

# Town Woods Park

## Operating Committee Comparison of Maintenance Program Options

Field Quality, Usage and Costs:  
Short-term and Long-term

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# Town Woods Park - Overview

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- **Municipal Park, Jointly Owned by Towns of Old Lyme and Lyme**
  - 75% : 25% split; Towns also share yearly operating costs
- **Oversight Responsibility of Parks & Rec. Commissions of both Towns**
  - Joint Operating Committee established, responsible for park maintenance
- **Facilities include:**
  - 3 High-quality, Multi-purpose Athletic Fields, plus Practice Area
  - 2 High-quality Softball and Baseball Fields
  - Playground
  - Paved and Unpaved Parking Areas
  - Field House, with restrooms, kitchen, storage, security
- **Facility Construction Costs<sup>1</sup> (2002-2008, 2 Phases) \$1.977 Million**
  - CT STEAP Grants (obtained by both Old Lyme and Lyme): \$1.6 Million
  - Town payments: \$377,147; Old Lyme: 75%; Lyme: 25%
- **Maintenance Costs: \$81,000 for 2010**
  - Includes mowing, field lining, turf maintenance, weed control, field repair, etc.
  - 3-year full-service contract with Country Lawn & Gardens, expires Dec. 31, 2012

<sup>1</sup> Excluding Field house and playground

# Field Usage Comparisons

*(wear and tear)*

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Home Lawns	Very Low
School Fields	Medium
Town Woods Park Fields	<b>Very High</b>

**Important** - The greater the field usage, the greater the labor and maintenance treatments needed to sustain turf quality

Town Woods Park Fields require intensive turf maintenance due to nearly continuous usage over three seasons – Spring, Summer, Fall

# Three Options for TW Park

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## 1. Original Contract Treatments

**RECOMMENDED**

- Program developed by Vollmer Associates (engineering firm designed TW Park) and Professional Turf Management experts
- Low concentration pesticides safely applied by licensed professionals; Abide by state laws for municipal parks
- Successfully used to maintain high quality fields at TW Park from opening in 2004 thru 2010
- Cost effective, both short-term and long-term

## 2. Elimination of all Pesticides

**NOT recommended**

- No synthetic pesticides (herbicides or insecticides) applied in 2011. Quality of fields declined dramatically, plus increased weed growth in parking areas, baseball infields, playground, etc.
- A fully pesticide-free (synthetic herbicides and insecticide) approach not adequate for high-usage turf athletic fields; does not prevent crabgrass, weeds or grubs that can rapidly destroy high-use turf athletic fields
- Will result in substantial additional costs, both short-term (maintenance) and long-term (field rework)
- Should full field rework be required, in addition to the extensive costs incurred, reworked fields would be “out of service” for approximately 1 year during repair and re-growth

## 3. Hybrid Option

**Compromise alternative**

- Offered solely as a compromise option to consider, if needed, in order to protect these high-usage, turf athletic fields from the more extensive damage that would occur with a fully pesticide-free approach
- Will not maintain quality of Town Woods Park as well as the original contracted maintenance program
- Significantly higher yearly maintenance costs; may also increase long-term costs for field repair/rework
- If selected, suggest trial use on only one field for at least 1-2 seasons, before decision to transition to other areas

## Comparison Table – Town Woods Park Maintenance Options

Season	Area	Purpose	Original Contract <sup>1</sup>		Treatments <sup>2</sup> in 2011		Hybrid Non-synthetic / Synthetic Option <sup>1</sup>		
			Product	Cost / year	Product or Added Labor	Cost / year	Revised Purpose	Product or Added Labor	Cost / year
Spring May	<u>Playing Surfaces</u>	Preemergent Crabgrass Control	Fertilizer & Siduron	\$2200	<i>No Organic Product Option</i>	<i>n/a</i>	Preemergent Crabgrass Control	Fertilizer & Siduron	\$2200
May	<b>Common Areas</b>	Preemergent Crabgrass Control	Fertilize & Dimension	\$2400	<i>No Organic Product Option</i>	<i>n/a</i>	Fertilize only	Sustain Fertilizer	\$3534
May	<b>Parking Lot, Baseball Infields, Playground</b>	Non-selective weed control	Round-up	\$300	<i>No Organic Product Option</i>	<i>n/a</i>	Manual Weed Trimming	<b>String trim &amp; Rake</b>	\$1500 \$1000
Summer Jun	<b>Spot applied directly to visible weeds</b>	Selective Broadleaf weed control	Broadleaf Weed Spray	\$1500	<i>No Organic Product Option</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>Selective Broadleaf Weed Control</i>	<b>No Organic Product Option</b>	-
Jun	<u>Playing Surfaces &amp; Common areas</u>	Insecticide to control grubs	Fertilizer & Merit	\$2700	<i>No Organic Product Option</i>	<i>n/a</i>	Insecticide to control grubs	Fertilizer & <u>Acelepryn</u>	\$3000
Jun	<b>Parking Lot, Baseball Infields, Playground</b>	Non-selective weed control	Round-up	\$300	<i>No Organic Product Option</i>	<i>n/a</i>	Manual Weed Trimming	<b>String trim &amp; Rake</b>	\$1500 \$1000
Jun	<u>Playing Surfaces</u>	Preemergent Crabgrass Control	Fertilizer & Siduron	\$2200	<i>No Organic Product Option</i>	<i>n/a</i>	Preemergent Crabgrass Control	Fertilizer & Siduron	\$2200
July	<u>Playing Surfaces</u>	Fertility	Lime	\$730	<i>none</i>	<i>n/a</i>	Fertility	Lime	\$730
Aug/Sep	<b>Parking Lot, Baseball Infields, Playground</b>	Non-selective weed control	Round-up	\$300	<b>String Trim (2X) &amp; Rake (2X)</b>	\$3000 \$2000	Manual Weed Trimming	<b>String trim (2X) &amp; Rake (2X)</b>	\$3000 \$2000
Fall Sep/Oct	<u>Playing Surfaces</u>	Fertility	Fertilizer	\$850	Sustain Fertilizer: all areas	\$3545	Manual Weed Trimming	<b>String trim (2X) &amp; Rake (2X)</b>	\$3000 \$2000
Nov	<u>Playing Surfaces &amp; Common areas</u>	Fertility	Fertilizer	\$2300	Sustain Fertilizer	\$3545	Fertilize	Sustain Fertilizer	\$3545
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>\$15,770</b>	<i>(partial season)</i>	<b>\$12,090</b>		<i>(minimum)</i>	<b>\$30,490</b>

# Other Potential Costs with Fully Non-Synthetic, Pesticide-Free Approach

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- Note: Simply eliminating the use of Round-up (\$900/yr) in parking lot, baseball infields, and playground area, adds \$15,000 in labor (string trim and raking) to address uncontrolled weed growth
- Other costs that may also be incurred:

<b>Treatment</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Nematode Applications	~\$15-20,000 <u>per</u> application
Organic Mulch	~\$15,000 <u>per</u> application
Compost Tea or Bacteria Applications	~\$5,000 <u>per</u> application
Removal of Planting Beds	\$? or add cost for manual weeding
Resurfacing of Playground Area	\$? to avoid uncontrolled weed growth

# Impact of Continuing Antipesticide Approach at Town Woods Park

- Continued deteriorating field quality
- Reduction of available practice and game time for sports teams, including shortening of seasons, less home games
- Limit or eliminate District 18 use of fields
- Rotation of fields for repair, closing a field each fall season
- *Significant increase in costs for taxpayers*