

Correspondence received by the Concord Select Board
Week Ending – December 16, 2024

1. Mark Rus, Travel Soccer Director, Concord-Carlisle Youth Soccer - 20 Authors Road
2. Shep Shephard – 166 Main Street
3. Greg Karczewski - 262 Monsen Road
4. Kevin Jones – 38 Ash Street
5. Ken Fischl - 34 Holden Lane
6. Kelly Crowley - 25 Jennie Dugan Road
7. Jim Atwood - 133 Stow Street
8. Caroline Myer – 1007 Lowell Road
9. Lee Halloran - 22 Deer Grass Lane
10. Janet Rothrock – 617 Annursnac Hill Road
11. Dawn McCullough – 178 Virginia Road
12. Carl Calabria - 261 Heaths Bridge Road
13. Rob Morrison – 63 Monument Street
14. Beverley Bryant - 175 Conant Street

Please Note: The letters posted here reflect the views and opinions of the author as recorded in the body of their email. Neither the Select Board nor Town staff have verified or reviewed the contents. The Select Board and the Town do not necessarily agree, condone, support or advocate the ideas expressed in these letters and have not verified any factual statements made in the letters.

Dear Select Board,

I'm reaching out today to voice my hope that, as future plans for the Peabody School are finalized, Concord please consider keeping Cushing Field available as a vital part of our youth healthy lifestyle and sports programs.

While participation in youth sports across Concord and Carlisle has grown in recent years, the number and availability of our fields has not. We have roughly 1,400 children participate in youth soccer each season. But we've lost the fields at Sanborn due to the new Middle School, while Ripley Fields are persistently under water in early spring, and the increased field usage from other sports (which is a good thing for our Concord kids to have multiple sports & healthy lifestyle options) nevertheless puts a strain on everyone.

Cushing Field has been a standout location for our soccer teams, allowing both 11v11 and 9v9 games. Losing it to development would be a massive set-back for our youth sports programs for years to come, as additional field development of that size is not on the near-term horizon.

Lmk if you have any questions, thanks for all you do for Concord, and please do anything you can to keep Cushing Field available for the mental and physical health of our kids.

Thanks for your consideration!

Mark Rus, Travel Soccer Director, Concord-Carlisle Youth Soccer

20 Authors Road

617-775-9325

Dear Select Board, Town Managers, and Finance Committee,

I am writing to formally request that the decision be made to replace the turf at Doug White Fields with modern turf. I believe this is the best option for our community for several reasons.

Doug White Fields are used by thousands of players each season, across multiple sports. This equals hundreds of hours of continuous usage. These fields are used by both high-level youth sports programs and state championship-level high-school programs which require quality playing surfaces. But Concord weather produces rain, snow, sleet, heat, and drought that all affect the quality and availability of grass fields.

Therefore, turf is the only surface that can accommodate both the volume of usage and weather while remaining consistent, playable, and available.

In addition, the Friends of CC Playing Fields organization has accumulated over \$1.5M over the past 16 years for the eventual replacement of this turf. Those funds are available and ready to use, but cannot be used for grass fields given that grass would dramatically limit access to the youth sports programs that have helped fund the replacement.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Shep Shepard

Father of Tyler Shepard (CCHS 2026)

Dear Select Board, Town Managers, and Finance Committee,

I respectfully request your approval to replace the turf at Doug White Fields with modern synthetic turf. These fields serve thousands of players across multiple sports and require a surface that can handle heavy use and Concord's unpredictable weather. Turf is the only option that ensures consistent playability and availability.

The Friends of CC Playing Fields have raised \$1.5M over 16 years to fund this replacement, but these funds cannot be used for grass fields as they would significantly limit access for the youth sports programs that raised the funds.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Greg Karczewski

262 Monsen Road

Dear Select Board, Town Managers, and Finance Committee,

My name is Kevin Jones and I am a parent, coach, and fan of all sports in town. I am writing to formally request that the decision be made to replace the turf at Doug White Fields with modern turf. I have done a bit of research and believe a hybrid of actual grass and modern field turf would be the best possible solution. I believe some NFL teams have installed this as well as some European soccer teams. Although this option would probably be more costly than installing new modern field turf as well as natural grass (although I think with maintenance, watering and fertilization over the years on a natural grass surface will undoubtedly be a big expense) I believe this is the best option for our community for several reasons.

