**Parks & Recreation Department FAQs for Gonzalez Field**

**How often is Gonzalez field used?**

For 2015 Fall permits, the field was permitted 44 hours a week based on the availability of sunlight. The field was used from 2 PM -5PM every weekday by the Dedham Public Schools (DPS) and from 5 PM until dusk by Dedham Youth Soccer (DYS). On Saturdays the field was permitted 8 AM until 5 PM for DYS and on Sundays from 8 AM until 12 PM for 3 adult soccer leagues and from 1 PM until 5 PM for DYS.

DYS Fall numbers: 992 players, 673 families.

**Why artificial turf and not grass?**

· **Increased playability**. Artificial turf fields are much more durable than grass; because playability is much higher. Weather has little impact on the playing surface. Spring use can begin as soon as the snow clears there is not wait for the field to dry out. Rain is not a problem. No need to rest a field to prevent a worn out playing surface. A grass field should be used 3 hours a day, 6 days a week to properly rest and maintain a playing field. Based on the usage reported above, Gonzales is well above the recommended playing time.

· **Lower maintenance costs than grass fields.**

· **Pesticides and fertilizer eliminated**

· **Fewer injuries:** Durability and an even playing surface mean fewer injuries.

- **Conserves water usage.** Typical water usage for a soccer field in the Northeast can exceed 50,000 gallons per week.

**How did P&R determine turf was a better option. Were estimates and costs considered?** Yes, The costs for bother options as well as field usage were discussed. These items are listed below.

o $407,000 for a grass field no lights. Add lights it is $450,000 for a total of $857,000. Gonzales can be used 3 hours a day, 6 days a week 18 hours a week recommended field usage. . Current permit for a Fall season is 44 hours.

o It is slightly over $100,000 (current cost) to resod Gonzales which based on over usaing the field would need to have new sod after every 2 years.

o A turf field properly maintained with the above usage should last 12 years. Based on that we would resod 5 times in a 12 year span.

o $857,000 + $500,000 for a total of $1,357,000.

o Please keep in mind we would need to close the field for at least one full season each time we need to put down sod, for the sod to take. The Avery field was actually closed for 2 seasons for the sod to take. So we lose the field for 5 spring or fall seasons over 12 years.

o Also, please keep in mind that each time the field is redone we are disturbing more and more of the soil. Although we have received documentation and approval from the Board of Health to use the field there still seems to be some doubt as to the contaminated soil on that site. A turf field would cap the site and the soil would be contained.

Below is a Grass verse turf Cost Benefit Analysis. Please note that is for 20 hours of use which is recommended. We permit for 44 hours in the Fall. If we go to the 44 hours of use we have to factor in putting down new sod every three years due to overuse as explained above and then the hours of use is drastically reduced during those years as the field needs to be rested for the sod to take. Also, it will mean overuse of other fields. It is a Catch 22.

| | **Natural Grass** | **Field Turf** |
|---|---|---|
| Base preparation: & materials | *$857,000* | $2,400,000 |
| Maintenance: | $25,000 x 10 years = $250000 | $7,500 x 10 years = $75,000 |
| Total: | $1,107,000 | $2,475,000 |
| Scheduling Possibilities: | 20 hours x 25 weeks x 10 years = 5000 hours | 50 hours x 30 weeks x 10 years = 15000 hours |
| Average Cost Per Hour of Use: | $221.40 | $165.00 |

**Why install lights?**

Lights will provided an additional 2-3 hours of field time each day, which can add approximately 30% more field time. Also, during warmer months practice and games can be scheduled for evening hours

when air and surface temperatures are cooler. Parks and Rec. are open to working with the community to establish times of use and potential restrictions on when the lights are in use.

**Why not wait until the Parks & Recreation Master Plan is complete**.

Gonzales cannot be reconfigured for any other use or field configuration as it has wetland issues and parking issues as well as it would be cost prohibitive to enlarge or reconfigure. The Master Plan may make recommendations for fields like Memorial and Rustcraft may be reconfigured to accommodate other field options, that is not the case with Gonzales. So the only question the Master Plan will answer is it to be a grass field or a turf field. The benefits of turf are listed above. The P&R consultant provided input an guidance during the decision making process.

**Was an alternative to crumb rubber infill considered?**

Yes. P&R looked at cork, coconut and sand alternatives. The public health concerns were discussed with our consultant and the Board of Health. Based on the Board Of Health's review and having no formal public health concerns as well as our consultant providing documentation to support no health concern P&R chose crumb rubber infill. Crumb rubber provides a lower cost less maintenance alternative to organic infills.

**Public Health Concerns**

From The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Bureau of Environmental Health

**What do the available studies that have been conducted on exposure opportunities to artificial turf fields and health impacts show?**

Although exhaustive research has not been completed, the available studies have shown that although artificial turf fields components contain chemicals in the material itself, exposure opportunities at levels measured do not suggest that health effects are likely.

**Has the potential for the development of cancer been assessed using standard risk assessment methods for exposure opportunities associated with artificial turf fields?**

Several studies, including those conducted by officials in New York City, New York State, Connecticut, California, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and Norway, have conducted cancer risk assessments based on opportunities for exposures at Artificial turf fields.

Statement from Environmental Protection Agency: https://www.epa.gov/chemical-research/tire-crumb-questions-and-answers