

Online – Zoom

Commissioners Present: Trip Barnes, Christina Brown, Rob Doyle, Fred Hancock, Jim Joyce, Michael Kim, Joan Malkin, Kathy Newman, Ben Robinson, Doug Sederholm, Linda Sibley, Christine Todd, Richard Toole, Jim Vercruysse

Staff Present: Adam Turner, Alex Elvin, Lucy Morrison, Christine Flynn, Mike Mauro, Sheri Caseau, Dan Doyle, Bill Venio

Richard Toole opened the meeting at 5:30 p.m. and Adam Turner took attendance.

1. MARTHA’S VINEYARD REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOLS (MVRHS) ATHLETIC FIELDS – OB (DRI 352-M4) PRE-PUBLIC HEARING REVIEW

Present for the Applicant: Chris Huntress, Project Manager; Richie Smith, Asst. Superintendent; Kimberly Kirk, Chair MVRHS School Committee; Kris O’Brien, MVRHS School Committee; Joseph Sullivan, Project Manager; Mark McCarthy, MVRHS Athletic Director

Alex Elvin gave an overview of the project and presented additions to public record since the previous LUPC meeting on Oct. 19. He encouraged everyone to review the public record, which includes a large amount of material, and offered to help navigate the materials.

Kimberly Kirk spoke on behalf of the high school, and emphasized that the project is intended to benefit the high school students. She reported that Cape and Islands Tennis and Track had evaluated the high school track since the last LUPC meeting on Oct. 19, and confirmed that the cracking is significant and unfeasible to repair, and that at some point in the future the Eastern Athletic Conference will “disallow athletes from competition.” She pointed out that the MVRHS Committee is an elected body whose mission is to advocate for students and public education in the community, and that athletics are key part of public education. She said the proposed project was the outcome of intensive review and public forums by the school committee, which stands by the proposal as the best and safest alternative.

Chris Huntress of Huntress Associates Inc. (HAI) gave a presentation on the project, including written materials provided since Oct. 19, existing conditions of the fields and track, highlights from the submitted plan set (including the grandstand, lighting, fieldhouse, traffic and pedestrian circulation plan, and changes to the plans since January 2020), and slides on specific planning concerns that were not shown on Oct. 19 due to time constraints. The planning concerns included short- and long-term costs, synthetic field recycling, groundwater protection, player safety, and issues related to the fieldhouse, wastewater, and grandstand.

Following the applicant’s presentation, Alex Elvin went over specific questions that MVC staff has already discussed with the applicant, including questions about future financing; current and projected

field use projections; more detailed budgets, projections, and procedures for natural grass maintenance; temperature data for synthetic turf; fire safety for the synthetic field; alternatives for end-of-life recycling of the synthetic carpet; potential nitrogen leaching from the infill; and disinfection procedures. Answers and clarifications were expected in the next couple of weeks.

Commissioners then identified additional questions for the applicant and made comments related to cost and finances, field maintenance, environmental impacts of synthetic turf, project specifications and alternatives, long-term planning, field usage, and traffic.

Cost and finances

- Trip Barnes: Is the project being paid for by a donor? (Chris Huntress and Richie Smith confirmed that it is.) Finances are important, since many large projects are in the works. Are there ways to organize additional funding, including from MVRHS alumni? What is the current square-foot price for synthetic turf?
- Joan Malkin: Detail the total amount committed by the donor, any capital costs that the donated funds will not cover, whether the donated funds are in place, and if they are subject to any contingencies.
- Richard Toole: Will the donors commit to longer-term funding to support the project?
- Linda Sibley: The high school should have an endowment for the project.

Maintenance

- Linda Sibley: Clarify whether maintenance costs refer to all the grass fields, or just the one in the proposal. Does the agriculture program at the high school teach organic grass maintenance? Could that program be involved in maintaining the high school fields?

Environmental impacts

- Linda Sibley: Does “no recycling for energy” mean that the products can’t be burned? Don’t use acronyms, including for the names of chemicals.
- Ben Robinson: Provide a comparison of the carbon footprint of natural vs. synthetic turf. Provide more information about the testing of PFAS and other contaminants. Show whether the proposed shockpad is made from recycled materials.
- Christine Todd: Who is being consulted to determine the location of the proposed groundwater monitoring wells, and are two wells enough?
- Christina Brown: We need a simple, clear plan for the monitoring wells, including the process for annual inspection, and what and who will determine if there is a problem.
- Trip Barnes: Post the Tetra Tech scope of work for the synthetic field testing online.
- Jim Vercruyse: What chemicals will be used in maintaining the natural fields (amounts and types)?

Specifications

- Fred Hancock: Talk more about the proposed infill for the synthetic field, including how it is spread out, where it sits in the system, and whether it migrates over time.

- Doug Sederholm: Explain the reduced impact associated with the shockpad under the synthetic field. Why is the range of risk reduction so large? What is the stated reduction relative to? Is the woven turf backing a new technology and has it been proven in practice? What is its durability?

Alternatives

- Joan Malkin: The MVC considers the availability of suitable alternatives, and natural turf would be an alternative to synthetic. Relevant to financing, why did the prior Field Fund proposal to install natural turf not go forward? Are those issues still germane in light of the proposal?

Long-term planning

- Joan Malkin: How do we know future phases of the master plan will include only natural fields? The applicant needs to explain the longer-term plan. (Huntress confirmed that the high school has only committed to one synthetic field.)

Usage

- Richard Toole: Would events that have taken place elsewhere be encouraged to use the synthetic field instead? (Richie Smith confirmed that the current plans were for high school, summer camps and youth programs only, so that people wouldn't think the high school was trying to inflate the numbers. However, he said the high school would like to allow community uses in the future.)
- Linda Sibley: We could address usage concerns and future phases of the project by way of conditions.

Traffic

- Richard Toole: The Oak Bluffs Planning Board is concerned about the Edgartown-Vineyard Haven Road corridor in general. Provide more information about the effects on traffic.

Trip Barnes asked Chris Huntress if he had any questions for the commissioners. Chris acknowledged the large amount of information submitted by the applicant, and wanted to make sure he is able to explain it all to the commission. He said he and the high school are willing to stay with the LUPC as long as necessary to cover all the issues prior to the public hearing. Richie Smith agreed, and said he would defer to the LUPC about whether to schedule another meeting.

Richard Toole adjourned the meeting at 6:59 p.m.