link to register for the whole project webinar tomorrow evening.

18:05:24 If you'd like to join us for that.

18:06:25 Please welcome we're just waiting for a few participants that are still getting into the meeting, and then we'll go ahead and begin.

18:06:33 Right, thank you so much Commissioner. Apologies for the delay.

18:06:38 Got the lights on itself. Finally, so the playoff game shall continue.

18:06:46 Let's have a storm related issues going on here this evening.

18:06:58 All right, we'll go ahead and get started. Just want to make everybody aware that our meeting tonight is being recorded. We'll have everything available after this meeting posted on our parks website.

18:07:13 And we're going to go ahead and kick it off here now.

18:07:18 Let's see. So, I'm Nicole banks and the Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and culture. Thank you for joining us this evening to talk about feel projects and our city.

18:07:30 The Parks and Recreation commission, established a fields committee to discuss the condition of our athletic playing fields, and to explore paths to improve them.

18:07:40 The fields committee has been meeting for over a year now and then work has been very valuable.

18:07:46 We have learned of the challenges that sport groups are facing in terms of field needs and what we can do to overcome these challenges.

18:07:56 The sport groups have participated in many of our meetings and have shared their ideas and interests and improving fields and increasing availability of field space.

18:08:05 We are here tonight to cast a wider net and listen to ideas and comments from not just our athletic groups but also from the neighbors, and others who visit these parks.

18:08:17 And again, as I mentioned earlier.

18:08:20 Tonight we'll be talking about the bird elementary fields first.

18:08:23 So we'll start off with a presentation about our fields initiative, and then learn more about the elementary fields will then take some time to solicit some comments, we can do comments through chat here this evening.

18:08:38 If you prefer to write in your comment, you will be able to do so at the bottom of your screen you will see an icon that says chat, you can write in your chat comments, anytime throughout the presentation, and we'll make sure to read those items in and

18:08:55 provide answers or take those questions back and get answers available for those in the future.

18:09:02 We will also be taking verbal comments, if you prefer. And the way to participate in that way is to press the raise hand button, virtual hand raised on the bottom of your screen.

18:09:15 And that will let us know that you would like to speak.

18:09:18 That way we can listen to your comments, everyone will be able to hear you. And again, we'll, we'll work on providing answers.

18:09:26 If you don't wish to participate in the meeting and that way this evening or if you leave this meeting and think of a great idea after we're finished here.

18:09:35 You can also always email in comments to us at the email address, I'll put this in the chat, but the email.

18:09:43 Sorry, a little bit of noise in my kitchen.

18:09:46 The email is athletic fields at Newton, ma.gov, and I'll put that in the chat box for you all. So at this time, I'd like to introduce Luis Torres de Maria Tse he's our Director of parks and open space, and he'll be presenting this evening.

18:10:04 Once we get through the burb presentation, and our conversation about where.

18:10:10 We'll take a short break and then we will go on, move on to our presentation on the brown Oak Hill, athletic fields. So thank you all so much for being here.

18:10:23 Louise, take it away. Thank you so much Commissioner.

18:10:26 Welcome everyone, as Commissioner bank stated I'm Louise pres de Maria is the director of parks and open space for the Newton Parks, Recreation and culture.

18:10:37 Just giving you all a brief overview of the borough elementary school fields, and you know some of the exciting things we have going on, or that we would like to implement here.

18:10:53 So just to go through the agenda will be talking about the athletic fields projects overview.

18:11:01 The for elementary school fields presentation, and then we will have listening and discussion session.

18:11:10 So, a brief overview of the parks, recreation and culture department, we manage and oversee nearly 600 acres of parkland with varying recreational interests ranging from aquatic facilities to trails to field hardcourts athletic fields parts with historic

18:11:31 significance and parts that fall within wetlands and waterways, along with dog parks and a few others are parts and fields are spread across all villages wards and school zones.

18:11:46 And in this map here you can see the bright green is what is considered parks and recreation areas like green conservation land, and the pale beige color is school land property, and the site that will be talking about is right up here.

18:12:10 So why improve athletic fields.

18:12:14 Our current facilities experience, little to no rest time and are extremely overused. You can see here in this image, a field that was recently renovated.

18:12:28 As of, 2019.

18:12:30 You can see this where pattern that that is shown here, and this picture was taken a couple of weeks ago.

18:12:39 Another reason for improving athletic fields as part of the open space recreation plan, we, we put out of the city put out a survey, asking the community various questions.

18:12:54 One of the questions as you see here is to for residents to provide.

18:13:01 You know, input on the open space resources and greatest demand and playing fields came in second. And this was a survey that roughly 1300, Newton residents participated in.

18:13:17 And in terms of how important.

18:13:21 Various recreational features or resources are to resonance and those that responded to the survey found that athletic fields were third most important, you know, a bit of a anomaly here, if you will, as there are parts that have fields.