We all know the Doug White Fields are the primary fields used and preferred by many players and coaches across a multitude of sports. Due to such high demand nearly 12 months out of the year, weather permitting, I think we can all agree these fields need to be able to be durable and usable. Although I do not fully like a field turf and would much prefer to play, coach or be a spectator on real grass, I believe the longevity of the field turf is what is needed for that location. I appreciate all the arguments for having a natural field but with the amount of youth, high school and adult activities on these fields, the only option is something that will hold up throughout the year.

I believe investing in a hybrid technology of grass & turf is the only surface that can accommodate both the volume of usage and weather while remaining consistent and playable, as well as having many of the benefits of an all natural playing surface. If this solution is not an option then I would be in favor of a new age full synthetic field for the Doug White Fields

Thank you for your time and consideration.

All the Best,

Kevin Jones

38 Ash Street

Dear Select Board, Town Managers, and Finance Committee,

I am writing to formally request that the decision be made to replace the turf at Doug White Fields with modern turf. I believe this is the best option for our community.

When we first moved to town and had two toddlers, this same debate happened (2013?) and I didn't really understand why we needed turf. But, now that the turf fields have been built and my kids are in middle school, I see huge advantages of having turf over grass. The town's grass fields are often closed (climate change towards very heavy rains) and not level. The old Sanborn grass soccer field had such a big hole that a cone had to be placed over it. This hole was not fixed after 3 years! Practices are often cancelled on the grass. It can be difficult to find place for make-up games as there is heavy demand on all of Concord's field space. Turf benefits from being an all-weather surface and I see the turf being used on weekends from 8am-8pm by multiple sports. We have plenty of grass fields already. Taking away the turf would have a detrimental effect on children's sports and exercise.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Ken Fischl

34 Holden Ln
Concord, MA

Dear Select Board, Town Managers, and Finance Committee,

Please consider my letter to formally request that the decision be made to replace the turf at Doug White Fields with modern turf. I believe this is the best option for our community.

Doug White Fields are used by thousands of players each season, across multiple sports. This equals hundreds of hours of continuous usage. These fields are used by both high level youth sports programs and state championship level high-school programs who require quality playing surfaces. But Concord weather produces rain, snow, sleet, heat and drought that all affect the quality and availability of grass fields.

Therefore, turf is the only surface that can accommodate both the volume of usage and weather while remaining consistent, playable, and available. .

In addition, the Friends of CC Playing Fields organization has accumulated over \$1.5M over the past 16 years for the eventual replacement of this turf. Those funds are available and ready to use, but cannot be used for grass fields given that grass would dramatically limit access to the youth sports programs that have helped fund the replacement.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kelly Crowley

25 Jennie Dugan Rd.

Dear Select Board, Town Dear Town Leaders,

I'm writing to express my enthusiastic support for replacing the turf at the Doug White fields instead of switching to grass.

There is no possibility that the grass fields could offer any approximation whatsoever of the usage that the turf fields afford us; even with an inconceivably large maintenance budget that would never be approved anyway. I doubt there is much disagreement with this point from any interest group.

I also believe that the fields are perfectly safe and environmentally acceptable. The studies that the "pro grass" side like to reference are highly selective and unconvincing. And you can come up with a study to agree with you on just about anything in this day in age. That doesn't make it right. There are plenty of studies supporting turf.

What is clear is that this country has been using turf fields for generations and continues to do so without any significant identifiable negative effect. Pro sports teams that could afford to have a new grass field for every game still choose turf.

Let's not react to yet another claim of a crisis that does not exist, but rather serve the citizens. If you put this to a town vote, you would find that in overwhelming numbers we want the turf fields. And what the citizens want is what the citizens should get. This is, after all, America.

Regards,

Jim Atwood

133 Stow St.

Dear Select Board, Town Managers, and Finance Committee,

I am writing on behalf of CC Youth Lacrosse, as the director of girls program, to appeal that the TURF at the Doug White Fields is replaced with modern TURF.

