

**Athletic Facility Fundraising
Focused On Artificial Turf at CR North Stadium**



Administrative Proposal September 4, 2008

A Brief History.

In November of 2005, Council Rock administrators and coaches met after a series of games and events were canceled at our stadium field based on a few days of rain. The concerns expressed by this group centered on the use that the CR North Stadium field endured with two high school programs and three middle schools scheduling events. This group made a recommendation to look at other options for the field surface at CR North. Soon after, involvement from the board, coaches, community, and staff led to a proposal to plan for the installation of a modern artificial turf surface at CR North and CR South.

A formal proposal was made to address the following issues and goals:

- Create a project plan that would provide funding from our community and other alternate revenue sources for artificial turf fields, rather than make them taxpayer funded projects.
- Expand the use of a durable artificial turf stadium field to accommodate multiple uses by district and community groups rather than the 30 - 40 events that can be safely scheduled on natural turf.
- Develop this alternative fund raising process to allow Council Rock to explore the potential for fund raising, naming rights, and other revenue opportunities for maintaining and improving athletic facilities without investment from the taxpayers.

In December of 2005, a group was formed to begin this work. The initial group included coaches, members of various athletic organizations in our community, members of the administrative team, representatives appointed by the school board, and interested community members. After early discussions, it was concluded that the project would be most successful if artificial turf at both schools was planned. Initial cost estimates indicated that the proposed fields would cost approximately \$800,000 each. With

contingencies, a figure of \$900,000 was used for each field, totaling \$1.8 million for both high schools. The fundraising task was outlined in general terms as follows:

- Raise one-third (approximately \$600,000 of \$1.8 million for two fields) from general fundraising.
- Raise one-third (approximately \$600,000) from naming rights.
- Council Rock contribution of one-third (approximately \$600,000) from capital project funds to be repaid through increased revenue opportunities and maintenance savings.

This plan was presented to the Board of School Directors in February of 2006. After careful discussion, the Board approved this direction and fundraising activities began. When this presentation was made to the Board, we set milestones for progress. When our fundraising reached 33% of the estimated project cost, design would begin and when fundraising reached 80% we would bid the project.

At the outset, we explained that this was an ambitious goal given the magnitude of the project and we made it clear that we were traveling an uncharted path. However, the opportunity to develop this turf plan along with the alternative funding is consistent with two important strategies in the strategic plan

1. Developing alternative revenue sources and
2. Developing community support needed due to known and difficult financial challenges.

Since the project started, we have realized the financial challenges of addressing critical facility maintenance issues. The financial challenges are exacerbated by the Act 1 constraints. These past two years have clearly shown that our principal focus for district revenue will need to go to school facilities and programs.

It was our primary goal to create a fundraising and revenue generating process that will ultimately allow the district to improve athletic facilities without contributions from the district's general fund. Artificial Turf and other athletic facility improvements can be accomplished with either funds raised in advance or reliable funding sources used to repay debt service payments.

In December of 2006, the Board authorized the administration to hire an architect to begin planning for installation of an artificial surface at both North and South. Joe DeGeronimo, an experienced athletic facility architect, was selected from a pool of architects with artificial turf expertise. Based on input from meetings with coaches, the architect's contract also included basic athletic facility planning to answer important questions related to any changes of athletic facilities at both high schools. The work began in the winter of 2007 and was put on hold in April as it became clear that there were differences of opinion on the School Board related to the best way to achieve our goals. At this point, both the fund raisers and the architect were directed to postpone further work until the district refined its commitment to the project. To date, the architect

has not completed an initial design nor has he billed the district for any of the preliminary work done toward this project.. The funds for this design work are to be paid from our community fundraising activities.

Our Current Plan.

As we have worked to make this project a reality, it has been apparent that our initial plan needs to be phased to focus first on the construction of the stadium field at North and then follow with another artificial turf field at CR South.

In July, 2008, the School Board reviewed the progress toward the project. At the direction of the Board, the administration submits this proposal to illustrate the current funding available and our design toward future fundraising. This plan will bring this project to completion for the 2009 fall season:

Plan If No Additional Community Fundraising or Naming Rights Achieved

Source	Original Concept	Amounts by August 2008	Notes
General Fundraising	\$300,000	\$195,000	
Naming Rights	\$300,000	\$200,000	If offer approved
District Commitment Repaid by Revenue Opportunities	\$300,000	\$505,000* (Assumes that no further revenue or fundraising is realized)	Requires annual rental income of \$63,000 to repay amount borrowed over 10 years.