18:13:43 So, because it started here doesn't necessarily mean that it's 39, if you will.

18:13:48 So some of our departments field and park improvement goals are to improve quality and quantity of usable multi use Multi Purpose field.

18:13:59 We certainly want to improve accessibility and park and feel the manatees.

18:14:06 We would like to establish standardize Park construction details so that we can better manage operations and maintenance. Once these fields and parks are constructed.

18:14:19 And then of course invest equitably equitably and Newton's athletic fields and parts across the city.

18:14:26 So, some of you that haven't been involved over the past year might be wondering, how do we prioritize the fields that we're presenting for improvement.

18:14:37 Well, we, we looked at the open space and recreation plan that we recently completed.

18:14:43 We also look at the city of noon capital improvement plan also known as CIP.

18:14:51 We look, we looked at potential for greatest city wide benefit.

18:14:57 Project sequencing so looking at fields that could provide a net increase in field space, sort of being brought online first potential for expansion of multi use fields, expanding evening plays such as lighting improvements or additions to already lit

18:15:17 areas.

18:15:19 Player safety, of course. And, as well as integrated with other Park.

18:15:25 Other projects and apart for example pathway and McGrath, and then the gap pool project.

18:15:33 And, you know, how do we arrive to add a viable project design. So we look at, we compare Parks, Recreation and culture goals with community input, as well as safety and regulatory guidelines, meaning current standards for athletic fields.

18:15:55 Conservation Commission, and other environmental entities as well as other regulatory guidelines that might be required such as state building codes and such.

18:16:05 And with that, we develop project goals, and then the project goals lead us to a project that will successfully.

18:16:16 Meet the community's needs but also provide the Parks and Recreation, and

culture department success in terms of managing these areas. Once they're built.
18:16:29 So here's phase one of the cap athletic field capital projects. As you can see a map of noon here, so the fields and parts that we're looking to, you know, renovate or improve or Albemarle forte Park, birth School, which will be talking about now.

18:16:52 Brown own killed fields McGrath Park and Bobby Graceland

18:16:58 some additional athletic field projects in the words are the feasibility of sports lighting at Newton North High School, Tiger Stadium Winkler stadium and Brandeis road field artificial turf carpet replacement and South High School feasibility for noon

18:17:21 South High School Brandeis road field, artificial turf field lighting those as well as the replacement of the turf carpet at the Newton's North High School Tiger Stadium.

18:17:36 And we are also looking to improve or relight the sports lighting at forte park with high efficiency, low spillage sports lighting.

18:17:48 As a result of developer funded mitigation.

18:17:53 We also have increased maintenance, including additional seating fertilizing the narration.

18:18:01 And here's an overview of how we've improved or increased maintenance.

18:18:08 There are two main buckets that sort of fit within the, the field fields projects or fields in general, and there's turf mowing and then turf management, and here's a general description of what each bucket entails.

18:18:26 Looking at fiscal year, 2021, which ended June 30 of this year, and we began July 1 within with an improved budget, where turf mowing budget was increased by it.

18:18:45 By 125,000, and the turf management budget was increased by 175,000.

18:18:52 So, now getting to the, to the exciting part here is the bird elementary school fields.

18:19:00 So the bird school property is 10.1 acres. That includes the chords playground school building parking and field area.

18:19:14 As the existing amenities within the field area and or the open space in this lot is little league t ball playground community garden.

18:19:25 There's roughly 57 parking spaces.

18:19:30 Three are Ada walking path, which serves as Safe Routes to School one full size soccer field and one full size lacrosse field. And there are also recently planted trees as a co op ed remembrance project along this pathway.

18:19:51 So here are you know the the permitted hours for birth school pretty low compared to some of the other sites.

18:20:03 As you can see, the, the summer has zero hours, and that is.

18:20:10 And then in the fall there again very minimal hours. If I may jump back to this image here. A lot of the issues as to why this field is not permitted is because there's a lot of great changes.

18:20:27 Plenty of depressions very hard surface on the field itself. So there are a lot of player safety issues, and in terms of expanding playability this path itself.

18:20:43 You know, provides a little bit of us conflict there.

18:20:48 So some of the improvement ideas and goals that we as a department, along with what the athletic subcommittee has provided along with other stakeholders, is to maximize field and site layout to increase permitted field space, improve accessibility, by

18:21:06 way of a perimeter walking path, which would include the Safe Routes to School path that's there now. I improved site furniture offerings bike racks benches and drink, and potentially drinking fountains.

18:21:21 Assess potential environmental impacts of developing the field regraded and properly develop multipurpose field areas to meet current athletic field surface specs and standards, improved field drainage.

18:21:37 Install irrigation reconfigure Safe Routes to School pathway and replant the coven remembers trees along the rec reconfigured pathway and increase tree canopy coverage, where possible, and we are.

