



Dust Up at Fields Meeting

By Cathy Tyson

“It’s not safe, not usable, and doesn’t meet the needs of this community,” said Vince Lattanzio of Carducci & Associates, the firm hired to do the Lafayette School District Outdoor Athletic Facilities Master Plan. The purpose of both recent meetings was to share information on proposed field design plans and hear comments from the community. Clearly concerned residents weren’t shy about sharing their opinions. “We invite public comment and feedback,” encouraged Lattanzio, adding that there is a link on the school district website to see specific plans.

Shayne Silva, Lafayette School Board Member at one point attempted to calm the increasingly cranky crowd reminding that this was just a preliminary look.

“The district is in the first stages of looking at what to do with our fields. We will look at all options, but given our limited resources, I don’t expect any dramatic changes to our fields. Our first priority is to make them safe for children to use.”

Lattanzio outlined possible design changes at all of the elementary schools as well as Stanley Intermediate. A number of factors were considered in the independent analysis: drainage, soil type, analysis of use, types of grass, restrooms, and more. Carducci’s job, as school board member Silva was quick to point out

was just to make an assessment of the current condition of the fields, to guide the process as the district grapples with what to do with the aging fields.

Differences in using natural vs. synthetic turf got the audience all riled up. While synthetic turf can provide significantly more hours of use and has considerably lower maintenance costs, attendees voiced their displeasure with the option.

Some neighborhood groups that were already at odds with athletic events were concerned over the possibility of lighted fields allowing sporting events possibly late into the night.

“I think it’s important that you really hear from the neighbors. When it’s in the District’s hands it’s not in the community’s hands,” said one Topper Lane community organizer. Lattanzio made a special point of offering to attend neighborhood meetings, and reiterated that the District and Carducci & Associates listen to comments and concerns.

Another neighbor said, “I bought a house near a school, I didn’t plan on moving next to a sport complex – there’s a big difference.”

Upon hearing when potential closures for field refurbishment might take place, Judy McNeil of LMYA commented that, “We have 2,000 soccer kids with LMYA – we need use of all the fields, all the time.”

For more information, go to the Lafayette School District website at www.lafsd.k12.ca.us.



One of two proposed design changes for Stanley Intermediate School by Carducci & Associates.