CC Youth Lacrosse is predominately a Spring program. When we open our girls program in late March, we have to squeeze grades 3-6 on TURF #2 because the upper grass fields are not yet playable (they are still too wet). We often have to postpone the start of our 1st and 2nd grade program until late April, as the only field available to them on Sunday mornings is the upper grass. It's always an unknown when the grass fields will be open/if they will remain open. As TURF has fewer weather related variables, we are able to ensure that our program is able to host many of our games, making it much easier for players and their families and not have to deal with last minute cancellations and the dreaded game rescheduling process of other towns in our league.

Lacrosse is a sport where different lines are needed for the women's and men's game. On TURF there is the ability to permanently line the fields for multiple formats (football, women's/men's lacrosse, field hockey, and 11v11, 9v9, and 7v7 soccer). On grass, the lines would have to be redrawn constantly. Overall, grass fields require constant maintenance, mowing, irrigation and fertilization, which is also costly.

Over the last 16 years, CCYL, has contributed yearly to the Friends of CC Playing Fields fund in order to plan for the eventual replacement of the TURF. Those funds (over \$1.5M) are available and prepared to cover the cost of the TURF removal and replacement with TURF. The funds cannot be used for grass fields as the grass would greatly decrease the access our program (that have helped fund the replacement) has to playing fields.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best Regards,

Caroline Myler

Director, Concord-Carlisle Girls Youth Lacrosse

1007 Lowell Road

Dear Select Board, Town Managers, and Finance Committee,

I am writing to express my support for the immediate replacement of the existing turf at Doug White Fields with modern turf. As a parent of three kids who benefit from these high quality playing surfaces and a volunteer for CCYL, I see firsthand how important these fields are for the long-term sustainability of our exceptional youth and high school sports programming.

Our community depends on us to ensure our programs can continue to thrive, and turf fields are essential to making that happen.

Doug White Fields are used by thousands of players each season across multiple sports, with hundreds of hours of continuous use by high-level youth and state championship high-school programs. Turf is the only surface that can handle this high volume of use and unpredictable weather while remaining consistent, playable, and available.

The Friends of CC Playing Fields have raised over \$1.5M over 16 years for turf replacement, which is ready to be used but cannot be applied to grass fields, as grass would severely limit access for the youth sports programs funding the project.

Thank you for your consideration.

Lee Halloran

22 Deer Grass Lane

Dear Select Board,

In deciding how to renovate the Doug White Fields, please consider the whole town – its human and environmental health, its finances and possible liability, not just now but for the future.

We know so much more now than we did in 2008 when the Memorandum of Understanding was written.

- We know artificial turf is deleterious to personal and environmental health.
- We know we may have more difficulty disposing of used turf in the future.

Since 2008, Concord has voted three times for multi-year moratoria on artificial turf. In addition, Concord clarified its position on public private partnerships in 2018. Do not let a private group give the Town something it does not want.

Personal health - Natural grass is healthier than artificial turf. I don't need to detail the greater incidence of ACL tears among high school girls, and abrasions, burns and infections among all players. (See study below for more health details.)

Environmental health - All artificial turf carpets contain PFAS which allows plastic to be extruded through tiny metal apertures without clogging. Last spring, Concord Town Meeting authorized the borrowing of up to \$50 M to treat our water in an article entitled, Nagog Pond Improvements and PFAS Mitigation. We don't need to add more PFAS to the watershed of the Hugh Cargill well which is quite near the high school and already has a borderline PFAS level. Artificial turf carpet blades shed one millimeter of plastic per year on average contaminating the environment with nano plastics which are coming increasing scrutiny for interrupting biological processes. Infills contain a variety of harmful chemicals.

Liability – Pennsylvania is currently accepting discarded turf but has no way to process this material; hundreds of rolls of carpet with infill lie piled up in rural areas. (See photo below.) In another 15 years it may be difficult or impossible to dispose of an artificial turf field if Pennsylvania refuses to increase its burden of PFAS, plastic and other contaminants. Can Concord buy liability insurance for future disposal? How will a future SB deal with disposal?

In 2032, when the lease agreement ends, if disposal of artificial turf fields has become problematic, Concord may not want to renew the lease agreement and CCRSD may not want to take responsibility for disposing of a plastic field either. Further, Carlisle might drive CCRSD reluctance and might even sue if pressed to take responsibility.

