

September 11, 2020

Based on comments contained in the Planning Board letter of July 30, 2020 to Tiara McCray recommending approval of the abandonment and prior testimony of turf opponents, below please find Petitioners' responses to the key turf-related issues raised.

Synthetic Turf Topics

- **SWM Runoff**

- Claim:

- Water from the turf will make its way into nearby Sligo Creek bringing with it pieces of turf, ballast, animal waste, and general trash and debris.

- Response:

- No increase in runoff from this system versus existing conditions. Therefore, no change in the possibility of animal waste or trash and debris.
 - The proposed SYNTipede 243 turf material is an "unballasted" system, so there are no infill particles that will run off as happens on athletic fields
 - All stormwater from the turf will continue to run to an existing two-vault system located under Ellsworth Drive and will pass through 368 X-CSF storm filter cartridges. Those filters will capture suspended solids, oils, greases, and metals as small as 20 microns (0.000787402 inches). A human hair is 50 microns wide. Approximately 15 manholes provide maintenance access, which the County handles under contract to a third-party firm. PFA pays a prorata share of that expense.

- **Cleanliness**

- Claim:

- The turf will be unsanitary due to trash and debris as well as microbial content and pet waste.

- Response:

- SYNLawn, SYNTipede 243's manufacturer, has an established maintenance protocol for the turf which PFA will follow. Key maintenance points are:
 - Pet waste, stains, and blemishes can be cleaned with a mild solution of granular household detergent or other low sudsing detergents typically used on fine fabrics. (They recommend using Simple Green, a bio-friendly cleaner.)

- Oil-based stains and chewing gum can be cleaned with limited application of mineral spirits or grease spot removers that are also used to clean sidewalks, streets, and plazas
 - Periodic brushing will help remove debris and maintain the turf's appearance.
 - SYNTipede 243 turf uses Sanitized® Silver-based anti-microbial treatment to prevent the buildup of microbes on the face fibers of the turf. Similar treatment is used in the manufacture of bedding, mattresses, home textiles, and sportswear.
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- **Toxicity**
 - Claim:
 - Turf is a petrochemically-based material that is harmful to humans.
 - Response:
 - Parts of SYNTipede 243turf are manufactured with renewable soybeans that replace some petroleum-based polymers.
 - SYNTipede 243 turf is a low VOC material safe for indoor and outdoor use.
 - SYNTipede 243 turf contains no traceable amounts of polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFA's).
 - Attention from the public and some members of the medical community with regard to the possibility of turf toxicity has been related to the infill "crumbs" or ballast used in athletic field applications but which are not a component of the Ellsworth Drive system.
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- **Heat Gain**
 - Claim:
 - The turf will become uncomfortably hot and pedestrian unfriendly.
 - Response:
 - Ellsworth Drive is currently a paved asphalt street, which is less inviting than the proposed turf.
 - The proposed SYNTipede 243 turf incorporates infrared reflective pigments that help to dissipate heat build-up by reflecting sunlight. This technology reduces fiber emissivity by 20% compared to other traditional artificial turf products
 - PFA's design firm, Oculus, prepared a sun-shade study that illustrates the amount of shading time resulting from the shadows of the surrounding buildings. The building shadows coupled with the shade from the trees along Ellsworth Drive will help to minimize any potential for heat build-up on the turf surface.

- **Recyclability**

- Claim:

- Turf is an artificial, non-biodegradable material that ends up in landfills.

- Response:

- The proposed SYNTipede 243 turf material includes nylon 6 in its fibers, which adds up to 50% longer life, reducing the need to replace the material.
 - Traditional turf assemblies in athletic fields include infill material, a drainage mat, and shock pads, all of which must be separated from one another to permit recycling. The SYNTipede 243 material planned for Ellsworth Drive does not require these additional components, which allows the turf to be pulled up and recycled as a single unit.
 - SYNTipede 243 is recyclable. At the end of its usable life, the turf can be pulled up and recycled through SynLawn's existing recycling stream. Through its partnership with Best Plus Lumber, SynLawn creates perimeter nailer boards from recycled turf for its installations.
 - The proposed turf also includes recycled content making it eligible under LEED for points in the Recycled Content, Rapidly Renewable Material, and Innovation in Design categories.

- **Flammability**

- Claim:

- The turf could catch fire due to smokers.

- Response:

- Per the manufacturer, cigarettes will not ignite the turf. Worst case, a cigarette could fuse blades of grass together.
 - SYNTipede 243 has been classified as a Class A roof material by the Southwest Research Institute, an independent testing agency, offering the highest rating for resistance to fire (ASTM E108-17).

- **Alternatives to Turf**

- Claim:

- PFA should consider other alternatives to the turf such as natural grass or hardscapes

- Response:
 - PFA has considered natural turf but determined that it would not be an appropriate material for this location due to wear and tear from pedestrian activity and periodic vehicular traffic. The use of natural turf would also necessitate a change to the stormwater management system design which would complicate the abandonment and County-approvals processes.
 - PFA considered a hardscape solution but determined that trading asphalt for pavers would be duplicative of Silver Plaza and Veterans' Plaza and would not create a more varied environment that would be both visually interesting and provide a setting for varied types of activity.
 - PFA considered simply painting the asphalt surface. While offering fun design opportunities that could be visually interesting, the painted asphalt would neither be as inviting nor encourage as diverse activity as synthetic turf.

- **Dog Access**
 - Claim:
 - The turf will preclude people from walking their dogs on Ellsworth Drive.

 - Response:
 - Dog owners may continue to walk their dogs on Ellsworth, and PFA encourages them to do so in accordance with Montgomery County ordinances about picking up pet waste. In addition, PFA will regularly clean the turf to address pet waste per the manufacturer's protocol.
 - PFA has long-maintained all of Downtown Silver Spring to a high standard and will continue to do so with the turf.

- **Thanksgiving Day Parade**
 - Claim:
 - Utilizing the turf will preclude the Thanksgiving Day Parade from passing down Ellsworth Drive.

 - Response:
 - For years Ellsworth Drive has been closed to vehicular traffic the vast majority of the time, something that will continue to be the case once the turf is in place. Because the turf will be attached directly to the existing roadbed, vehicles will be able to drive on the turf if they do so slowly.
 - The Thanksgiving Day parade in most years includes few wheeled vehicles, and the turf can withstand that level of traffic. In election years, candidates tend to

participate in the parade by vehicle, and in those years it may be advisable to have the candidates walk the parade or to reroute it altogether.

- The turf area will make Ellsworth Drive a more interesting and inviting pedestrian destination, and it may be advisable to focus activities there on pedestrian needs and to reroute the parade off of the street.