18:21:54 We have an approximate construction budget of 500 k based on some of these improvement goals and ideas.

18:22:03 In terms of what we've done today.

18:22:06 We have attained Community Preservation Act funding for design and engineering work. We prepared request for qualifications and advertise bid for designer to help us accomplish these projects.

18:22:24 And the next steps are revealing the proposals which we're doing as we speak.

18:22:30 To select design from that can again help us develop these fields.

18:22:38 And then of course, come back and provide preliminary field design and layout.

18:22:46 You know developed based on community input.

18:22:51 And these will be again presented to you all. Once we have that consultant on board and have provided all the input that you all are providing tonight.

18:23:04 With that, I will leave it open to questions and discussions.

18:23:08 We will be posting this presentation, recording, as well as transcript of the chat, and you can find it at this website at our website. And here's the link, and we can post that on the chat as well.

18:23:28 And with that, I leave it open to the floor for questions, comments, input.

18:23:37 Please great presentation we always enjoy your presentations and even out of breath running back from the south stadium fields.

18:23:47 You were able to get us through all of this information. Thank you for that.

18:23:52 So we have a good overview of the athletic field improvement plan. We have some details about Burke. And at this time you can participate, either by writing into the chat box, and we will read those through as they come in, or raising your hand and Robin

18:24:12 who is with us here this evening is going to help.

18:24:16 By bringing our attendees in to be able to speak with us so thanks Robin for being here with us. Okay, um, Louis, Doris has the hand raised and when they will allow them to talk.

18:24:28 They just have to unmute. Yes, thank you.

18:24:32 Yes, I am Doris lewis i am at a butter and I like to take every opportunity to commend everyone who's involved with the Burfoot field improvements to date.

18:24:45 The tree planting the commemorative tree planting is, as you know, is already a massive improvement it's beautiful and will stand for the ages, I would like to help the quality of the turf we've been helped out quite a bit of course by the rains but the

18:25:03 quality of the turf is visibly improved the whole maintenance of the area

on the perimeter of the field has been great. So I just want to commend everyone who's been involved in the planning and execution, it's, it's been lovely to see.

18:25:23 I had some concerns actually about I pm and I took the time to educate myself and I noticed that there is an IP and committees, through which and the use of pesticides is approved, and then there is within the guy IP and guidelines that there would be

18:25:47 that notification of butters, or any community groups or anyone with the right to know, as well as yellow sign so I'm, I'm feeling heartened about what the prospect would be, although I noticed that I pm is not a major part of the effort.

18:26:10 So again, thank you to everyone who's involved with the Burghfield.

18:26:14 Thanks so much Doris Luis and I will make sure we mentioned your comments back to our grounds maintenance team they do take a lot of pride in the maintenance and upkeep of the areas.

18:26:24 They also oversee our I pm program, and you are correct, on our parks web page we do have a section for IBM integrated pest management, and that plan includes treatments for athletic fields, only so we would never be putting a treatment on an entire park,

18:26:44 but very specific to athletic fields.

18:26:47 Only when it was determined that the weeds and overgrowth was to a point that we needed to implement that plan, and you are correct, we would have a listing of any of the athletic fields that would receive a treatment, and we do about our notice and a

18:27:05 public hearing to answer any questions for the neighbors as well. So, those are very important steps for us with that program, and thanks for your comments in general about birth.

18:27:18 Okay, and Nicole we have a couple of comments, will the drainage efforts include the playground area or just the fields.

18:27:27 You are and I can, I can take that Robin.

18:27:31 Thank you for the comment, the drainage improvements, we are looking at right now, just the fields were our main focus at the birth school field is to improve athletic, you know, expand athletic field availability and this is one that would certainly

18:27:55 increase by improving drainage and recreating.

18:28:01 Okay, next question. Prioritizing this project would really help with the athletic field crunch, especially since there is so much underutilized space.

18:28:11 What is the potential timeline for bringing these reconfigured figured slash improved fields online.

18:28:20 Great question. Thank you for that, and you know we we do see the birth school fields as really sort of the low hanging fruit, the one that could be brought online first.

18:28:37 However, we, we are also looking at.

18:28:41 As I mentioned earlier in the presentation looking at lighting some of the artificial turf areas that we already have at the high schools. So if we're able to do that.

18:28:52 You know that would add a good amount of time in field space while we really take a look at this we. Once we have the professional consultant on board.

18:29:04 We will certainly be looking at all the various athletic field sites that we've that we've prioritized.

18:29:14 And, and then develop a more a schedule, looking at construction, which ones go offline, which one's gone online, when, and when. So, to answer that

question we don't have a very specific schedule but birth school is a priority in terms of expanding athletic

18:29:33 field use.

18:29:36 The next comment, when new fields are properly maintain, they should not need herbicides regularly.

