

Sports Commission Meeting Agenda

Thursday, September 25th, 2025

In-Person Meeting

Lubber Run Community Center

[Virtual Microsoft Teams Meeting](#)

Time: 7:00pm to 8:45pm

Public Comment

Approval of Minutes

- Approval of Jun 26th, 2025, Meeting Minutes

Old Business

New Business

- Synthetic Turf Fields by Arlington County Department of Parks and Recreation
- PSMP Recap

Commission Member Reports

- Chair Updates

Upcoming Sports Commission Meetings

- October 23rd (**In-person**)
- November 20th (**Third Thursday**) (**In-person**)
- December 18th (**Third Thursday**) (**Virtual**)

Sports Commission Meeting Agenda

Thursday, June 26th, 2025

In-Person Meeting

Lubber Run Community Center

Virtual Microsoft Teams Meeting

Time: 7:00pm to 8:45pm

Public Comment

- None

Approval of Minutes

- Approval of April 24th, 2025, Meeting Minutes
 - Motion – Lizzy Stell
 - Second – Nancy Sharkey
 - Approved by SC
- Approval of May 22nd, 2025, Meeting Minutes
 - Motion – Lizzy Stell
 - Second – Nancy Sharkey
 - Approved by SC

Old Business

- Into of new members – Joesph Dunn, Sam Watzman
- Day of Play Discussion
 - Vice Chair, Lizzy Stell, spoke on the goal of day of play which is to introduce different sports to children and adults in Arlington County. The event was to take place at Barcroft Park with the purpose of showcasing different sports including Gymnastics, Baseball, Ultimate Frisbee, Basketball, and potentially pickleball. The Sports Commission is actively seeking volunteers and engagement from different sports organizations to ensure the success of this event.
- Interest/Concerns of other Sports Groups Outreach
 - Discussion opened that within the Sports Commission there are some sports that are clearly represented but there are other sports that exist in the county that do not attend these meetings and how do we reach out to those sports to get them more involved in the Sports Commission. New Chair, Lizzy Stell, will be taking over leading this movement with the Sports Commission moving forward.
- PSMP Next Steps: Sports Commission Representative
 - Public Spaces Master plan that was adopted in 2019, and it is now in the stages of being updated. A major item in the PSMP that concerns the Sports Commission is the Field Utilization project. There was a group in the PSMP Implementation committee that were not the biggest fans of sports use of public spaces were very vocal in their opinion, so Chair, John Mingus, emphasized the importance of Sports having somebody at that table for sports. Next meeting for the planning committee will be sometime in the Fall and will be held quarterly. Pushed for someone in the

commission to step up and take a seat in the PSMP committee. Member Nancy Sharkey made a push for the importance of someone from the commission to participate in the meetings as no other recreational activities have to justify themselves the way sport field users have to justify themselves.

New Business

- Field Utilization Pilot Program Presentation by Ben Harris & Mariah Leonard
 - The project aimed to track field usage for various partner leagues including Arlington Girls Softball Association (AGSA), Arlington Soccer Association (AS), Arlington Youth Lacrosse Club (AYLC), and Youth Ultimate.
 - The study ran during the Spring (March 15 - June 16, 2024) and Fall (August 19 - November 15, 2024) seasons. Fields selected were Bluemont Junction (natural grass rectangle field), Key 1 & 2 (natural grass diamond field), and Williamsburg 1 & 2 (synthetic grass rectangle field). Data collected included organization, use type, and number of players in attendance.
 - Graphs presented showed "Total Hours Provided vs. Total Hours Reported by Field" for both Spring 2024 and Fall 2024 seasons. These graphs highlighted a significant disparity between the hours provided by DPR and the hours reported by the leagues. For example, Williamsburg 1 was provided 470 hours in Spring 2024, but only 185.5 hours were reported.
 - Data took into consideration the hours subtracted from initial permits for various reasons, including daylight savings, heat advisories, inclement weather, and permit cancellations.
 - Fields were being utilized heavily however, the data did not show this due to various challenges faced when completing the pilot program. Some of the challenges faced in the pilot program included, Leagues were not consistently completing field check-in forms, QR code signs at some fields went missing, game day challenges, such as coaches being too busy to fill out forms or confusion over which coach should submit the form if multiple teams were present.
 - The first phase of the pilot was deemed inconclusive due to low and inaccurate submission rates.
 - Next Steps for the Field Utilization Project:
 - Staff is currently looking for short-term and long-term solutions to improve data collection, with a plan to resume the pilot in Fall 2025.
 - Short-term solutions include exploring alternative reporting tools like an SMS texting service, where coaches can simply reply "Y" for yes or "N" for no to a daily message about field usage.
 - Meetings with leagues are planned to discuss the feasibility of these new methods.
 - Rovers will be utilized to sample field usage on a random schedule.
 - Long-term solutions involve researching alternative technology methods for tracking field use, potentially benchmarking with other counties

