

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA

BELMONT MIDDLE and HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE
FINAL MEETING MINUTES
August 21, 2019
Beech Street Center
7:00 PM

2019 SEP -6 AM 9: 51

Meeting #78

Committee Members Attending:

Chair Lovallo; Members John Phelan, Bob McLaughlin, Tom Caputo, Pat Bruschi, Joel Mooney, Chris Messer, Emma Thurston, Steve Dorrance, Kate Bowen, Ellen Schreiber, Jon Marshall (for Patrice Garvin)

From Daedalus: Shane Nolan

From Perkins+Will: Brooke Trivas

From Skanska: Mike Morrison

BMHSBC Members Absent: Patrice Garvin, Mike McAllister, Jamie Shea, Joe DeStefano, Diane Miller

There were about 50 citizens in the audience.

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:06 p.m. by Chair Lovallo. He began by having the Building Committee members introduce themselves.

He next reviewed the evening's agenda. He highlighted the turf/grass presentations and noted that the audience will have a chance to comment at the conclusion of the presentations. Chair Lovallo displayed a photo from the live webcam and informed the Committee/audience that the pile driving will begin tomorrow. He acknowledged that this will be a loud undertaking. The hope is to complete the pile driving by November.

II. Update on 60 Percent Construction Documents Cost Estimate

Mr. Nolan provided an overview of the reconciled Project Cost Summary. He noted that the reconciliation process revealed that the Value Engineering (VE) process will need to begin again. Chair Lovallo underscored the fact that the project is \$19M over budget (i.e., slightly less than 10% over budget). He suggested that the Committee set aside some dates to convene the VE process without feeling rushed. He suggested that the Committee meet on the next two Wednesday evenings to undertake the VE process.

Wednesday, August 28, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. Homer Building, 3rd Floor
Wednesday, Sept. 4, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. Homer Building, 3rd Floor

III. Structural Steel Phase 1 Bid Discussion and Approval

Mr. Morrison reviewed the steel phase 1 bid process as well as the structural steel project budget. He explained how the bids were vetted and scoped. He informed the Committee that this bid is approximately \$2,500,000 below the current Structural Steel Phase 1 budget. The Committee asked clarifying questions about the bid process and the structural steel project budget. Weather delays, and how those delays relate to the bid and the work, were briefly explored.

Ms. Mooney moved: To approve the Structural Steel Phase 1 Bid in the amount of \$10,189,813 to Canatal Steel USA.

The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Next Full Building Committee Meetings

Chair Lovallo suggested that the construction site tour be moved to 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, August 28, 2019 at the construction trailers (prior to the 6:30 p.m. BMHSBC meeting). He noted that *Meet Belmont* will be held on Tuesday, August 27, 2019 from 6-8:00 p.m. at the Belmont Day School.

Chair Lovallo reviewed the following planned meetings:

Wednesday, August 28, 2019 at	5:00 p.m.	Construction Site Tour
Wednesday, August 28, 2019 at	6:30 p.m.	Homer Building, 3 rd Floor
Wednesday, Sept. 4, 2019 at	6:30 p.m.	Homer Building, 3 rd Floor
Tuesday, Sept. 10, 2019 at	7:00 p.m.	CMS, Joint Meeting with School Committee
Wednesday, Sept. 18, 2019 at	7:30 a.m.	Homer Building, 3 rd Floor

V. Turf Discussion

Chair Lovallo noted that there are several considerations that must be explored, including what *type* of field needs to be considered and what the *composition* of the field might be. The Committee will not be making a turf-versus-grass decision tonight. More information may need to be gathered.

Mr. McLaughlin's Presentation (on Artificial Turf)

Mr. McLaughlin began by noting that his report pertains to the rugby field behind the school, on the north side of campus. Crumb rubber (derived from recycled tires which are ground down) is a material that is used at the Wellington and at the Chenery. He then reviewed the pros and cons of using natural grass on a field. He explained the components of artificial turf and the infill material crumb rubber. Mr. McLaughlin reviewed the pros of using artificial turf with crumb rubber. He reviewed the demand for the field, which is very high. If it is used, the benefits of artificial turf will need to outweigh the concerns.

Mr. McLaughlin then reviewed the highlights of the data from three years of studies. While it makes sense to proceed with caution when selecting field materials, the studies show that the health risks are low to negligible. Peer reviewed, scientific data showing that this is a health concern does not exist.

Mr. McLaughlin then discussed the heat issue (the heating up of the crumb rubber). Given the Massachusetts climate, heat impacting Harris Field has not posed a problem. Concerning costs, he reviewed artificial turf versus natural grass. Turf, which is more expensive than grass, lasts about 12 years. However, the maintenance costs for grass would be about \$20K per year versus \$1,300 per year for turf.

Mr. McLaughlin then reviewed the infill alternatives (e.g., cork, walnut shells, coconut fiber) to crumb rubber. He ended his presentation with the hope that the dialogue will be based on data, facts, and rational thought.

Ms. Bowen's Presentation

Ms. Bowen began by showing a video (from UMASS Lowell) entitled "*Safer Alternatives for Athletic Fields.*" She provided some background information on the video. The video cited data that pointed to the health risks of crumb rubber and an overview of approach to organic grass field management.