18:29:45 That is something that we certainly will be talking to our maintenance division.

18:29:51 You know some of the.

18:29:56 The IPM treatments are based on usage and need as well as what emerges out of the, the grass so we'll, we'll certainly be looking at it but yes that that's that's a, that's probably an accurate statement that we won't be needing to go there and so often

18:30:14 at some of the older fields.

18:30:17 And just to reiterate our IBM program does monitoring of the weed thresholds, so we will be collecting data on any field site prior to making a determination and not just treating the fields, you know, on a regular schedule, but more reviewing the actual

18:30:37 field what types of weeds are prevalent. And when they reach a threshold level that the treatment is needed.

18:30:44 Only then would it be recommended to move forward in our IBM plan.

18:30:51 Okay, I do not see any more comments or hands raised at this time.

18:30:58 Okay. Excellent. Thanks everyone for those comments I'll give it a couple more minutes if anybody would like to raise their hand.

18:31:06 You'll see the raise hand button at the bottom of your screen.

18:31:10 That will allow us to see and we can bring you into speak also just want to remind everybody I know not everyone loves to speak at these meetings. So, especially sometimes when they're recorded.

18:31:22 So please keep in mind we have put in the chat for you, our website so that you can find out more information and are our email address, parks, at Newton ma.gov is also available to right into.

18:31:42 I think we have actually the athletic fields is what's in the is in the chat so athletic fields at Newton Ma. gov is our email address. So you can also write into that sometimes also you might think of something after the meeting, wish you would mentioned

18:31:59 it, and we'd love to hear from you.

18:32:03 I do Commissioner see another comment in the chat.

18:32:08 Given the challenging state of Newton's fields, is this location at candidate for lights or turf.

18:32:15 I right now we're open ears, you know, we're really just listening to input. This particular site because of its history of being a landfill posted some challenges to install lighting and artificial turf, which could significantly impact the scheduling

18:32:39 in which this field gets developed and brought online. So this is something that will have our consultant really look into. And, and see if this is an adequate location for that, but based on the history of it.

18:32:53 We haven't been thinking about this site necessarily for turf and light.

18:33:01 Take Doris has her hand raised three doors, just unmute and you'll be at yes I did feel that I should mention that, as I was doing research also I looked at what had been done in the past and 2020.

18:33:16 is still q4 plus and pilots and Silent Spring Institute which is

internationally respected and Newton based did do a toxicity statement on that looking up the research that I do need to just bring into words endocrine disruptors that we know a lot more

18:33:43 than we did even a few years ago about endocrine disruptors and how even a small amount of those can be

18:33:54 very detrimental to help particularly in young people.

18:33:58 If I had kids on those fields I would be questioning very carefully, any use of compounds that might be endocrine disruptors I just want to keep that visible to second, the statement of the person that said that I will maintain field will probably have

18:34:19 less need for q4 Plus or or pilots and that.

18:34:29 Correct. I PM, use involves spot us in not broadcast use of of any such chemicals I felt a responsibility I'm a chemist and I felt a responsibility just to bring up endocrine disruptors as an issue that needs to be kept front and center, as we're looking

18:34:48 at the pluses and the minuses of IPS.

18:34:54 Thanks Doris, you know, everything you've stated it, I feel like I'm at one of our IPO meetings, right now so thank you for the research that you've clearly done on our program for others who might want more information on this on our website we do list

18:35:10 the products we list the product labels. We follow all of the instructions and we also have as part of our IP and policy details about when and how we administer the products.

18:35:24 So things like you know we would mow the grass right before we did a treatment, we would do it early in the morning, before you know the winds pick up during the day, we would be monitoring, what the conditions of rain, that would be coming in and make

18:35:41 sure that we are only applying in spot treatments like you said, only two athletic fields, and are doing that in a in a responsible way that follows our policies for the program so really appreciate you, you looking into that and feel free to send us

18:35:59 any more questions that you have about that program,

18:36:08 doors, you're allowed to speak just unmute yourself.

18:36:13 I just want to say thank you.

18:36:15 Thanks Doris and Doris also mentioned, I think, as well as a previous chat comment that you know the the improvements of the field would lessen the need for IBM treatments, which could be the case but these projects improvements will also be done in coordination

18:36:38 with our maintenance program and turf management plan for the, for the fields, and in this past year, our operating budget for the maintenance of the fields, which you may have had a slide under our general field maintenance information that just highlights

18:36:57 the budget increase that Mayor fuller supported this past year.

18:37:03 This this also came from our conversations in our fields committee meetings, working with our stakeholder groups our parks and recreation commission to really identify the need to increase the maintenance budget and that's another area where with a strong

18:37:21 turf maintenance program, we can, you know, keep better, where management of weeds, all of those things that are really important for the athletic field so we're very happy to have had the support for that budget increase, and that is that

was increased

18:37:39 funding available to us on July 1 of this year, and our grounds maintenance division is working on their plans to utilize that funding for our athletic fields.