Commission Member Reports

- Chair Updates
- Softball Presentation by David Lansing
 - AGSA is dedicated to providing fastpitch softball for female athletes in Arlington County, focusing on teaching basic rules and skills, maximizing player development, maintaining a decent pace of play, fostering a competitive but fun environment, and encouraging player retention
 - AGSA is a partner organization with Arlington Parks and Recreation, with a board of directors comprising 30 members overseeing recreation programs and travel programs.
 - House Age Groups (Recreation): Pixie (K-1st), Pigtail (2nd-3rd), Ponytail (4th-5th), Diamond (6th-8th), High School (9th-12th), and Spirit (Summer All-Stars).
 - Travel Programs: Arlington Sage and Arlington Impact, with 2-8 teams for 9U-16U and 16U and 18U respectively.
 - Arlington Sage is a year-round fastpitch travel softball program focused on competitive play at the B-level. Impact is also a year-round program but focused on recruiting players for college. Both have tryouts and teams formed based on age and skill
 - AGSA operates both Spring and Fall seasons. Spring is the primary season with playoffs.
 - 2024 Spring Registration: 370 players
 - 2025 House Fall Registration: 435 players
 - 2025-2025 Travel Teams (Sage and Impact): 123 players
 - Overall registration numbers are exceeding COVID levels by approximately 15%, with a notable increase in Fall numbers over previous years
 - AGSA partnered with Arlington Little League to form Little League All-Star teams (10U, 12U, 14U) to play in the Little League District 4 World Series. The 14U Juniors team qualified for States

Upcoming Sports Commission Meetings

- August 28th **(Field Trip)**
- September 25th **(In-Person)**
- October 23rd **(Virtual)**
- November 20th **(Third Thursday) (In-person)**
- December 18th **(Third Thursday) (Virtual)**

Synthetic Turf Fields

Department of Parks and Recreation

September 25, 2025



**ARLINGTON
VIRGINIA**

Parks & Recreation

Brief History

- Prior athletic fields were **all-natural turf**. These were renovated approximately every 5 years. However, the turf typically did not last one year requiring frequent intermittent maintenance.
- Sports leagues run by the County did not have access to Arlington Public Schools fields. APS also struggled with maintenance challenges.
- **1999** - DPR began seeking a solution. A **stone dust** material was the first alternative surface attempted on an athletic field. This surfacing material was tried at Thomas Jefferson Lower community field and the Rocky Run Park community field.
- The stone dust **failed** because the material was easily displaced during play and rain created dips and gullies. Material also went airborne during competitive play creating a dust bowl over the entire field and into the air. This option was quickly abandoned.

