

Special Board of Education Meeting on High School Track
Somers High School Auditorium
April 29, 2019
6:00 PM

Attendance Taken at 6:00 PM:

Present Board Members: Jan Martin, Sarah Bollinger, Barbara Capuano, Rick Lees, Kate McLellan

Absent Board Members: Anne Kirkpatrick, Bruce Devlin, David Palmer, Jeremy Anderson

1. CALL TO ORDER

The special meeting of the Board of Education on the SHS Track was called to order by BOE Secretary, Rick Lees, at 6:00 p.m. in the Somers High School auditorium.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. PRESENTATION BY SMRT ON PROPOSED TRACK REPLACEMENT

Discussion: Superintendent Czapla reviewed the past four to five months of the SHS track preparation. In November, the town passed a \$10 million referendum with \$6 million earmarked for the SPS schools for various projects including the track. A bid was put out in December asking various engineering and architect companies to bid on the architectural, engineering, and project management phase. In January, a committee made up of administrators, school staff, and town officials were asked to analyze the bid specifications and interview five companies. SMRT was selected. They have extensive experience building and replacing track facilities. Over the last three to four months, SMRT has been working with the committee and overseeing project management. There have been numerous meetings regarding expectations, criteria, etc. A comprehensive plan was developed. Superintendent Czapla introduced Mr. Dick Webb and Mr. Ken Costello from SMRT to present their track proposal to the public. Superintendent Czapla stated that questions from the public that aren't answered during the meeting will be posted on the district website.

Mr. Dick Webb introduced himself and Mr. Ken Costello to the public as SMRT's lead designers for the track project. Mr. Webb gave an overview of the presentation involving campus orientation, the track component, the field component, venue improvements, and budget and schedules. Mr. Webb opened the presentation with a slide of an aerial view of the present track, lower athletic fields, baseball field, softball field, gravel parking area of the park on Field Rd., and the natural grass fields to the north. The first step involved analyzing three potential track locations. The first area considered was the existing natural grass fields on Field Rd. behind the school in the lower fields abutting the park. Dimensionally, this area could support a new track facility. There were some key

constraints, however. There are currently two fields located there. Developing a track facility would displace both fields. The site is also more remote than some of the other sites to support facilities, restrooms, adequate parking, and utilities. The second area considered centered around the existing track but in a north-south orientation. One concern to this track location included having to add appreciable amounts of fill to the slope between the track and lower field. More importantly, there is a septic system at the northern end of the lower field. From an engineering perspective, it is not good practice to locate a permanent paved track over a septic system. The third and proposed track is at its existing location and orientation. The existing track is an equal-quadrant track. The concern with this orientation is that it limits the width of the infield. The proposal for the new track would be an unequal-quadrant track which creates shorter runways and longer distance on the turns. This type of track is still a certified track which can support a multipurpose field including soccer.

The proposed track would consist of six full lanes and adding two more sprint lanes on the north straightaway side of the track creating a 6/8 combination track. This design is valuable to manage meets more effectively. The west side of the track will contain a pair of jumping areas for the long jump and triple jump. The east side of the track will support high jump. The pole vault area will remain the same but be reconstructed. The throwing events will be further off the track and not proposed to change. SMRT is proposing a 4-ft. chain link fence around the immediate perimeter of the track for track management. The track material will be a synthetic paved basemat system with polyurethane binders. This product is of good quality (not at the top of the line nor at the bottom of the line). It's very popular and used in most high schools within the State.

The proposed field will be a synthetic turf field consisting of a shock pad underneath and a sand/rubber infill. It is proven to be a workhorse in the industry for shock and allows for safe interaction with the cleat and turf surface. The cleat interacts with the sand/rubber mixture, not the green. There is a proposed ball safety netting with limited return at the ends of the field.

The venue itself will have four 70-80 ft. light poles. The engineering is not final. Currently, SMRT is looking at an LED-type fixture as budget allows. This would provide a 50-ft candle illumination of the field which is important for men's lacrosse. In addition to the lighting, the poles will include convenience lighting for community use of the track. SMRT is proposing a 500-seat bleacher at the north end of the track. There will be accessible ramps and stairs. SMRT is proposing fencing to encase the track so that the school has the ability to control crowds. SMRT is not proposing a press box; however, they are proposing a filming tower which will be a little off-center due to the septic infiltration area. Some of the existing trees abutting the parking area will need to be cleared but will be replaced. SMRT is proposing a scoreboard at the southwest corner of the track as well as storage and future concessions at the east end of the track. The existing fire access drive will be paved for emergency and service access to the track. The proposal also calls for a continuous trench drain around the perimeter of the track.