18:37:56 Well, great comments and, you know, as Louise said, you know, really burger is about developing some fields that currently aren't able to be utilized to the full extent I think there might be some younger children size fields that get put into spaces

18:38:17 that might work.

18:38:18 But really improving the turf, and looking at the size of fields that we could fit there could help add to our inventory of use. So bar is very important component of the overall fields plan here, and quite possibly could be one of the projects that we

18:38:37 decided to move forward with first or close to the beginning, so that's exciting.

18:38:45 All right, well, at this time.

18:38:48 Let's see what time are we at I might do we want to take a quick break Louise and just give folks a minute I want to make sure those who are coming for the second part of the discussion, have a have a few minutes to get here.

18:46:29 Hi everyone, welcome back.

18:46:35 Right, so I'm for the second portion of our fields meeting this evening, we're going to review our field project information in whole, the information that we're presenting on is the culmination of our work with our field subcommittee, which was a subcommittee

18:46:55 put together by our parks and recreation commission.

18:46:59 The group is worth worked closely with the school department.

18:47:04 With our school athletics, as well as with our new athletic groups to put together some of the challenges faced in, in regards to field space field schedules field quality and condition that these groups are facing, as well as just taking a look at some

18:47:28 of the projects that have been a part of our wider planning documents are open space and recreation plan was updated in the past year, as well as our capital plan that we work on each year to provide updates within that of projects that should come forward.

18:47:47 So we're going to review and highlight a little bit of the athletic field project needs in general, and then we will have a presentation on the details for brown oak fields, and then again we will open it up for comments will be taking comments through

18:48:05 the chat function you can write those in at any time during the presentation or after the presentation. And if you would like to speak after the presentation we can do the raise hand function, and bring you into the discussion here as well.

18:48:20 So with that, I'm going to turn it over to Luis for the second part of our presentation thanks so much Louise.

18:48:29 Thank you, Commissioner. Hello everyone again, who's been here, and welcome to those who who just joined.

18:48:44 I'm Louise pressed him or easy director of parks and open space for the parks, recreation and culture department. And we're will be discussing. At this point, the brown Oak Hill, middle School fields.

18:48:53 And in the agenda we'll, we'll go through. As I see, most people stayed

from the previous meeting the athletic fields projects overview, the fields presentation for brown Oak Hill.

18:49:07 And then of course listening and discussion.

18:49:09 So really quickly. Parks, Recreation and culture we manage nearly 600 acres of land of parkland ranging from, you know, aquatic facilities, through wetlands waterways flash parks dog parks, etc.

18:49:29 bright green is Parkland pale green is conservation land, and the page color is school department land. So why improved fields.

18:49:43 Our current field facilities experience little to no rest time and are certainly overused. This is an image of where patterns had the Newton Highlands playground, that this picture was taken up a couple of weeks ago.

18:49:59 As part of the open space and recreation plan is Commissioner bank stated, we put out a survey where roughly 1300 residents participated and playing fields came in at number two on their open space resources in greatest demand.

18:50:19 In terms of how important certain open space resources were to those residents that participated athletic fields, was also sort of at the top of the list.

18:50:37 Some of the goals that we're looking to achieve with these improvements are improving quality and quantity of usable multiuse multipurpose field increase accessibility.

18:50:53 Establish standardize Park construction details so that we can better manage and.

18:50:58 And so we can better manage operation and maintenance and invest equitably equitably in Newton's athletic fields and parks across the city.

18:51:08 So, how do we, how did we prioritize fields, we looked at as Commissioner bank stated, we looked at the open space for recreation plan gained all that input.

18:51:19 We also look at the tip or the capital improvements plan, we looked at the sites that have the potential for greatest city wide need prioritizing new fields so basically, expanding playability first before improving.

18:51:40 Some of the ones that we, we need to improve potential expansion of multi use fields, expanding evening play such as lightning and addition to lighting in certain areas player safety, and then integrated with other projects where, where these are occurring.

18:52:03 How do we arrive at a viable project design, we look at safety and regulatory guidelines parts recreation and culture goals community input and all of that gets mixed in into project goals and, and we generally.

18:52:20 We then move forward with a project once we've accomplished all these.

18:52:26 Here is an overview of the six sites that will be looking at in the coming years. There's Albemarle forte birth school brown Oh kill McGrath and Bobby bracelet.

18:52:41 Additional athletic fields projects feasibility of sports lighting and new North High School stadium turf replacement. Add New South Winkler stadium and Brandeis road field feasibility of lighting at the Brandeis road field and self High School.

18:53:04 The artificial turf replacement at New North High School stadium relating forte Park. As part of developer funded mitigation. And then the increased maintenance by additional seating fertilizing narration.

