

ARTICLE 18. Citizen Petition – General Bylaw Change: Artificial Turf Field Moratorium

To see if the Town of Sharon will vote to amend its General Bylaws Part I: Administrative Legislation, Chapter 61: Public Property, by adding a new Article III: Artificial Turf Field Moratorium, as follows:

ARTICLE III

Artificial Turf Field Moratorium

§61-5 Artificial Turf Field Moratorium in the Town of Sharon

A. Purpose. The purpose of this moratorium is to protect Lake Massapoag, and the town's wetlands, rivers, streams, ponds, groundwater, drinking water, soil, fish and wildlife, as well as human health. Current artificial turf carpets have known environmental and health hazards. They contain toxic chemicals, including flame retardants, plasticizers, and PFAS, a class of synthetic compounds that includes approximately 4,700 chemicals. PFAS are a particular health threat, as they are highly persistent "forever chemicals" that never fully degrade, accumulate in our bodies, and adversely impact human health even at low levels of exposure. A new regulation promulgated by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection establishes a drinking water standard of 20 parts per trillion for the sum of six specific PFAS. Thus, artificial turf installation could potentially contaminate Lake Massapoag, rivers, streams, ponds, ground water, soil and drinking water in the Town of Sharon by leaching chemicals. Plastic grass blades also break off artificial turf and would be blown by the wind to surrounding areas where they would break down into microplastic which does not fully degrade, thereby threatening to contaminate the nearby natural areas with PFAS, microplastics and other chemicals. Current infill materials are also problematic: crumb rubber from scrap tires is likely toxic, organic infill must be watered to get it to stay in place, and can freeze, which requires the addition of anti-freeze substances to prevent athlete falls. Artificial turf carpets are produced from petroleum. They are also not currently recyclable in the U.S. One facility in Pennsylvania collects turf fields for "recycling", but only recycles the crumb rubber that is removed from the plastic carpet. Current plastic artificial turf fields are also not biodegradable or compostable.

B. Definitions

ARTIFICIAL TURF shall mean any grass turf carpet composed of petroleum-based plastic, whether or not the plastic turf contains PFAS.

PFAS shall mean a class of per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances.

C. Regulated Conduct

The Town of Sharon shall not install artificial turf on any land, of any size, owned by the Town, for a period of three years from the effective date of the moratorium.

D. Exemptions.

Synthetic turf grass carpets made of plant-based bioplastic which is entirely biodegradable or compostable, and is certified to be free of PFAS.

Or take any other action thereto.

VOTED:That the Town amend its General Bylaws Part I: Administrative Legislation, Chapter 61: Public Property, by adding a new Article III: Artificial Turf Field Moratorium, exactly as printed on pages 36 through 37 of the warrant for this Annual Town Meeting.

ARTICLE 22. General Bylaw Change: Amend Water Discharge Bylaw to Clarify Right to Lien

To see if the Town will vote to amend Chapter 235 of the General Bylaws Streets, Sidewalks and Public Places, Article 1, Use Restrictions, by adding the following underlined language after the word "lien" in the last paragraph of Section 235-9.1, Water discharges to the public right-of-way, so that the last paragraph of that section states as follows:

If the Town completes the work and the amount due is not received within 30 days of the notice of billing, the costs shall become a special assessment against the property owner's property and shall constitute a lien for the purposes of MGL c. 40, § 58 on the property owner's property for the amount of such costs until such costs, including interest, are paid in full.

Or take any other action thereto.

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: That the Town amend Chapter 235 of the General Bylaws, Streets, Sidewalks and Public Places, Article 1, Use Restrictions, by adding the following underlined language after the word "lien" in the last paragraph of Section 235-9.1, Water discharges to the public right-of-way, so that the last paragraph of that section states as follows:

If the Town completes the work and the amount due is not received within 30 days of the notice of billing, the costs shall become a special assessment against the property owner's property and shall constitute a lien for the purposes of MGL c. 40, § 58 on the property owner's property for the amount of such costs until such costs, including interest, are paid in full.

