

Hamilton Planning Board

Re: HWRSD Fields Project

Dear Planning Board,

On behalf of the Board of the Hamilton-Wenham Little League, please accept this letter of **strong support** on behalf of the HWRSD Fields Project.

As an organization that has invested well over \$250,000 in the recreational facilities of both Hamilton and Wenham in only the past few years, HWLL is uniquely positioned to understand the critical importance of the Fields Project to our Community. Youth and Middle/High School sports and recreation are part of the fabric of this Community. HWLL regularly services over 400 children each year in our Little League, Softball, and Babe Ruth programs. We work tirelessly with other youth sports, the H/W Recreation Board, and the HWRSD Athletic Department to schedule, maintain, and improve our fields without significant financial assistance from the Towns or School District.

Critically, the exuberance for youth and Middle/High School sports and recreation severely taxes our current grass fields, often making them unplayable, and likewise prevents the Community from utilizing many recreation areas because of over-use and/or schedule conflicts. The HWRSD Fields Project benefits the entire Community, not just children and families who play sports, by providing much needed improved areas that can withstand significantly more use, alleviating the strain on current grass fields and adding other amenities like tennis courts and revitalized track and stadium for everyone to enjoy - bringing sports and a sense of community and pride back to the Middle/High School.

As active and experienced coaches, we have zero safety concerns about turf fields. Our players - our own children - play on turf fields all the time, and have for many, many years. Whether in almost all neighboring Cape Ann League towns, at Pingree in Hamilton and Gordon in Wenham, throughout New England and beyond at other high schools and colleges, or any number of indoor facilities, we see absolutely no safety concerns. To the contrary, flat, cushioned, and well-drained turf fields minimize injuries. Further, as experienced "grounds keepers" for the HWLL fields, we know full well the negative impact of overuse on grass, the immense cost and manpower needed to maintain grass, and the complete irrelevance of any comparison to the "wants" of professional athletes to play on grass fields that are used perhaps two dozen times per year and have the benefit of billionaire owners to maintain them.

The voters of Hamilton and Wenham approved this project. Funding has been provided. HWRSD has incurred significant costs. Bids are going out. Every other town board has followed their legal mandate to honor the vote of the community, only consider issues that are properly within their purview, do their job appropriately and without undue influence or personal motivations, and then decide to approve the Project. On behalf of the entire Board of HWLL, we respectfully ask that you do the same.

Sincerely,

Tim Fazio  
President - HWLL

HWLL Board

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