18:53:21 Here's the breakdown of the operating budget for for increased maintenance. Here's fiscal year, 2021 fiscal year, 2022 significant increase, and then here is the increase in the budget from fiscal year, 2021 to 2022.

18:53:42 Then on the left hand side are the two buckets that relate to our athletic fields, and how these two buckets are the sort of broken down.

18:53:54 So, the fun part, round know kill Middle School fields.

18:54:00 The field area here is roughly 11.3 acres.

18:54:07 It's adjacent to Winkler Stadium, you see here on the lower right hand corner. Last year we live the stadium.

18:54:17 That's how I came running because the lights had a bit of an issue, had to run over there to get them turned on, but the bronco kill fields have a challenge corps could fit for full size soccer lacrosse fields.

18:54:37 There are two softball fields, along with some cutouts for t ball.

18:54:44 It's literally middle school baseball practice track and field.

18:54:51 There are 38 parking spaces at the old school, middle school parking area.

18:54:56 And then a lot more for the Newton South High School.

18:55:01 And then, as I mentioned at Jason to the high school synthetic field, and track, that's light it.

18:55:10 Some of the issues we found their preliminary analysis is basically the entire field area, including this section here, which is not excuse me Sorry, which was not circled, they all have players save it all has player safety issues there's significant

18:55:38 deletion in the field, poor drainage. And if you see here in this area there's this sort of brown line here that continues through that is a train line that is causing some depression along this line.

18:55:48 So we are looking and working with DPW to figure out how to fix that. And, and then once we go in there to renovate the field.

18:55:59 Hopefully that that drainage line would have been fixed and the depression would also be fixed.

18:56:06 Here's some of the improvement goals, and ideas that we've developed based on working with the stakeholders, as well as internally some of the things that we as a department would like to see.

18:56:20 So it's maximize field and site layout and crews permitted field space, prove accessibility, improve site furniture offerings bike racks benches drinking fountains recreate the field area to meet current athletic field specs.

18:56:39 Expand irrigation, and improve field drainage and right now just based on needs, we're looking at a, an approximate construction budget of 500,000.

18:56:50 The brown Oh kill fields does get a significant amount of use, particularly during the spring and the fall.

18:57:14 The summer there are some permitted hours, but the bulk of the use.

18:57:05 It's for fall, and that is mostly soccer.

18:57:11 And some of the completed steps, many of you have seen this already we secured design funding we put out a request for qualifications for a designer, we are reviewing the proposals, so that we can select a firm to help us through all these projects.

18:57:32 Develop preliminary field design and layout, based on community input, as well as stakeholder input and then of course, bring these back to you all, and, and the community for updates on how that's going with that.

18:57:50 Here is our email as well as the link to where you can find the presentation chat recordings, as well as the voice recordings. And we've also added that to the chat for everyone, so that you can just click on it and access that will be posting this in

18:58:11 the next day or two.

18:58:13 And with that I think we just leave it open to the floor for questions comments concerns input.

18:58:22 Thank you.

18:58:26 Thanks Louise.

18:58:27 So again everyone that can, you know, raise your hand if you'd like to speak. If you prefer to use the chat just hit the chat button at the bottom, you can type in, we will read the comments in and look to provide answers.

18:58:43 Thanks everyone.

18:58:45 It just didn't.

18:59:02 You can

18:59:02 see speak.

18:59:12 Alright, Justin you can speak.

18:59:16 Thank you, um, I guess since we're in a public forum here My name is Justin Traxler I resided 36 meta comment road. I am the president of Newton girls soccer for those who don't know we're programs supporting residents grades K through 12 currently have

18:59:37 about 1200 players. I'm also the founder of the Newton athletic field foundation. We're a group dedicated to improving athletic fields here in Newton and so far have over 1000 residents supporting our cause.

18:59:49 I wanted to start just really quickly here as quickly as I can with kind of an open question I'm going to answer for you but what, what are the following have in common and bear with me I'm going to read off this list.

19:00:03 Brookline Cambridge Natick wall fam Weston Needham Lexington the cell college president YMCA of Newton folio soccer club Newton Boston College nobles river school beaver Country Day School and Harvard University.

19:00:17 And I listed those because every one of those institutions and municipalities has come to the conclusion that synthetic turf is a critical part of their athletic infrastructure, they see that it has a higher quality playing service and any grass field

19:00:31 and Newton.

19:00:34 They realize they're available regardless of the weather, such as today. Grass fields have now been closed in Newton for three days in a row, and they do not degrade under excessive use and Luis he stole my thunder by showing the photo of Highlands.

19:00:48 I got sort of an update today that I decided I would be very salient to the discussion tonight, which is Highlands is now closed until further notice.

19:00:57 a good thing, but the bad thing is that we are really not able to maintain fields at the usage levels that we need to support our athletes.

