

**CITY OF COOPER CITY  
CITY COMMISSION WORKSHOP AGENDA  
OCTOBER 19, 2015  
6:30 PM**

**1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Ross opened the Commission Meeting at 6:30 PM and led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Present were Commissioners Green, Curran, Mallozzi, Sims and Mayor Ross.

**3. AGENDA CONCERNS**

Joe Thiry, 4952 SW 93<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, commented as Chair of the Recreation Advisory Board and explained that the site visit to the synthetic turf fields at the City of Tamarac left him with a very positive impression of the quality of the field. He expressed concerns over health related issues that may be caused by particular aggregates and asked whether there were alternative products that may be used in this process.

Ken Glazer, 8690 SW 51<sup>st</sup> Place, suggested that crumb rubber, which these fields are most often comprised of, contains carcinogens and should not be used where people may come in direct contact with the product.

Erica Ruble-Lucena, 12560 N Stonebrook Circle, expressed her strict opposition to the use of artificial turf, citing many health risks for which the fields are said to present.

Bryan Lucena, 12560 N Stonebrook Circle, echoed the concerns of his wife and expressed his opposition to the use of artificial turf fields.

Beth Kroll, 11553 SW 51<sup>st</sup> Street, expressed her opposition to the use of synthetic fields and questioned the Fire Chief regarding the combustible nature of the product, the City Manager regarding the cost/benefit analysis of replacing existing fields and City Attorney regarding warranty considerations.

Mike Russo, 2510 Ambassador Avenue, explained that he is eager to hear all of the details about these products as they are manufactured today, from the experts as well as the pros and cons related to the use of these fields for the owners, for the players and for the maintenance crews.

Lori Green, 10518 Zurich Street, explained that she is interested in being educated on the subject and asked whether all of these products contain the crumb rubber component and/or other carcinogen-containing elements.

Jim Nacknouck, 3750 Ottawa Lane, advised against the use of synthetic turf products.

#### **4. SYNTHETIC TURF**

City Manager Loucks introduced the representatives from Field Turf, the synthetic turf manufacturers and installation company who holds the state contract and has provided this product for other local municipalities.

##### **A. Presentation by Synthetic Turf Vendor**

Chris Wedge and Jamie McDonald, representatives from Field Turf introduced themselves and presented their product and service to the Commission. They described the history of various turfs used over time, provided scientific studies on product safety, detailed present manufacturing processes and gave examples of fields currently in use throughout the country.

##### **B. Question and Answer Period for Commission and Public**

Ken Glazer opposed the testimonial given by the presenter, declared that studies show increased incidents of cancer in players using these fields and suggested that owners install these fields based on cost considerations only.

Chris Wedge clarified that field related injury statistics are much lower on synthetic fields than on natural grass, the incidents of Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma incidents are no greater in the case study he cited than they are in the general public and that the cost is not a factor at all for many of the organizations that are currently using synthetic turf fields.

Bob Sands disputed the information provided by the vendor as sales-oriented propaganda, questioned where the City would find funding for the implementation of such a project and expressed dissatisfaction for the lack of a cost/benefit analysis.

City Manager Loucks addressed all of Mr. Sands' questions, including the budgeting process, revenue sources and preliminary cost studies.

Walt Jolliff, 11095 Bismarck Place, disputed the vendors' claims of safety and suggested the immune systems of smaller children are less resilient than older children and adults.

Mike Russo, 2510 Ambassador Avenue, stated that the field in question would be utilized by teens and asked about comparisons between temperatures, and debris transfer from fields sparsely covered with grass as opposed to fields blanketed with grass or where artificial turf is present.

Jamie McDonald explained some of the scientific factors associated with natural grass and other organic materials and described the findings of ambient and surface temperatures of each under various circumstances.

Luann Scott, no information provided, asked for information based on younger children's teams rather than college and professional teams.

Maxine Nicely, no information provided, spoke in opposition to the purchase of synthetic turf and asked about the cost-savings potential of installing dirt.