Ms. Bowen reviewed the highlights from her report (Progress Update). She noted some of the downsides of certain infill materials. She stated that there are alternatives to crumb rubber that are also more economical. Artificial turf certainly has lower yearly maintenance costs, but those costs must be balanced against the need to replace the turf every 10-12 years. She then discussed the importance of aeration of the materials and the soil as well as the reductions in use of pesticides. Ms. Bowen showed a photo of Belmont's "hot spots" based on materials that heat up, including existing playing fields. She noted that as climate change impacts the weather, heat stroke and other heat-related impacts on kids (e.g. heat exhaustion) need to be highlighted. She acknowledged that the recycling market for artificial turf and disposal may be considered.

In closing, Ms. Bowen read a statement from Ms. Prestwich, who expressed concerns about artificial turf. Ms. Prestwich stated that the risk of cancer from crumb rubber exposure has not been well studied at this time. The environmental impacts of turf are also concerning.

VI. Comments from Belmont Residents

Mr. Mike Crowley, School Committee member, expressed concerns for the use of artificial turf. He discussed artificial turf's release of toxins into the air that kids will be exposed to. He noted that the EPA cautions that the health risks are not well known. He requested that the Committee be very cautious before moving forward.

Ms. Mary Lewis thanked the Committee for their hard work on the project. She said the public needs time to read and reflect on the two reports. She then read a statement from a resident, a medical doctor, who expressed concerns about turf. This person noted that the studies have not been conducted on a long-term basis yet and that it took years of studies before the link of cigarettes to cancer was established.

Ms. Kathy Senent read a statement in support of using artificial turf. She noted that natural grass attracts geese and results in unhealthy "droppings," that natural grass is uneven and can lead to injuries, and that ongoing maintenance with grass is very expensive and can be cut when budgets are tight. She added that turf can be used right after installation and can be used in all kinds of weather.

Mr. Jamie MacIsaac, CMS Football Coach, spoke to the shortage of fields in Belmont. Turf fields are widely used across the state. Given the demands on field space, turf makes sense.

Mr. Peter Noone, Belmont Baseball, expressed his support for artificial turf.

Mr. Craig Widener, Belmont Soccer Association, expressed his support for turf fields. As a cancer researcher, he added that the research on turf would have shown a causal cancer link by now – if one existed.

Mr. Tom Ferraro, Lacrosse Director, spoke to the compelling need for more fields in Belmont. Turf is the only viable option, given the shortage of field space.

Mr. John Carston spoke in support of turf. He called out the heat issue and noted that the re-use of tires is actually very good for the environment.

Mr. A.J. [Bathac?] spoke in support of youth and athletics. Carcinogenic materials are everywhere. Kids would need to be ingesting the crumb rubber in order to get sick. Mosquitos pose a higher risk to kids than turf.

Mr. Josh [Strife?] spoke to the money grass will cost to maintain and the fact that the field will be unusable all winter and spring.

Ms. Erin Lubien expressed concerns about the health impacts of crumb rubber. She noted that the building is ZNE, yet the Committee would install a “plastic carpet” behind the building. She cited data on turf injuries. Maintenance is in Belmont’s vision, which includes fields.

Mr. Asa Rosenmeier, a student athlete in Belmont, noted that he received a serious turf burn on his leg. He said grass feels better.

Mr. Paul Graham, BHS Soccer Coach, noted that fields in Belmont cannot be “rested” any longer. Grass becomes a mud field when it is wet; this is not safe for our students. Most fields are turf and it would be a huge disadvantage to play on grass. He said the children are not in danger.

Ms. Cabel Eames spoke to the chemicals found in crumb rubber. Many communities are banning crumb rubber. Hot weather is here to stay. She requested that the “precautionary principle” be used when dealing with exposure to kids.

Mr. Phil Thayer suggested that the total cost of grass maintenance, over 25 years, is much less than what Mr. McLaughlin reported, based on one year.

The Building Committee asked various questions.

Ms. Thurston asked several questions pertaining to soil.

Ms. Schreiber asked about that particular field’s overall usage. What are the specific demands on this field and how would the material used impact those demands? Chair Lovallo noted that a bit of research will need to occur in order to answer that question.

VII. Other/New Business

None.

VIII. Related Meeting Documents

1. Report of Findings Investigation of Artificial Turf vs. Natural Grass
2. School Committee Fields Working Group Progress Update
3. Skanska Reconciled Project Cost Summary
4. Skanska Structural Steel Project Budget Summary

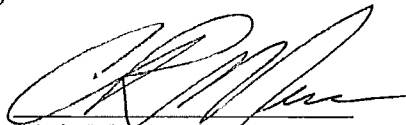
IX. Adjournment

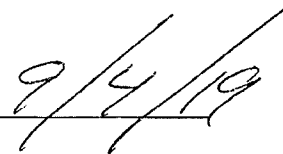
The meeting ended at 9:50 p.m. by Mr. McLaughlin

Respectfully submitted by:

Lisa Gibalerio

Approved:


Chris Messer, Secretary


Date