19:01:13 So, Newton has got to modernize our athletic facilities we, we all know about concerns with synthetic turf, the articles are all over the place. So let's work together as a community and address those concerns, and I suggest you all look down the road

19:01:28 at daily field which is just a stone's throw away from the Charles River recently installed two beautiful synthetic turf fields. The project was reviewed and approved by Newton zone conservation committee.

19:01:42 So here's my main point of the four projects that park and rec a shared with you. Not a single one has been committed to, to have synthetic turf.

19:01:51 And yes, some are being considered but there's been no commitments made. If we miss the opportunity to do this now, our fear and concern is that we will be further years behind what this problem.

19:02:04 So I speak tonight, on behalf of thousands of Newton families not only Newton girls soccer but I've been in touch with many throughout Newton.

19:02:13 And I'm doing my best to implore Park and Recreation and culture department.

19:02:18 The Community Preservation committee and the park and rec commission to start looking objectively at the tremendous benefits delivered by synthetic turf to our residents.

19:02:29 And if we want to support our athletes turf, is no longer just an option.

19:02:34 It's an absolute necessity Thank you for listening my last comment. I am going to sign off.

19:02:41 Thanks Justin and thanks for all your support and participation in.

19:02:46 You know the field subcommittee meetings that we've been having this past year and have have led the wider public know has been a great opportunity to get to work with our, our support groups both the school side and the youth sports side though so thank

19:03:01 you for all of that.

19:03:02 It's interesting. This is the fourth field, out of six athletic field projects that we've highlighted for what we're calling phase one.

19:03:15 And I think every single one of the public meetings, artificial turf has been at least talked about asked about.

19:03:23 So I think the thing to do is that we're certainly open to to supporting artificial turf. We're certainly open to reviewing, you know, any of our sites for the potential of artificial turf.

19:03:41 I think that there's a lot that's that goes into that review. You know, we take a look at where do we have artificial turf in the city, where do we need additional artificial turf, we take a look at the the parking, the size of the layout what type of

19:03:59 turf field, could we get. So those will all be things that we can consider during this process.

19:04:05 You know, Justin as you know we haven't made any final decisions for the design of any of the projects so we certainly still have the time to take that this comment in this evening and think about it.

19:04:19 When you know, when I look at this the six projects that we have highlighted the two sites that we have had some conversations about our forte, and Albemarle those two particular sites were discussed, you know, just as part of our fields meetings as potential

19:04:39 sites.

19:04:40 And so, you know, I don't think that it's that we're not including artificial turf in this package.

19:04:46 It's that we are starting off by looking at what can we, what can we improve at at these four sites.

19:04:53 One thing to keep in mind for us as we're doing the design and plans for each of these sites, is that we do expect that we will be seeking funding from the CPA or from the CPC so for CPA funding, and the CPA funding is not able to pay for the artificial

19:05:15 turf portion of the project.

19:05:18 So we'll certainly need to think through what our funding request would look like, and I believe work work very closely with our groups and partners on a project like that.

19:05:31 Louise I don't know if you have anything else to add about, you know the

project sites we're looking at and reviewing artificial turf as part of this.

19:05:43 I think you pretty much hit the nail on the head. You know, we, as I mentioned in our previous meeting for school field.

19:05:54 We are open ears. We still have, you know, the professionals that need to look at this more deeply and really assess every site, and then advise us and help us make those decisions.

19:06:11 And then, also, In the meantime, you know, seeking input from the stakeholders in the community, such as, you know, soccer lacrosse flag football.

19:06:22 Ultimate Frisbee softball baseball Little League, we, we will be coming back.

19:06:29 We're not going to build something in the dark of night.

19:06:34 You know, we're.

19:06:36 Long story short, we're open ears. No.

19:06:43 So I.

19:06:42 Yeah, we're, we're going to look at all options possible here and then determine which are the most feasible sites, as you mentioned, Commissioner.

19:07:07 I am seeing a few comments on the chat, and I can take those Robin, if you don't mind. Agree 100% with Justin's comment we need a commitment to to what this parking have to do with turf.

19:07:10 I think we all understand that, artificial turf expands playability.

19:07:17 We will, we certainly need to take that into consideration because artificial turf would be widely used and we certainly don't want to push the popularity of this sites.

19:07:33 By pushing people to park on neighborhood streets that's why parking is, you know, very, very important, as well as just in general for athletic facilities as you all know, carrying equipment, back and forth, parking is certainly, you know, a good, a

19:07:52 good amended to have to support that.

19:07:56 The next comment is, I think the stakeholders are uniformly supporting turf.

19:08:04 Yeah.

19:08:05 And that is, thank you for those comments that's what we have at this point.

19:08:12 So anyone else.

19:08:14 Oh, it looks like Justin would like to speak again, I'm going to

19:08:23 unmute yourself, Justin and you're all set to speak.