SMRT is projecting the final design and engineering in two months. Geotechnical work is scheduled this week. They will submit permit reviews with the town and State by the middle of July to bid the project. SMRT has begun conversations with different contractors to make them aware of the project. Construction is proposed to begin in early August with the majority of the track to be completed by December 2019. The formal track surfacing may not be completed until April 2020. This is dependent on the contractor and the weather. The goal for track activity is set for May 2020. The budget for the track is on target.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Discussion: Superintendent Czaplá opened the floor to the audience for questions and comments:

- Ms. Caroline Skowronek asked Mr. Webb if the bidding will be local and public as well as what type of turf will be used. Mr. Webb stated that it will be a public, competitive bid. SMRT will continue to work closely with the committee regarding the potential contractors. The synthetic turf has not yet been determined; however, SMRT is looking at a multipurpose material to support various types of play. It will most likely consist of a monofilament and slit film fiber combination.
- Mr. Don Kaufman of Applewood Dr. asked Mr. Webb if the scoreboard will be a sophisticated type of scoreboard and asked why the press box was ruled out. Mr. Webb stated that the scoreboard will have a track component but is not proposed to have a video component. At this point, SMRT is still working with the design. Mr. Webb stated that the press box was most likely ruled out due to budget but will be discussed with the committee. The filming box will be an open structure.
- Mr. Brian Reid of Shady Dell Ln. asked Mr. Webb if a grant was available for Somers to obtain for the track. Superintendent Czaplá and Mr. Webb stated that they are not aware of any grants at this time. Mr. Reid also asked about turf maintenance and longevity of the turf field. Mr. Webb stated that a synthetic turf field is less maintenance than a natural grass field because it does not have to be mowed, fertilized, or irrigated. Mr. Webb stated that turf fields may be used 24 hours, seven days a week as long as infield depths are maintained and infill doesn't migrate away from the grass fiber. Typically, synthetic turf fields have twelve years of life with replacement cost at half the cost of the initial installment. Studies have shown that wear of the synthetic turf field has less to do with the amount of play but more to do with the UV light that starts to impact grass fiber.
- Mr. Ned Lynch of Cantlewood Dr. asked Mr. Webb about bleacher location and why another set of bleachers couldn't be placed on the other side. Mr. Webb stated that they proposed the bleachers to be placed on the north side of the track because it is more adjacent to parking and provides accessibility. If the bleachers were placed on the opposite side, it would be at the edge of the sanitary system and accessible walks and paths would have to be provided. Mr. Lynch also asked how close the track will be to the lower fields. Mr. Webb stated that the proposed track will be 10 feet closer to the lower fields than the existing track. Mr. Lynch

asked if the two southern lighting poles could support future lighting. Mr. Webb stated that they could be engineered to support future lighting but would have to look into the cost.

- Mr. Scott Raymond of Main St. asked Mr. Webb about track maintenance and restrooms. Mr. Webb stated that a track surfacing system is similar to building a road. The track will require resurfacing and re-striping every six to eight years. After three to four cycles of that, the track will need to be surfaced out, milled, and resurfaced. Mr. Webb stated that the east side of the track may support storage, concessions, and restrooms.
- Mr. Jim Jewell of Main St. asked Mr. Webb if the track will remain open to the public. Superintendent Czapla stated that the track will be open to the public. Mr. Jewell asked if the infield lines will be seasonal or permanent. Mr. Webb stated that SMRT has not gotten to that level of design just yet but will speaking with the committee about this issue. Mr. Jewell also inquired about a walkway to the lower track or if people will be able to walk through the track. Mr. Webb stated that since the track will be encased in fencing, people will have to walk the perimeter of the track to reach the natural field. Nothing has been proposed for a walkway.
- A member of the audience asked if parents may be part of the committee. Superintendent Czapla stated that the committee is made up of administration, the athletic director, the superintendent, the director of business, town officials, and school staff. The BOE has final approval of the committee's recommendations.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Motion Passed: Motion to adjourn the Special BOE meeting on the SHS track at 6:46 p.m. passed with a motion by Jan Martin and a second by Barbara Capuano.

5 Yeas - 0 Nays.

Rick Lees, Board of Education Secretary Date

Shannin Burns, BOE Recording Secretary