Original Plan – Continuation of the work of school and community fundraising

Source	Original Concept	Amounts by August 2008	Plans for September 2008 to Sept. 2009	Notes
Fundraising	\$300,000	\$195,000	\$105,000	Money actually needed by September 2009
Naming Rights	\$300,000	\$200,000	\$100,000	Assumes current offer approved, plus approval of offers by naming rights consultant
District Commitment	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$37,000 in annual	Partial CRUSA offer only, any

Repaid by Revenue Opportunities			revenue starting Fall 2009 to repay \$300,000	additional revenues earmarked for next project
---------------------------------	--	--	---	--

An important part of this financial proposal is the commitment of the Council Rock United Soccer Association (CRUSA) to commit to lease the field for a five year period, with payments to be made monthly. They are requesting 3 hour blocks of time when the field is not needed for school events, including weekends and some weekday evenings. Their proposal to rent three-hour blocks of field time would fund a maximum of \$60,000/ year of rental revenue with four blocks of field time and a minimum of \$30,000/ year with two blocks of field time. (These calculations are based on \$125/hour and 40 weeks of commitment per year, which excludes winter months.)

It is important to note that we will continue on a path toward implementation of our initial proposal with fundraising activities through the fall and winter. At this point in time, assuming Board approval of the naming rights contract, \$395,000 has been raised, which is almost two-thirds of the general fundraising and naming rights commitment for a field at Council Rock North. With the revenue opportunities secured by a long-term lease agreement, the district share of the funding is no longer just a hope that reliable revenue is possible. This will allow the project to be completed at no cost to the taxpayer. Rental revenue is not possible without artificial turf.

In addition, numerous other sources of funding are being developed including:

- Naming rights and sponsorships of 3 to 5 years with annual payments.
- Additional fundraising events in the fall of 2008 involving school and community members.
- Gate receipts and concessions income from additional events.
- Maintenance cost savings, cautiously estimated at \$15,000 per year.
- In-kind contributions from community members to reduce construction costs.

Based on the proposal funding methods above, we are seeking approval from the Board for the following proposal:

- Immediately restart the design process with the intent to prepare drawings and specifications for fields at both North and South, determining more specifically the government approval process, design decisions, construction costs, and construction issues.
- In the late fall of 2008, prepare bid documents for the construction of an artificial turf field at Council Rock North
- In January or February of 2009, bid the work for the North field.
- In June of 2009, begin construction.

See Attachment 1-Project Schedule

Since we began this effort, four school districts in Bucks County have installed or approved artificial turf fields at taxpayer expense:

Central Bucks, Palasades, Centennial, Pennridge

Council Rock followed a different path – one that was designed to test a model of fundraising that was bold and difficult but was ultimately designed to draw alternative revenue to Council Rock for installation of this field and for future projects across the district. This ultimate proposal should be seen as innovative and responsible. It is a model that brings a community resource to Council Rock without taxpayer contributions and sets the stage for future fundraising potential to offset other academic and athletic needs.

http://www.buckslocalnews.com/the_advance/council-rock-gives-final-approval-to-artificial-turf-at-north/article_c25aa3ea-04a5-57e0-9d25-c230d0f3baa5.html

Council Rock gives final approval to artificial turf at North

By Jeff Werner; BucksLocalNews.com May 21, 2010



It's official. A Rock will be turfed this summer.

After a one-year delay, the Council Rock School Board on Thursday night voted 5-4 to move forward with plans to replace the grass field with artificial turf at the Council Rock High School North stadium.

Members signed off on a change order for \$30,409 that will bring the cost of the project to \$683,309.83. The work will be done by P. DeMarco & Co.

Board members Richard Abramson, Dr. Paul Anagnostakos, Robert Donnelly, Jerold Grupp and J. Dennis McMenamin voted in favor of the new field surface. Board president Bernadette Heenan, vice president Kyle McKesy and members Patricia C. Vaccaro-Sexton and Wendi Thomas voted against the motion.

Work is expected to begin on the field on June 18 and be completed by the start of new school year in late August.

