

**NORTH EAST SCHOOL DISTRICT
MINUTES OF THE ATHLETIC FACILITIES IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4, 2020**

The North East Athletic Facilities Improvement Committee met on Wednesday, March 4, 2020 with the following committee members present:

- Mr. Corrie Boyd, School Board Member
- Mr. Jeffrey Fox, Business Manager
- Mr. Patrick Fordyce, Athletic Director
- Mr. Richard Gregg, Coach
- Dr. Michele Hartzell, Superintendent
- Mr. Shawn Humes, Coach
- Mr. Thomas Pyle, Asst. Athletic Director
- Mr. Eric Riedel, Board Member
- Dr. William Renne, High School Principal
- Mr. Mike Rowe, Parent
- Mr. James Wargo, Board Member

Dr. Hartzell explained the process.

FEASIBILITY STUDY and TIMELINE

A topographical study and survey must be completed. This survey & study will provide information for existing underground utilities, property boundaries and elevations which is necessary for storm water planning, site preparation and engineering. A feasibility study for the project is scheduled to be completed in June, 2020. Mr. Fox explained that a feasibility study is done so the District can provide input on desired needs and wants and the architect can prepare options based on the topographical study and survey and existing facilities.

A concern was raised regarding district field runoff into adjacent property owned by Mercyhurst University, whether this will cause a problem since that property is currently for sale. Mr. Fox does not believe this will be an issue but it will depend on if turf selected would require a greater storm water runoff solution than what is now installed. Discussion took place regarding the \$500,000 donation from the North East community to Mercyhurst and they felt that requesting this to be returned to the North East Community and applied to this project should be pursued

The timeline of the study would be to hopefully have options to consider by September 2020. This would enable the committee to be able to send out bids by January 2021 and break ground in May of 2021 after track season. The goal would be for the field to be up and running by mid to late August 2021 but no home football games should be scheduled for September 2021.

PROJECT SCOPE and SUPPORT

Mr. Fox advised the group to hold off on any fundraising at this point. The North East Education Foundation needs to be up and running before any fundraising could take place. The committee believes that the community support is needed. It was noted that the North East News Journal has not reported on the last two school board meetings. Members of the committee believe we should upgrade all facilities, including softball, baseball and concession stands.

Mr. Fox that the PlanCon formula has changed, resulting in the district receiving less in state funding. This project could be mostly funded by taxpayers or it could be a bond option (3% to 5% over 10-15 years). The committee needs to prioritize the work to be done and organize the project into phases.

TURF DISCUSSION

Discussion took place regarding the amount of use a turf field would get from the football and soccer teams, band, and physical education classes, etc. The potential would be there for hundreds of uses not currently taken advantage of. A turf field might save the district in the cost and time for painting fields but this is not a huge cost savings. Turf should last anywhere from 10 to possibly 15 years with a replacement cost of \$400-\$500K; 12 years on track. The committee discussed the effect of turf on PIAA events. Mr. Wargo noted that a facilities upgrade would enable the district to showcase student athletes and perhaps not lose students to private schools. Academics can improve if the extracurricular options are better.

FUNDING DISCUSSION

Suggestions for fundraising ideas included selling gift cards in the community, selling bricks to community members, and setting up a Go Fund Me page which would enable out of town alumni to easily contribute online. It was noted that General McLane fundraised \$300K in about six months. An Alumni Weekend could be planned as well. The committee wondered what grant funds may possibly be available from Hirtzel Foundation, North East Community Foundation, etc. This could help to get businesses and community members involved.

NEXT STEPS

- Decide on priorities for facilities and upgrades
- Work on a marketing plan (website, brochures, etc.) Have a capital plan in place. Get it out to the public.
- Think about sources for donations of labor
- Specific tasks:
 - Mr. Pyle will bring back an artist sketch of our “dream facility” and will bring “wish list” from coaches
 - Mr. Gregg and Mr. Pyle will reach out to other districts about facilities and fundraising; how did they finance and how did they get community support
 - Mr. Rowe and Mr. Humes will work on a contact list for fundraising
 - Mr. Fordyce and Dr. Renne will reach out to AD’s and Principals from other districts about their past projects; how did they finance and how did they get community support

NEXT MEETING

The next committee meeting was scheduled for April 1, 2020