

Valley News Letters to Editor Summarized Athletic Fields Opinions

I. Arguments in favor of the athletics fields proposal:

- shortage of fields
- the longer we delay, the more expensive it will be
- must use Norwich land
- necessary to support sports which serve a lot of students
- Norwich fields are not that far away
- the towns and school have done all they can to cooperate
- good for the future of the communities
- wise to invest in children
- want to support an already successful program
- losing fields, don't want to have to cut teams
- benefits of physical activities, team cooperation, problem solving, time management, building self-esteem and confidence
- cost-conscious bond proposal
- won't be able to provide practice and game sites for many teams
- dire consequences to health of young people
- town cannot meet district's on-going needs for intensive daily use of playing fields

Arguments opposing the athletics fields proposal:

Expense

- too expensive overall
- locking up too much capital, making it harder to fund future priorities

- adding on to tax impact when salaries are not going up at same rate
- potentially forcing some people out of town
- too costly to relocate track
- only small proportion of students benefit from this large expense

II.Priorities, other alternatives

- unresolved issues regarding balance of field sports with non-field sports, interscholastic sports with intramural sports, organized sports with other outdoor activities, organized sports with other after-school-programs, of the athletics program with the academic program
- insufficient assessment of athletics needs by an impartial group of citizens
- not in line with a community with many levels of income

III.Community needs

- does not address the need for fields and greenspaces throughout the Hanover neighborhoods
- more fields than needed if the schools continue use of the fields we still have in the community
- alternative and less costly ways for staying healthy were not taken into consideration
- not maximizing use of fields we already have
- not looking at potential sites for fields close to school
- unsightly appearance of fields at school surrounded by parking lots
- fields too "manicured", too perfect a set-up, not using the nature we have
- trade-off for taxpayers in Hanover: more playing fields vs more bike paths, hiking trails, etc

IV. Process of generating and "marketing" proposal

-unethical targeting of campaign, financed with taxpayers'money, towards those who might be counted on to support the proposal instead of soliciting broader participation in the vote

-School Board used scare tactics and unfair marketing campaign

-School Board was not open about all the drawbacks, such as future maintenance cost, redoing the artificial turf and potentially the excess spending penalty in Norwich

-maintenace not included in bond proposal

-taxpayer money was used for brochures that did not present both sides

-information on availability of fields was incorrect

-the "new" proposal was essentially the same as the old proposal

V. Comparison with other communities, our image

-many more playing fields than other public schools with whom HHS competes

-too many fields when, like others, more sharing among teams could be expected

-creates undesirable "ritzy"image of our community

VI. Safety

- Astro turf not safe for people who are not used to it and do not have proper shoes, especially younger children and older adults