

MOUNT KEMBLE RECREATION COMPLEX

<i>Website Assertions</i>	<i>Morris Township Response</i>
<p>“In addition to the two soccer fields the site now includes plans for a baseball field as well.”</p>	<p>The concept plan for two artificial turf fields with lights as originally submitted to the Morris County Open Space program and Harding in June of 2006 has not changed.</p>
<p>“Alternatives such as the Greystone, Exxon, or Morristown High School properties are not even being considered.”</p>	<p>This process was initiated in early 2006 and at that time there were no options available for consideration at Greystone or Exxon. The current plans for Greystone and Exxon preclude meeting the timeframes associated with construction of a lighted multiple rectangular artificial turf facility.</p> <p>Morris School District elementary school and junior high school outdoor sports facilities are used extensively by Morris Township and Morristown Recreation programs, as well as by the local youth serving independent sports organizations. The Morris School District limits use of the Morristown High School and Harter Road sports fields for interscholastic sports only.</p> <p>Morris Township does not have management and operational control of school properties. While Morris Township does make extensive use of school facilities we are often bumped from the schedule. Making investments in property that is not owned and managed by the Township is not a prudent business practice.</p>
<p>“Instead of improving their existing facilities, Morris Township insists on building this new facility. The town is effectively operating this complex as a business, but they are immune from their own zoning requirements.”</p>	<p>We have our own Parks & Recreation staff who are constantly preparing and improving existing facilities so that they are always ready for use. Recent examples of improvements include the construction of the new Jean Street Soccer Field, renovations to the Cornine Field and Ketch Road natural grass turf fields, and conversion of many neighborhood fields to multi-sports use. As for operating this complex as a business, this facility will operate as any other Township-owned facility with substantial use by local youth serving athletic organizations and Township sponsored youth sports clinics. Morris Township is not immune from any zoning requirements regardless of where the property is located.</p> <p>Field usage will be determined by a Memorandum of Agreement</p>

<p>“Preserve Harding was created to provide the details that are missing from the Morris Township proposal to turn 15 acres of undeveloped land into a sports arena. Morris Township has consistently kept this “under the radar” by not providing details and when public announcements are required posting them in an obscure weekly newspaper, the Morris News Bee.”</p>	<p>negotiated by both municipalities. <u>First, there is no sports arena proposed.</u></p> <p>Second, we’ve distributed a chronological list outlining our 13 communications with the public about this project since July, 2006. Morris Township has repeatedly distributed press releases to all local news agencies and the information concerning our plans has been widely reported in the Daily Record, Star Ledger, and Morris News Bee.</p> <p>The conceptual plan for this facility was first presented to the Harding Township Committee and Open Space Committee in the spring of 2006. In the fall of 2006, the Harding Township Committee, the Harding Open Space Committee, and the Great Swamp Watershed Association all provided letters of endorsement as part of our County Open Space application. We have presented our plans to the Harding governing bodies and the Open Space Committee on multiple occasions; most recently the concept plan was presented to the Harding Planning Board in November, 2007 and the Harding Township Committee in December, 2007.</p> <p>Two rectangular fields with small bleachers do not constitute an “arena”. Use of such a word is an example of exaggeration designed to mislead and inflame people. Attached is a list of public communications from Morris Township about the project. Far from hiding it, we’ve made considerable effort to publicize it. We’re proud of this plan, which is enormously popular with people familiar with the facts and has been editorially endorsed by the Daily Record. We have no desire to hide any aspect of the plan from anyone.</p>
<p>“Presented as a couple of neighborhood fields “for the local town children”, it has morphed into a regional sports arena servicing adult leagues and commercial enterprises throughout Morris County and the surrounding counties.”</p>	<p>Again, no sports arena is proposed, just two rectangular, multi-purpose fields. Morris Township will cater to its own residents first and concern itself with surrounding towns’ use after its citizen’s needs are met.</p>
<p>“We oppose the transfer of the land from Harding Township to Morris Township and the fields as proposed- 80 ft night lighting, turf fields, PA system, play from 9am to 10:30 pm seven days per week,</p>	<p>Field play will end at 10 pm with lights off. Pathway access lighting will turn off no later than 10:30 for security/safety reasons. Morris Township and Harding have never discussed interstate usage and it’s</p>