19:08:29 I'm sorry to come back on I just got so excited hearing the word turf said five times within the last few minutes and I did want to just clarify one part though of why I'm looking for commitment now, which is the substrate of a grass field and the substrate

19:08:44 of a synthetic turf field are really completely different. And so if we do invest.

19:08:49 And I'm not sure we can budget the same amount for brown kill and burn, but let's even for sake of discussion say we can add \$500,000, I'm expecting we're going to have to, you know, read grade, read, probably redo the irrigation system augment the soil

19:09:06 cedar sod.

19:09:09 After that investment, it's not really going to make sense to then come back in a year to dig that all up again put down gravel, much more extensive drainage.

19:09:20 And the other advantages that we have with turf especially brown Oak Hill, I think, Luis you might not have mentioned floods so often that it's the only field I know of at least that is closed when others are often open that sort of that last one that

19:09:33 doesn't dry out for days.

19:09:36 And even today, or even recently without rain for weeks. They're still wet areas on that field so drainage is critical. Drainage opportunities with grass are pretty much limited the perimeter drains, as we have at Highlands and using crowns and that just

19:09:53 can only get so far, so I. Yes, I think this is actually the site where we can make a big difference on capacity of turf.

19:10:02 I'll also be submitting in Nicole some materials that put together, doing sort of a compare and contrast and why I feel this is a much better site than Albemarle, but I'm not going to go into detail.

19:10:14 I don't think on this call makes sense at this stage.

19:10:17 Thank you. Thanks Justin and I would, I would agree that it's something that we should talk about and consider early on in the process. We of course do want to wait till we have our design and engineer firm on board with us, so that we can really take

19:10:33 a look at these sites and start to have the conversation with the community.

19:10:39 In addition, I know somebody mentioned the parking but site selection, you know, another thing we've seen and I think this is pretty standard in the industry is artificial turf fields are typically lighted, and so that's certainly something that we're

19:10:55 seeing in Newton right now is that, you know, we have three artificial turf fields into the three or not lighted so you know to really maximize the use of playability of those sites.

19:11:09 The lighting is kind of a natural component to to partner with that project and of course I think that is also something for us to discuss when we, when we think about site selection.

19:11:21 So I just wanted to mention that one as well.

19:11:26 Okay, the next fluid is Phil clip it's laid up president of nude soccer.

19:11:32 Newton youth soccer also represents about 1250 players in their families in the program.

19:11:39 We also see this location as a great hope to build a multi purpose lit field on the south side of the city. There's tons of space. There's tons of parking in the light next to Oak Hill, plus the one across from Brown and Oak Hill.

19:11:53 There are lights already nearby. It's highly utilized already by two middle schools in the high school plus many other user groups is a large turf that multi use complex brown Oak Hill has the potential to be one of the crown jewels in the new park system

19:12:09 for fields. This question is does the feasibility request being made to the consultants include a review of the options and costs for church in late to brown Oak Hill specifically, it has fabulous potential.

19:12:26 Certainly.

19:12:33 I don't know Commissioner Do you want to take that one I can, I can also answer that.

19:12:33 Yeah, I can get us started here thanks Cliff for the question. You know, I think, you know, the first part of your comment is really in support for the need

for for artificial turf.

19:12:46 Clearly, many participants and players involved in your program.

19:12:51 And you know for some of the reasons you've listed here and that Justin has just talked about. I think that there's certainly an openness to reviewing artificial turf, and expansion of turf fields for Newton.

19:13:06 I think the question is going to be, you know, which which sites do we want to focus in on for this. And the reason that we've decided to hold these input forums, before we even get our consultant and just start working on designs is so that we can hear

19:13:25 what you know more of what the needs are and the ones.

19:13:29 So, you know, certainly will be will be putting those on the list and looking at those as we get into talking about you know what what designs we might want to show to eat for each of these sites.

19:13:42 We're also going to be starting our fields meetings again. And so, after being off for the summer, we'll, we'll kick those back off and continue working with our stakeholder groups.

19:13:58 I think the school athletics and our youth sports, athletics, as somebody said earlier have been pretty united in, you know, the need for this type of turf within our inventory of fields.

19:14:20 see any more comments or raise hands.

19:14:28 Happy to continue the conversation if folks when I continue to have.

19:14:34 Everybody's been great here tonight I know you know I see a lot of familiar names on our attendee list of those who also attended the session that we ran last Wednesday, about our other two field sites McGrath and Albemarle.

19:14:53 So we really appreciate that we have the interest that we do, certainly from our sport groups, our school, athletics program, and seeing here tonight some of our residents and and neighbors of our parks is also very important to us as we have this conversation

19:15:14 so.

19:15:16 Thanks everyone.

19:15:17 And I just want to remind everybody we will be posting the video at the website that we shared. We have the email address, set up for the athletic fields projects.