Erica Ruble-Lucena expressed the following:

- The products are dangerous to children and therefore, cost analyses are irrelevant as the value of health and safety has no measure.
- The vendors who profit from the sale of the product should not be looked upon as the experts on health-related data.
- Personal experience with synthetic turf fields has proved that a exorbitant amount of debris and particles are transferred to the uniforms, bodies and personal effects of the players.

Jim Nacknouck, stated that the restriction of oxygen caused by not using natural grass is enough reason to not use synthetic turf.

Mr. McDonald stated that synthetic turf has a less than 1% share of areas that would otherwise be comprised of natural grass, even if the use of the products were to quadruple in volume. He further suggested the consideration of hydrocarbon production during the maintenance of natural fields.

Mr. McDonald clarified for the assembly that his company is not a manufacturer of styrene-butadiene rubber and has many other temperature reducing, durable fill options that may be considered.

Pete Schlang, no information provided, asked about warranties on the fill.

Mr. McDonald explained that fills, other than the SBR rubber, have to be replenished annually at a rate of 5%, and that flood conditions may increase the migration. He described the various fill options and warranties

that correspond with them. He went over many of the fill options and briefly explained some of the cost differentials.

Maxine Nicely asked for a hard dollar amount for the cost of the product and installation.

Mr. McDonald explained that an estimated cost to convert a full soccer field to synthetic turf would be roughly \$700,000.00.

Questions were fielded from various, unidentified speakers regarding cork composite fill options, the cost of maintenance equipment, the method of procurement and credentials.

Commissioner Green asked about the following factors:

- Yearly maintenance costs
- Injury studies based on small children
- Temperature-related medical incidents

Mr. McDonald replied with the following :

- the cost for physical maintenance is roughly \$700.00 to \$1,000.00 per year.
- There is not enough controlled data to compile a study on small children with statistical validity.
- There has not been a reported heat-related injury with turf.

Commissioner Curran made the following clarifications:

- He explained the process by which staff originally introduced the idea of synthetic fields, how they were budgeted and that the number was reduced from three to one to allow for the staffing of the third rescue vehicle.
- He admonished those who have allegedly published negative accusations on public forums falsely accusing him of having a role in the potential purchase of the fields.
- He reiterated that he is open to learning everything he can about the various options before forming an opinion.

Commissioner Mallozzi explained that all of the information has raised the following additional questions:

- How do the safety studies apply when not utilizing a rubber base?
- How do you keep the lower or middle layers from rising to the top?

Mr. McDonald explained that their cork composite product is manufactured to a substantial weight to reduce its buoyancy and its size keeps it from moving past the layer above it. He further clarified the three categories of in-fill as SBR, Non-SBR and organic.

Commissioner Sims clarified that any public comments he makes are protected and warned against the approval of this purchase. He declared that the state of the national economy does not merit the purchase of a costly transition and spoke against the attempts to manufacture synthetic products to mimic organic substances. He admonished staff for not providing an expert on the subject to speak in this forum.

Mayor Ross requested the following clarifications:

- The temperature differentials and the suggested solutions, including usage interruptions.
- The current cost of annual maintenance on a City field.
- Lawsuits the vendor has had filed against them.
- Turn-around for the replacement of a field as opposed to initial installation.

The vendors explained the differences between the surface readings and the variations of the effects on the players based on height.

Tim Fleming, Public Works Supervisor, explained that the current cost for one of the City's natural grass fields is approximately \$17,000.00 - \$18,000.00 per year plus approximately \$10,000.00 to re-sprig the two soccer fields.

The vendor explained that the company had been sued for breach of contract and explained the suits and outcomes. He explained the typical turn-around time is approximately 21 days.

Commissioner Green received clarification as to the numbers and uses of fields the City currently maintains and the cost of maintenance associated with them. A staff opinion as to future impact on current resources and the state of City infrastructure in general and the methods by which the City has engaged in other capital projects.

Commissioner Curran shared his personal observations regarding current field usage and maintenance.

Commissioner Mallozzi received clarification as to the use, cost, longevity and maintenance of pure organic material as opposed to a composite.

Commissioner Sims stated that he has seen that the maintenance of the synthetic turf fields is higher than the cost to maintain a natural grass field and cited an Australian study that shows this as well as increased incidents of communicable infectious diseases.