<p>and catering to interstate adult and regional youth teams.”</p>	<p>not part of our recreational programming. The development of this property is made to meet the demands of our recreational programs.</p>
<p>“When does active recreation become nuisance recreation? Is it when out of state players and spectators from Pennsylvania to Maine come to the games? Is it when bleachers for 1,000 are installed?”</p>	<p>No out of state usage has ever been considered during negotiations between Harding and Morris Townships. Morris Township has agreed to cap bleacher seats at 300 people per field for a total of 600 bleacher seats. Morris Township will utilize portable bleachers that provide enough flexibility so that they can be moved based on the needs of a certain recreational program.</p>
<p>“Users of the complex include: youth soccer leagues with a significant non-resident membership, a new men's adult soccer team and a for profit soccer training company.”</p>	<p><u>A new men’s adult soccer team and a for-profit soccer training company have NEVER been discussed.</u> Prime users will be local youth athletic organizations most of whom have participation by residents of Morris Township, Morristown, and Morris Plains. There are also a number of Harding residents who participate in local sports programs.</p>
<p>“Turf pellets travel into the streams as runoff. Silver Brook stream runs through the property and into the Great Swamp Watershed conservation area.”</p>	<p>Runoff from Route 287, which has been there for at least 40-years, provides the greatest threat to the Silver Brook. Rubber pellet movement can be minimized through regular maintenance (i.e. sweeping, brushing). Synthetic Turf fields are constructed using cryogenic rubber pellets (which do not float) mixed with a fine sand fill. Properly engineered drainage and regular surface maintenance practices reduce rubber pellet movement.</p>
<p>“Connecticut and Texas are reporting incidents of MRSA staph infections related to artificial turf. Texas is reporting incidents 16 times the national average for high school football players. Eighteen percent of their high school football fields are artificial turf.”</p>	<p>MRSA can be contracted in school showers, on wrestling mats, etc. Are we going to do away with those facilities because of what MAY occur? A Penn State study conducted by Dr. Andrew S. McNitt, released October 2006, showed no evidence of staph contamination on synthetic fields in use, however found common staph in players’ clothing, towels, locker facilities and practice equipment.</p>
<p>“Stadium lights (typically 80 foot) for night lighting and artificial turf were “non-negotiable” items according to the Morris Township’s Mayor.”</p>	<p><u>The light towers being proposed are not stadium lights.</u> The towers may vary anywhere from 70 to 80 feet in height. The lighting will use new technology that shields the lights from the sides and projects directly down to the field surface. The lighting will not project over property lines. Recently completed lighting projection reports indicate that none of the light towers will be visible from Harding residential streets. The closest Harding residence is approximately a quarter mile away from the nearest property boundary.</p>

	<p>Morris Township believes that when millions of dollars are being invested in such a venture, it is imperative to be able to utilize the facility to meet play time demand. We need to have enough time to schedule two games each evening which therefore requires lighting capabilities to 10 PM. Security lighting would then be adequate to safely move participants to exit the facility.</p>
<p>“An extra 1500-2000 cars coming through Mt Kemble Ave, Sand Spring Road, Sand Spring Lane, and James Street”</p>	<p>These numbers are absurd. When 2 soccer games are going on, involving maybe 50 or so children, they’d have to attract 2 cars per child to add up to even 100 cars. Since most of the users would be Morris Township children, it’s reasonable to predict that cars would exit the site via Route 202 (their only option) and then disperse northerly to various destinations in Morris Township, highly unlikely to involve any Harding Roads.</p> <p>Regularly scheduled youth programs generate, at most, 155 cars over the scheduled 6 PM to 10 PM time slot.</p>
<p>“The site will be the home field for the Morris County Colonials a new franchise team in the National Premier Soccer League (NPSL).”</p>	<p><u>Not true and has NEVER been discussed. Pure fabrication!</u> The Colonials website (www.colonialsoccer.com) clearly indicates their home field as Burke Field on the campus of Morristown Beard High School.</p> <p>We’re interested in serving the documented needs of our own children, not outsiders.</p>
<p>“There will be no limit on the number of fields built other than available land. Proposals have been contradictory and indicate anything from 2-4 to start.”</p>	<p>3-4 lighted fields was mentioned in our 2006 county open space application and was endorsed by Harding’s mayor and Open Space Trust Chair, as well as the Harding Land Trust. Since that time, a concept plan has been developed to reflect 2 rectangular multi-purpose fields.</p>
<p>“Morris Township claims the land owner came to them wanting to build on the property, yet Morris Township not the land owner, commissioned a study from an engineering firm to determine how many houses could be built on the property.”</p>	<p>Residential lot yields were provided by Harding’s Tax Assessor. As part of the process of applying for funds for this project, Morris Township obtained appraisals that included engineering analysis to verify that about 12 homes could be built on the property under Harding’s existing zoning. This was necessary to determine the fair market value of the land.</p>
<p>“Components of artificial turf fields are made with old tires that</p>	<p>Cryogenic rubber infill for synthetic turf has been used for more than</p>

contain heavy metals which gets into children's hair and shoes and gets tracked into cars and homes."

"The Connecticut Environment and Human Health organization has recommended a moratorium on installation of new artificial turf fields until further study can be done."

15 years internationally and for more than seven years in New Jersey without reported related illness. It is generally viewed as a beneficial recycling use of used auto and truck tires. Studies have indicated that there is leaching of very small amounts of toxic materials from rubber infill materials within the first 90 days of installation. There is no evidence that physical contact with the rubber product or even the ingestion of small amounts of the rubber leads to toxic reaction in users. A 2003 study by public health experts in Alberta, Canada "Toxicological Evaluation for the Hazard Assessment of Tire Crumb for Use in Public Playgrounds" noted "Oral ingestion was deemed to be low in overall hazard because ingestion of tire crumb on the ground is not likely, and the gastrointestinal tract is unlikely to be efficient in extracting toxic chemicals from tire crumb. Tire crumb does not contain chemicals with high vapor pressures; thus exposure via inhalation was deemed inconsequential and the resulting hazard negligible. Dermal exposure was deemed to be unlikely and therefore, to present low overall hazard."

The NJDEP has noted in its June 2007 report "Preliminary Assessment of the Toxicity from Exposure to Crumb Rubber: Its use in Playgrounds and Artificial Turf Playing Fields" that "after reviewing the information available, with the possible exception of allergic reactions among individuals sensitized to latex, rubber and related products, there was no obvious toxicological concern that crumb rubber in its intended outdoor use on playgrounds and playing fields would cause adverse health effects in the normal population." The NJDEP does recommend continued study on crumb rubber exposure for those populations with increased sensitivity to the material.

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