

SCITUATE SCHOOL COMMITTEE
WORK SESSION-TUESDAY, JULY 12, 2016
TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS

1. Work Session Called to Order at 5:04 by Chair Umbriano

2. Call of Members – Chair Umbriano

Present were Mrs. Umbriano, Chair, Mrs. Guglielmi, Mrs. Pendergast, Mrs. Esposito and Mr. LaPlante. Also present were Dr. Lawrence Filippelli, Superintendent and Dr. Michael Sollitto, Assistant Superintendent.

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Led by Chair Umbriano, the Committee and the audience participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

A. DISCUSSION/ACTION

School Committee recommendations for submission to the Town Council regarding athletic fields, to include, but not be limited to, recommendations for short-term and long-term field development and repair(s).

After initial video trouble, the meeting was live streamed.

Mrs. Umbriano stated that the Committee needed to have a discussion about the short and long term repairs and development needed for the fields.

Mr. LaPlante stated it made more sense to talk about the long term goal first which would then drive the short term goals.

Dr. Filippelli stated that SYA is trying for a grant for a track. Whether or not that happens, we want to set up the field for the long term goal even if those monies are not available now.

Mr. McCormick, Trimtown Road, stated that the principle is whatever we do as a town should be done in such a way that it is part of the long term goal. Perhaps we do not put lights in on day one, but we should be thinking ahead towards those things. The question is what interim solution can be done that would allow for those things later. An embankment could be constructed and the retaining wall done later. It is best to keep moving towards the long term solution.

Mr. LaPlante said he agrees and that is why the discussion needs to take place tonight.

Mrs. Umbriano stated all games will be held away in September which gives time to put in sod or turf.

Mr. McCormick stated if the Committee decides on a short term solution of sod and more needs to be done to the field, the sod can be cut up, moved and reused if necessary. Therefore it is not wasted money.

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Casey Erven, Waterman Drive, stated it is important to decide on an interim solution that will give time to get everything done.

Mrs. Pendergast agrees that looking ahead to a long term solution is best.

Mr. McCormick reminded the Committee that the numbers they are looking at are only estimates. The School Committee needs to go to the Town Council with firm numbers.

Mrs. Esposito asked where we are with fields now.

Dr. Filippelli stated the well has been dug and the tank would be going in this week. He added that the field will be dug up and graded using existing materials. He reiterated that SYA is applying for a grant for a track. Dr. Filippelli stated that the Committee shouldn't put down sod, then if the grant comes through, everything would need to be torn up. He stated football games will all be held away in the fall and there are other arrangement for physical education classes. There is time to put more thought into the long term goals.

Mrs. Esposito stated the short term goal may be to leave the field as is for now and come back in September to plan accordingly.

Mr. McCormick urged the Committee not to wait for the grant and make a decision now. If the grant comes through that is great but don't focus on it.

Mrs. Esposito suggested the pitch of the land and the retaining wall could be fixed with or without the grant.

The Committee discussed the large packet of information and options they received from the Field Committee. The use of the land on Darby Road and Lawton Farm are off the table. The options to be discussed tonight are Caito East options A and B. All options include a retaining wall. The Committee learned the area considered for the second practice field has a lot of boulders. Digging those out may provide an enough rocks for the retaining wall. Also, there are piles of dirt from other projects at DPW as well as Tasca Field. Mr. LaPlante stated there are a lot of materials available that may be useful for the project to keep cost down.

Chair Umbriano asked the Committee if the audience should be allowed to speak now or wait until the Public Comment section of the Regular Session. All agreed that the public should join the discussion.

Mr. McCormick was asked to clarify the options for the audience. He stated that all off site options have been eliminated. They are down to three options; one is for artificial turf at Caito Field, the other two use sod. Mr. McCormick does not see the need for three full fields if teams are rotated. He feels the Committee should go with the sod solution with a second practice field and avoid the wetlands. Mr. McCormick stated that Manning Field does not have a good watering system. To address a new field at Manning, we

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would need a well drilled and a tank. He said with two practice fields, the sod would have time to rest.

Mrs. Pendergast asked if PE students can use a field if it is resting.

Mr. Ervin said PE is fine, no cleats or high impact sports are allowed when a field is resting.

Mr. LaPlante stated the primary field needs to be improved. Caito needs to be leveled and a retaining wall needs to be built. These improvements will be viable going forward with any option.

Mr. McCormick reminded the Committee they would need to invest in a practice field to make a sod field work.

Mr. LaPlante stated it is money well spent to improve the existing practice field for \$50,000.

Mr. McCormick said that figure is included in all the options.

Mrs. Esposito asked if the irrigation can handle a new practice field.

Mr. Mathieu said depending on the size, another well may be needed.

Mrs. Esposito stated the best option seems to be turf on Caito Field, rehab the practice field and rehab Manning Field.

Mr. McCormick corrected that statement saying that would be using natural sod. He said scheduling was not being considered. Lights need to be added to the field to allow all the teams to play and practice. This could cost about \$100,000. He added that sod would need to be replaced in 15 years.

A discussion took place regarding declining enrollment and the high participation in sports. All agreed the fields need to be safe for PE classes as well as sports teams. The discussion included the numbers of teams and students currently using all the fields.

Mrs. Esposito asked about the logistics of the students getting to Manning Field. There is a path through the woods that the Field Committee was looking into, however it runs on private property and one home owner was not willing to give permission for students to use the land.

Mariah Kmon, high school senior, said that students can take buses or walk to Manning. She said she does feel safe when she walks to the field. One suggestion would be to have the coaches walk the students as a team.

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Mr. LaPlante said the Committee could revisit the use of the path. However, he feels that having the students at Caito Field is safer and more convenient.

Mr. McCormick asked the Committee to think about putting a bond out for vote in November.

Attorney D'Agostino said the Town Council has a meeting on Thursday and they have a provision on the agenda in case they need a ballot question in November.

Mrs. Pendergast asked if the Town Council needed to have the exact dollar amount on Thursday.

Attorney D'Agostino stated in order for a question to be on the ballot in November, a recommendation from the School Committee needs to have Town Council approval with needs to go to the Board of Elections by 8/10. The exact dollar amount and information needs to be finalized closer to the November vote.

A lengthy discussion followed regarding the cost and benefits of natural sod vs artificial turf. The Committee and the audience discussed each of the options for long term solutions.

The School Department has roughly \$90,000 left in the budget for the fields. The Committee discussed the best use of that money to set the fields up for the long term solution.

The Committee discussed the benefits of putting a bond issue on the ballot for the November elections.

M. Adjournment

The Committee adjourned from the Work Session at 7:11 PM for a short break before returning for the Regular Meeting.

Respectfully Submitted

Mrs. Guglielmi, Clerk

Minutes were prepared by Jennifer Carnevale, Substitute Recording Secretary. Neither the Clerk nor the Recording Secretary is the designated Public Records contact for the Scituate School Committee or Scituate School Department under the RI Access to Public Records Act ("APRA"). For all APRA inquiries, please contact the Superintendent's Office