Brief History



Thomas Jefferson Lower Field



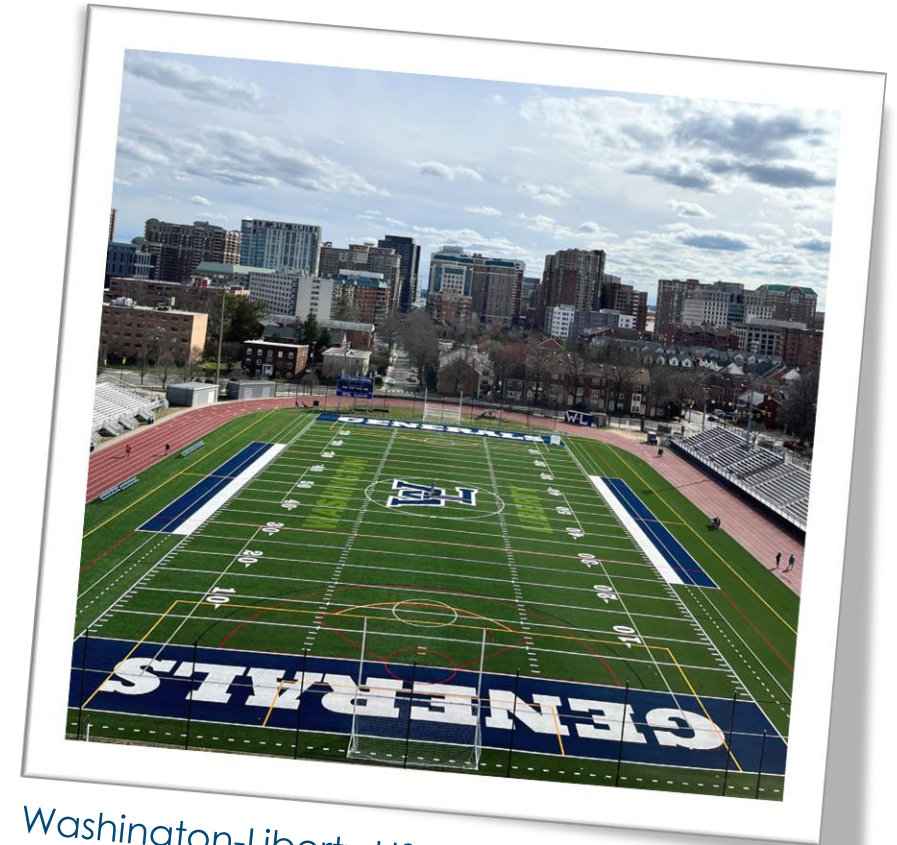
Rocky Run Park

Brief History

- The next alternate material tested was the use of **Bermuda grass** which is a warm season grass and has an aggressive growing habit. The results were moderately positive. The grass was an improvement over the cool season grasses previous used but could not completely offset the significant amount of use placed on rectangular fields.
- **2002** - First synthetic turf field installed at **Gunston Middle School**.
- This synthetic field was so successful, the demand increased for more fields to be covered with synthetic turf.
- Since **2002**, Arlington County has installed **17** synthetic turf fields. **None** of these fields currently use styrene butadiene rubber (SBR) made from **recycled tires**. Fourteen (14) of these fields use ethylene propylene diene monomer (**EPDM**) as the infill. EPDM is a synthetic rubber manufactured for the purpose of synthetic turf infill.

Current Practice

- Three fields in Arlington use an **organic infill**. These fields can be found at the stadium field at Washington-Liberty High School and the two fields at Williamsburg Middle School.
- While many in the County **support** and request more synthetic turf fields, others have raised many **concerns**. Information about the concerns brought to our attention and how DPR is addressing them can be found on the County's website under [Synthetic Turf Fields – Official Website of Arlington County Virginia Government](#).



Washington-Liberty HS

Current Practice

- Rectangular fields are typically replaced every eight years. This is based on usage/demand and the wearing down of the carpet fibers and the compaction of the infill.



Gunston Park Diamond Field

- Diamond fields with synthetic turf should not need to be replaced as often. Softball fields have less players which will wear down the field differently. DPR's experience with synthetic turf on diamond fields is not long enough to know how long synthetic turf can be expected to last on these fields. Stay tuned!

Current Practice

- When fields are replaced, the old carpet and infill material is **recycled** or **reused**. Contractors are required to provide proof that the material was sent to a recycling facility.
- The organic infill is **100% biodegradable** and can be repurposed as landscaping mulch.
- The synthetic turf industry is constantly **evolving**. As new organic infill options become available, DPR remains up-to-date with the latest developments in synthetic turf and infill technologies.
- DPR selects products and materials based on **ongoing research**, including site visits to fields using organic infill, conversations with synthetic turf field managers and maintenance teams, **feedback** from players and coaches, field temperature readings, consultations with sport design experts, and careful consideration of maintenance equipment requirements, **safety data**, and **cost**.

