

**EAST LYME BOARD OF EDUCATION
East Lyme, Connecticut**

**Board of Education Special Meeting Minutes
Public Hearing
Thursday, October 7, 2010
7:00 p.m.
East Lyme High School Auditorium**

Board Members Present: Tim Hagen (Chair), Beth Groeber (Secretary), Melissa Ford,
Laura Greenstein, Al Littlefield, Marlene Nickerson, Kevin Seery,
Rich Steel

Board Members Absent: Mary Broderick, Jaime Ellis

Administrators Present: Dr. James Lombardo (Superintendent)

I. CALL TO ORDER – 7:00 p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

A. Presentation of the Proposed East Lyme High School Athletic Complex

Chairman Tim Hagen began the meeting by providing background information to the public. In May, Gale Associates was contracted to provide the Board of Education with a feasibility/preliminary design study of the proposed East Lyme High School Athletic Complex. The study includes options for a possible artificial turf field, track and bleacher renovations and updated lighting. Several meetings were held with Dr. Lombardo, the Athletic Complex Renovation Committee and Gale Associates, Inc. The results, conclusions and recommendations of the study were jointly presented to the Board of Education on September 27 by Bill Seymour, P.E. of Gale Associates and Athletic Complex Renovation Committee Chair Carl Reichard. The presentation was repeated and the Board invited the public to comment. No action was taken as the board continues deliberations. Further discussion will take place at future board meetings. The board recognized and thanked committee members Carl Reichard (Chair), Kevin Seery (BOE member), Tim Hagen (BOE member), Dr. Lombardo (Superintendent), Don Meltabarger (ELPS Finance and Facilities Director), Mike Susi (HS Principal), Jack Biggs (former HS Athletic Director), Steve Hargis (HS Athletic Director), Dave Putnam (EL Parks and Recreation), and John Rhodes (Town Building Committee).

B. Receive Public Comment Relative to the Proposed East Lyme High School Athletic Project

1. Joe Mingo, 397 Boston Post Road, reviewed the history of the bleacher, press box and lighting projects as well as lumber replacement and upgrades noting contributions from the ELHS band parents. He acknowledged the need for facility upgrades; however, expressed concerns regarding economic constraints. He questioned the species of grass to be used on a natural turf field and noted that artificial turf requires regular disinfecting.

2. Judy Engel, 3 Spring Rock Road, spoke in support of the project and made reference to child obesity concerns and the importance of keeping children active and the importance it plays on their well being. She also supports community fund raising events to help with the costs of the project.
3. Wayne Wondell, 13 Stones Ranch Road, spoke in support of a multi-use facility. He expressed safety concerns regarding band practices in the parking lot.
4. Ruth Reluga, 10 Bronson Street, of the EL Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources, submitted a written list of questions and concerns related to the synthetic turf portion of the proposal and asked the Board that additional environmental studies and “green choice” considerations be made before pursuing the project. She also referred to a letter to Former Board of Education Chair Kevin Seery from the Commission dated November 22, 2009 re: the proposed artificial turf and runoff.
5. Bruce Cohen, 41 Cardinal Road, President of the EL Lacrosse Association, submitted a letter in support of the synthetic turf field and expressed concerns regarding the non user friendly and deteriorating bleachers, as well as the poor track and field conditions. A new facility will foster community spirit and will provide a vision for East Lyme.
6. John Rhodes, 6 Seebeck Road, spoke in support of the project and noted an artificial turf field will provide the town the equivalent of 2-3 fields. As a facilities supervisor in another district, he noted the present facilities have reached their life expectancy and stressed the economical reasoning of a new lighting system. He commended Track Coach Carl Reichard for his work.
7. Shawn Greeley, 11 Scott Road, President of the EL Youth Soccer Program, spoke in support of moving the project to the next step. His concerns included the wear and tear the high school athletic teams are taking on the Bridebrook fields, as well as the need for a practice area for the band. He also noted safety issues with the current track.
8. Rich Hansen, 17 Romania Road, recommended moving ahead with the project and asked the board to consider more efficient lights for extending public use of the track.
9. Fran Shields, 30 Parker Drive, informed the Board of his first hand knowledge of the CT College turf field which was installed in June 2005. To date there have been no issues with bacteria or heat. The artificial turf maximizes student athlete participation and he applauded the town for understanding the need for this type of field. His experience has shown a decline in injuries, elimination of game cancellations due to field conditions and encourages East Lyme to invest in excellence by providing a cutting edge facility for its students.
10. Alison Woods, 4 Ferro Court, supported wholeheartedly the project as presented. She expressed concerns regarding offsite practices and encouraged the community to invest in town assets, our kids and our community. She also encouraged the Board to research and pursue funding opportunities, and as a taxpayer, she is willing to pay for the facility in the many years to come.
11. Rajesh Phanabal, 21 Goldfish Terrace, ELHS drum major, advocated for the project as presented and spoke of safety concerns for band members practicing on the parking lot as well as limited time to practice on the field. He also expressed concerns regarding the bleachers, track and fence.
12. Mark Nickerson, 15 Jean Drive, Board of Selectmen, had no opinion on the subject; however, encouraged the Board to send the project to the taxpayers for decision.
13. Steven Hinkle, 21 Dean Road, HS track student, spoke in support of the project as presented. He spoke of track and fencing safety issues and how the town would benefit from a new facility.
14. Jerry Fortier, 13 North Ledge Rock Road, informed the Board that the same type of project was presented to the Board five years ago at a much lower cost; however, now is the time to act while the rates are low.

15. Gigi Begin, 27 Jeremy Drive, Former Girls' Lacrosse Head Coach and presently umpire for the Girls' Field Hockey Team, expressed her coaching frustrations regarding practice and play availability of fields, rescheduling of practices and games and bleacher safety concerns. She stated that an artificial turf field provides a level of play that is much higher than a natural turf field, while the number of injuries are much lower. She has not personally experienced any problems with excessive heat. She encouraged taxpayers to support this project which will provide an athletic complex comparative to East Lyme's great academic program.
16. Ed Haines, 11 Goldfish Terrace, spoke in support of the project as presented and encouraged the community to support the project as presented, providing an athletic facility that will match East Lyme's great academic program.
17. Lou Delaforcade, 22 Rose Lane, spoke in full support of the project as presented, but believes the town fields will still be used by the school. A turf field will enhance the community.
18. Beth Groeber, 94 Laurelwood Drive, Board Secretary, encouraged the Board to further explore turf field environmental concerns and the disposal process for the turf field carpet.
19. Reb Buckley, 16 Egret Road, spoke of pesticide and fertilizer adverse environmental effects and possible legal concerns.
20. Tom Gillespie, 47 Hilltop Trail, structural engineer, cautioned the Board of legal concerns related to current facility safety issues and advised the Board to move ahead and to take advantage of the low bonding rates. He noted baseball field drainage problems and asked if the Board has a plan in place for correction of the problem.
21. Paul Daigle, 8 Bobwhite Lane, thanked the Board for providing an informative presentation and to move ahead with the project as presented.

C. **ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION: Al Littlefield moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 p.m.; Marlene Nickerson seconded.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

MOTION CARRIED

Respectfully submitted,
 Elizabeth Groeber/lb
 Elizabeth Groeber, Secretary
 East Lyme Board of Education