Mayor Ross received additional clarification regarding field longevity, product warranties and replacement costs, including the costs associated with transitioning back to grass after the installation of a synthetic field. He

suggested that the use of City fields by non-residents be strictly kept to the current agreed upon ratio of 70/30.

Commissioner Green reiterated that the decision has yet to be made and asked that residents bring their specific concerns forward regarding the use of fields by small children. He asked for expert testimony and for the presentation to be made available on the City's website.

Commissioner Curran received clarification that there is no statistical data on turfs installed using only organic fill. He asked for the Recreation Advisory Board to continue to research the issue and for the community to provide input on the matter. He stated that cost is not a factor when it comes to safety and there is a great cost to locking neighboring children off Cooper City fields and out of Cooper City parks.

Commissioner Mallozzi referenced irrigation considerations, water reuse, rock filtration, and studies that link cancer to the use of synthetic fields. She questioned chemical reactions to heat, the use of dirt as a filler and the funding by them and other synthetic turf manufactures to the research organizations.

Commissioner Sims expressed the following:

- He has done extensive research on the subject.
- The Commission has a fiscal responsibility to its residents.
- His experience has shown that players who use these fields are never pleased with the physical effects.
- He clarified his position on the use of City facilities by non-residents and opposed the use of Resource Recovery Board funds for a project of this nature.
- He disputed company claims as scientific data.

Mayor Ross stated that the information gathered at this workshop has led to additional questions and the need for further vetting of the products and the health implications, especially where small children are concerned. He asked that the City Manager write the EPA and request an opinion.

**MOTION:** To extend the meeting.

**Moved by Commissioner Curran. Seconded by Commissioner Curran. All aye on roll call vote. Motion passed.**

Commissioner Green clarified that the lack of a decision by the EPA has little merit as government agencies tend to move very slowly on rendering official opinions and may be considering many factors including those of political and social concerns. He agreed that a decision would be contingent upon greater vetting and community input.

Commissioner Curran thanked BSO for their contributions to the Optimist Scholarship Program which allows underprivileged children to participate

in the sports programs. He explained that the community benefits from every child who comes into the City to play on our teams and clarified that the current resident/non-resident ratio is 69/30.6 overall. He credited the entire Commission with always putting safety first and coming together for the children. He thanked the assembly for their attendance and asked for greater resident input. He stated that he would sooner reduce the number of games played than the number of children involved and commended Mike Russo for his work with the Optimists and the children.

Commissioner Mallozzi received additional clarification on how injury studies are conducted, the cost of grass field maintenance, the resident/non-resident registration ratio in the sports programs and why dirt is not a viable fill option.

Commissioner Sims suggested that the sports programs look into utilizing fields at Bill Lips and Bamford parks. He received clarification from Tim Fleming regarding current maintenance costs and the long term effects to the budget including personnel expenses, and agreed with other Commissioners that more community input is needed and suggested that this issue should go before the voters.

Mayor Ross received clarification that an audit has never been conducted by the City regarding the resident/non-resident sports participation ratios to verify the address of each registered participant. He thanked the presenters for their participation and requested they return with additional information, if invited.

**Point of Information:** Commissioner Sims received confirmation from Lynda Good that the data regarding resident/non-resident registration ratio in the sports programs had been documented.

**Point of Information:** Commissioner Curran requested that the "Morris Cooper Drive" Item on the next Agenda be attributed to the Mayor.

## **5. ADJOURNMENT**

**The meeting was adjourned at 10:07 PM.**

**NOTICE:** This meeting is open to the public. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, all persons who are disabled and who need special accommodations to participate in this meeting because of that disability should contact the Office of the City Clerk, 954-434-4300 ext. 220, not later than two days prior to such proceeding. One or more members of the City of Cooper City Advisory Boards may be in attendance and may participate at the meeting. Anyone wishing to appeal any decision made by the Cooper City Commission with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearing will need a record of the proceedings and, for such purpose, may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. Agenda items may be viewed online at [www.coopercityfl.org](http://www.coopercityfl.org) or at the Office of the City Clerk, City of Cooper City, 9090 SW 50 Place, Cooper City, Florida, 33328, 954-434-4300.