

A RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE SAFETY OF THE AMHERST PELHAM REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC COMPLEX

Council Sponsors: Miller

WHEREAS, the Amherst Pelham Regional High School Athletic Track and Field are especially in poor condition and require immediate attention and action; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Amherst, through its Amherst Center Recreation Working Group, and the Amherst-Pelham Regional School District have been exploring options to remedy the poor conditions of the High School Track and Field and make other positive changes to the athletic track and fields since 2016; and

WHEREAS, the Amherst Town Council values students and student athletes tremendously and wants the Amherst Regional School community, and the greater Amherst community, to benefit from a safe track and usable athletic fields, competitive athletic opportunities, and a sense of pride in our schools and community; and

WHEREAS, the Amherst-Pelham Regional District and the Amherst Center Recreation Working Group and its consultant, Weston & Sampson, identified several options to improve the Town Center Athletic facilities, one of which includes the installation of an artificial turf field, known in their report dated February 11, 2022, as option 3. Option 3 was approved by the Amherst Pelham Regional School Committee, is the preferred option of the Amherst Pelham Regional School District Superintendent and the High School Athletic Director, and is the wish of many other community members; and

WHEREAS, the Amherst Town Council acknowledges that artificial turf has recently come under scrutiny, with several Amherst Town Councilors, one Amherst-Pelham Regional School Committee member, and many members of the public expressing concern about the health and environmental safety of artificial turf, particularly with respect to per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), a group of chemicals often referred to as “forever chemicals.”

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Amherst Town Council encourages the Amherst-Pelham Regional School Committee to reconsider all available options to remedy the poor conditions of the High School Athletic Complex and, in determining which option to pursue, to consider, among other benefits and drawbacks, the emerging science related to the health and environmental safety of PFAS and artificial turf.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Amherst Town Council encourages Town Staff and the Board of Health to work with other experts to understand the impacts of PFAS in our community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Amherst Town Council supports federal and state legislation related to PFAS safety, including the soon to be signed into law PFAS Firefighter Protection Act and Bill S.1387 - An Act restricting toxic PFAS chemicals in consumer products to protect our health - sponsored by Massachusetts State Senator Joanne Comerford.

Voted this 5th day of December, 2022.

Lynn Griesemer, Town Council President