Select Board, I urge you to:

1. Address the following key questions: What has been spent on the Doug White Field so far? What is the life cycle cost once disposal is taken into account? What is the cost comparison for natural grass vs artificial turf once two or three artificial turf disposals are taken into account?
2. Set up a working group to determine what is right for the town as a whole, not for a small vocal group. Take the time necessary to solve the problem for the good of the whole Town.
3. Concord has 13 fields and could use more fields, some instead of a few fields a lot. How can the interests of the sports community and the rest of the town be met with the fields we have?

Thank you,

Janet Rothrock

618 Annursnac Hill Road

Grantville, PA, August 17, 2022

<https://www.center4research.org/injuries-related-to-artificial-turf/>

Hello,

I am writing in support of replacing the existing turf fields with newer turf rather than grass. The turf will be paid for by current funds set aside and requires much less maintenance. The grass fields will require maintenance, which will be costly; they are far inferior play for our athletes and will likely be treated with chemicals.

Best,

Dawn McCullough

178 Virginia Road

Dear Select Board, Town Managers, and Finance Committee,

I am writing to formally request that the decision be made to replace the turf at Doug White Fields with modern turf.

I am a long-time Concord resident, and my three children all played high school soccer on the Doug White turf fields. At age 66, I still play competitive soccer on the Concord United Dragons and have come to especially appreciate the safety aspects of playing on a consistent and compliant surface. I once played on a perfectly maintained grass pitch at a soccer club in Denmark. There has been nothing like it since, and it was pure joy. It was watered daily and maintained by a ground crew, and it was used for no more than two matches per week. During my 20 years of playing soccer in Massachusetts, however, I have yet to play on a grass field that remotely comes close. I would happily choose the turf field at Doug White over any grass field in the state. Grass fields in our climate that are used frequently simply cannot be maintained to a reasonable level of quality without exorbitant cost. It only takes one depression, rut, or muddy patch to cause a serious ankle, knee, or muscle injury. It only takes one match completed in heavy rain to seriously damage an otherwise well-maintained grass field. Maintenance of a grass field also requires the use of pesticides and fertilizer. Those of us who live adjacent to wetlands and waterways are advised by the Natural Resource Commission to avoid the use of these chemicals so as not to pollute our waterways. Why, then, would we choose to install a grass field that will require these chemicals for the indefinite future and in close proximity to our high school children?

Another consideration that seems monumental is the amount of water needed to maintain a healthy grass field. In the last several years, there has been no debate about the number and severity of droughts we have experienced here in Concord. Why would we possibly consider a change that would increase water use? Would a grass field at Doug White be subject to the same water restrictions during times of drought as residents of the town? If so, how could we expect to maintain any semblance of a reasonable playing surface?

I wonder if the town would consider replacing its aging asphalt tennis courts with grass. Tennis can be played on grass, clay, and asphalt. Why is there not even a single grass tennis court in town? The answer provides guidance for the decision before you. A grass tennis court in our climate would not stand up to frequent use and would be too costly to maintain.

In conclusion, the combination of enhanced safety, consistent play, weather resistance, cost-effectiveness, and environmental benefits make artificial turf soccer fields a superior choice over natural grass.

Respectfully,

Carl Calabria

261 Heaths Bridge Rd.

Dear select board, town, manager, and finance committee,

As a coach for Concord youth soccer and at the Fenn School for over 20 years, I have witnessed the impact of the installation of turf fields at two different locations. I'd like to highlight a few ideas that I haven't heard from the Concord community so far.

Turf fields need little annual maintenance. Periodically, the crumb is re-brushed back into the substrate, but this is a relatively quick and easy job. Natural fields need regular mowing and lining on a biweekly basis. What is the cost in terms of pollution and actual dollars in order to line and mow grass fields throughout the town?

To maintain top-class grass fields for top-class programs at CCHS, these fields will need to be pampered. Usage in the autumn will fall almost exclusively to the high school program to support their varsity, junior varsity, and freshman teams. A soccer pitch can only take so much usage, and evening practices under the lights will most likely be eliminated in order to let the fields have a chance to rest. The fields will need to be installed with sprinkler systems and fertilized regularly. When insecticide or herbicide needs to be applied, the fields will be closed. Irrigation, fertilization, pest control, mowing, and lining have environmental and monetary costs.

