



## Shrewsbury Public Schools

Patrick C. Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations

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2 May 2017

To: School Committee

Subj: VOTE ON ARTICLE 13 OF THE MAY 2017 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING  
WARRANT

### Background

In November 2016, after a series of presentations to School Committee and subsequent discussions amongst its members, and a period of receiving public input, the School Committee voted to move ahead with Phase 1 of the renovation plan for the Shrewsbury High School Athletic Campus, contingent upon the raising of \$1.8M in business sponsorships and private donations to fully fund the project. Phase 1 includes the installation of an artificial turf field in the stadium with some related field equipment and bleacher repairs. Town Meeting has already approved an appropriation to fund the resurfacing of the track and that project is planned to occur simultaneously with the artificial turf installation to gain the economies of scale of a larger project and improve coordination of the two projects.

Recently, a very small group of individuals devised a citizen's petition for the May 2017 annual town meeting warrant calling for a "resolution" opposing the installation of artificial turf fields at Shrewsbury High School. The minimum required signatures to place a citizens' petition on the warrant is ten. This citizen's petition received only twelve signatures.

### Key Points to Highlight

1) Article 13 is a non-binding resolution with no legal authority. Our school counsel has specifically advised:

*"By its express language, the Petition would, at most, amount to a non-binding expression of opinion by Town Meeting [if the Motion passes.] While the Motion is expressly limited only to a resolution by Town Meeting, it nonetheless is without legal binding effect in terms of its impact on the Town Manager and the School Committee. This would remain the case even if the Motion was amended to compel or preclude action."*

2) Although there is language used in the warrant article referencing projects costs, this project is being strictly financed by business sponsorships and private donations.

3) This project stands on the merits of its outcomes:

- a) to provide significantly increased use of the stadium field by more teams, students, and time for Shrewsbury youth sports groups on a rental basis,
- b) to increase player safety by providing a safer and more consistent playing surface regardless of weather conditions,
- c) to have positive environmental impact by significantly reducing use of irrigation water and eliminating the use of fertilizers and herbicides,
- d) to provide significant financial value to the town and its taxpayers by seeking business sponsorships and private donations for its construction and reduced annual maintenance costs for its upkeep.

#### Recommended Vote

It is recommended that the School Committee go “on record” as opposing Article 13 by taking a vote this evening. A recommended motion is:

*“I move that the School Committee vote to recommend the defeat of Article 13 of the May 2017 Annual Town Meeting.”*