A little more than half of the cost of the new surface will be paid by the Turf the Rock Foundation, including \$200,000 for naming rights and another \$270,000 raised by the general public. The balance will be paid for through a five-year lease agreement the district has hammered out with the Council Rock United Soccer Association (CRUSA).

The board voted 7-2 to approve the agreement with CRUSA, which will pay the district \$46,250 for nine hours of weekly field usage on Monday, Thursday and Sunday between Aug. 1 and Dec. 15 and March 1 and June 30. The agreement also includes a right of renewal for five additional years.

“[CRUSA] will anchor this project from a revenue point of view, thereby offsetting the cost to the taxpayer. It balances the \$470,000 we have already raised. We make money and improve the facility with an anchor organization,” said board member Robert Donnelly.

Donnelly said the project would end up making money for the taxpayers through an ongoing rental agreement with CRUSA while also supporting the spirit of the community, which worked to raise money for the new field surface.

“For all the right reasons, this is the right project at no cost to the taxpayers and increased utility to the students at the high school, the middle school and the elementary schools that will be using that facility. We’ll actually have a positive revenue stream from it,” he said.

But Vaccaro-Sexton called the turf “the wrong project at the wrong time. Does this community really want 30,000 ground up tires deposited in the backyard of Council Rock North to be covered by a plastic carpet in many colors? I know these fields are attractive, but all that glitters isn’t gold. I have begged you not to do this. I don’t believe it will save us one dime.”

Thomas agreed, arguing it’s the wrong time economically to move forward with the project.

"I don't inherently have a problem with a turf field," said Thomas. "I happen to know that people are looking to rent turf fields. I believe there's a market for them. I believe we will make a nice income .. If we were passing a zero budget and we could still do this, maybe I would be willing to vote for it, but we're not."

Vaccaro-Sexton said the project was brought to the board's attention by a group of citizens who wanted to improve the stadium at North and who promised to raise the funds needed to pay for the project. "In five years, \$270,000 was raised by the general public. That was the broad-based support for a \$700,000 project?" she asked.

"We are lending ourselves this money when we were told that the public would never have to put out taxpayer money for this. And while we may, someday get that money back, we are today voting again to commit taxpayer funding to this," said Vaccaro-Sexton. "I believe this is a project whose funding has failed."

Grupp laid the blame for that at the feet of the board. "This board, rather than taking a chance and coming away from a unified front supporting the naming rights, there were members of this board who threw everything, but the kitchen sink, at the naming rights ... and scared people away from buying in ... They never thought the project would come to fruition."

Vaccaro-Sexton also joined Heenan in voting against the CRUSA agreement. She argued the district "is engaging in a lease to give the first set of open hours to one organization before any other community group could ask for that time for the next five years.

"That field is an asset for this community," she argued. "It is a taxpayer-funded asset. It's maintained by taxpayers. I don't understand how we can go forward and give one group the exclusive rights. Our kids should have first rights to that field the vast majority of the time."

Grupp said right now "no one is clamoring to rent our lumpy, soggy field. It doesn't have value to people on the order of what we're speaking until there's an investment made."

Sexton shot back, "CRUSA would be happy to rent our lumpy, soggy, wet grass field whether there was turf on it or not because what they need are playing spaces. They just need playing spaces and they will rent it one way or another. That is the issue."

Superintendent Mark Klein called the lease with CRUSA “fair” and said it would not displace the district’s athletes. “It gives up one night out of five or six and even that night, if there were a district game or playoff we would work a good pro quo with CRUSA. The rest of the time is Sunday afternoon, which implicates no interscholastic sports schedules and it gives other organizations plenty of other times.”

CRUSA, the second largest non-profit soccer organization in the state with 2,300 players, will use the new turf fields to alleviate the heavy use its program has on the grassy soccer fields in Northampton Township.

“There are huge chunks of time where we have to rest the grass to keep it healthy. That’s why this is important to us. It’s a facility that can handle traffic and can alleviate some of the traffic we’re crowding onto one facility in Northampton,” said Mark Reilly, vice president of travel for CRUSA. “The benefit to us is that we’re not killing grass when we’re on it.”

Reilly said if his organization were given the use of the current field, “football would literally hunt us down and kill us. We would destroy a dirt field putting three teams on it, two sessions every night.”

Grupp noted that by bringing the organization to Rock North, it would have the added benefit of bolstering the local business community. “This helps us, but it also helps the community as well.”