Before the turf fields were developed, Concord grass soccer fields were maxed out by usage by the various soccer programs in town. The grass fields in general were in poor shape. The field inside the oval track had large areas of barren dirt, which became mud whenever it rained. Two other fields were established on Emerson, one was primarily used by the CCHS Men's varsity soccer program for preseason tryouts. That field was generally torn to pieces by the time the school year started because of the intensive use by 50+ boys trying out for the team. I'm not sure where the women's program practiced, but I suspect they had an equal effect. After the building of the turf fields, there was a dramatic improvement in the condition of the grass field throughout town. The fields at Emerson reverted to their original function as outfield spaces for the baseball and softball diamonds, thus eliminating the need for the town to set up the goals and line and maintain the soccer fields.

The fields at Rideout, Peabody and Sanborn also suffered from overuse and from damage when games were played in the rain. Generally, there were numerous cancellations in the fall and spring because of the lack of playable fields, but at times, games were played on wet pitches, and this created lasting damage to the soccer fields. Fields had to be closed on a rotating annual basis in order to allow the grass to recover, and this created more scheduling headaches.

I think we should also consider the impact of canceled games and practices upon our youth. Getting kids off their screens is so valuable to their physical and mental health these days. When I go to the Doug White Fields on Thursday evening, every corner of the turf is being used by youth teams. Up to 10 different teams are practicing on those two fields. Those are all kids who would most likely be sitting around playing video games or watching TV if they didn't have their weekly evening practice. Before we built a turf field at Fenn. we would cram the kids into the gym when it rained just to let them run around a little bit and let off steam. This certainly did not replicate the exercise or the skill building that could take place when practicing in the rain on a turf field.

Finally ,as a significant donor to the fund responsible for the construction of the turf field, I would consider the removal of these fields as a betrayal of our agreement with CCHS and the Town of Concord. I am proud to have been a supporter of these efforts and I would hate to see all these improvements go to waste.

As always, thank you for your service to Concord.

Yours sincerely

Rob Morrison

63 Monument St.

To the Select Board

In reference to the replacement of the Douglas White athletic fields at the Concord Carlisle Regional High School.

I am writing to urge you to support the replacement of the Douglas White fields with organic grass and not with artificial turf.

Artificial turf fields are toxic, especially to children. Chemicals found in samples tested by Haley and Aldrich for Concord include:

- Benzo(a)pyrene
- Benzo(b)fluoranthene
- Chrysene
- Indeno(1,3,2,3-cd)pyrene
- Bis(2-ethylhexyl)phthalate

The first four are carcinogens and the last is an endocrine disrupter which is harmful to a child's developing reproductive organs, especially in boys. None of these chemicals are safe at any level in the environment.

Children absorb small but significant amounts of these chemicals through skin contact, breathing in off-gassed chemicals, and ingesting small particles. Amy Griffin, the soccer coach in Washington state, who collected names of soccer players suffering from blood cancers, found that goalies were more than 15 times more prevalent on the list than other position players. They had played for years on artificial turf and were more exposed to the chemicals in it due to their proximity to the crumb rubber and carpet during play.

Proponents of these fields point out that there is no scientific study that links artificial turf to an increased cancer risk in children. These longitudinal studies have not yet been undertaken. However, cancer rates in children are rising in this country. Scientists attribute this to environmental causes. How many children will needlessly die of cancer waiting for such studies to be carried out – if indeed there is ever financing to do so?

The precautionary principle states that if there is an environmental risk that has not been accurately assessed, we err on the side of safety. Common sense might suggest that requiring children to play on cancer-inducing chemicals is a terrible idea, especially when the laws governing toxic chemicals are so weak.

In 2016, 2019, and 2022, moratoriums were passed at Town Meeting to prevent artificial turf fields from being built on Concord town land. These moratoriums passed nearly

unanimously every time. This suggests that the citizens of Concord do not want artificial turf in their town.

The children who are going to be exposed to these chemicals have no say in the matter. It is for their sake that I beg you to please replace the Douglas White fields with organic grass.

Respectfully

Beverley Bryant

175 Conant Street

Concord MA