

MEMORANDUM

TO: Zoning Commission
FROM: ^{JLS} Jennifer Steingasser, Deputy Director, Historic Preservation and Development Review
DATE: June 18, 2018
SUBJECT: ZC Case No. 18-04 Proposed Text Amendment for RFK Playing Fields

BACKGROUND

On April 2, 2018, the Office of Zoning received a report that served as a petition from the Office of Planning (OP) proposing a text amendment to Subtitle A, Section 209 of the Zoning Regulations, specifically the Restrictions on Unzoned Land and Section 301, Building Permit Requirements.

The proposed amendments would permit the construction of three athletic playing fields and associated accessory structures on unzoned land. The amendments would also provide for Zoning Commission design review of an unenclosed pavilion structure adjacent to the fields.

At the April 9, 2018 Zoning Commission public meeting, the Commission asked about the Department of General Services moratorium on turf fields and potential implications for the proposed playing fields at RFK. The District has a moratorium on crumb rubber, which would not be used at RFK. (See Attachment 1.)

RECOMMENDATION

OP recommends the Commission approve the following text amendments. New text changes are being proposed in this report that were not included in the set down report or Public Hearing Notice. The text in **blue** is new proposed text. The text in **red** with a ~~strikethrough~~ is a new proposed deletion.

I. Amend the text in Subtitle A § 209, Restrictions on Unzoned Land, as follows:

- 209.1 No building permit or certificate of occupancy shall be issued nor proceeding instituted before the Board of Zoning Adjustment, nor shall any property in private ownership be used for any purpose until after the Zoning Commission has designated zoning for the property, except as may otherwise be authorized by the Zoning Commission as a map or text amendment.
- 209.2 Nothing in this chapter shall prevent the following:
- (a) Minor repairs and alterations to buildings and structures for which no building permit is required under the D.C. Construction Code Supplements; ~~or~~
 - (b) A caretaker from residing on property formerly owned by the Government of the United States, or property in the Central Area formerly owned by the government of the District of Columbia, for which zoning has not been designated, for the purpose of maintaining and preventing the deterioration of the premises ~~;~~ **or**

(c) Installation and use of playing fields and associated accessory structures to support such fields on the unzoned property comprising and abutting the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium, more specifically known as Parcel 149 Lots 65 and 66 subject to the following:

(i) Three (3) accessory structures shall be permitted: a visitor building, a storage building, and restroom facilities, as follows:

(A) Each permitted accessory structures shall not exceed a maximum height of twenty feet (20 ft.) and one (1) story, and a maximum gross floor area of one thousand square feet (1,000 ft.) and shall be limited to the following three (3) structures: a visitor building, a storage building, and restroom facilities; and

(ii) In addition to the accessory structures listed in § 209.2(c)(i), an unenclosed pavilion, either covered or uncovered, no greater than six thousand square feet (6,000 sq. ft.) in gross floor area footprint and with a canopy no greater than thirty feet (30 ft.) in height may be installed and used provided the Zoning Commission finds that said structure, as designed, meets the standards of Subtitle X, Chapter 6 other than § 604.8.

II. Amend the text in Subtitle A § 301, Building Permits, as follows:

301.1 Except as provided in Subtitle A §§ 301.5 and 301.7, a building permit shall not be issued for the proposed erection, construction, conversion, or alteration of any structure unless the plans for the erection, construction, conversion, or alteration fully conform to the provisions of this title.

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301.3 Except as provided in the building lot control regulations for Residence Districts in Subtitle C and § 5 of An Act to amend an Act of Congress approved March 2, 1893, entitled “An Act to provide a permanent system of highways in that part of the District of Columbia lying outside of cities,” and for other purposes, approved June 28, 1898 (30 Stat. 519, 520, as amended; D.C. Official Code § 9-101.05, a building permit shall not be issued for the proposed erection, construction, or conversion of any principal structure, or for any addition to any principal structure, unless the land for the proposed erection, construction, or conversion has been divided so that each structure will be on a separate lot of record; except a building permit may be issued for:

- (a) Buildings and structures related to a fixed right-of-way mass transit system approved by the Council of the District of Columbia;
- (b) Boathouse, yacht club, or marina that fronts on a public body of water, is otherwise surrounded by public park land, and is zoned MU-11;
- (c) Any combination of commercial occupancies separated in their entirety, erected, or maintained in a single ownership shall be considered as one (1) structure;

- (d) Trapeze school and aerial performing arts center to be constructed pursuant to Subtitle K;
- (e) A structure in the USN zone to be constructed on an air rights lot that is not a lot of record; ~~and~~
- (f) Buildings and structures approved as part of a campus or private school plan or medical campus plan; **and**

- (g) Playing fields and associated accessory structures to support such fields and, if permitted by the Zoning Commission, an unenclosed pavilion, on the unzoned property comprising and abutting the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium, subject to ~~H-Subtitle A DCMR~~ § 209.2(c).**

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Should the Commission take proposed action, OP requests the flexibility to work with the Office of Attorney General to clarify the language to be included in the notice of proposed rulemaking.

JS/emv

Attachment 1



Artificial Athletic Turf Fields

Frequently Asked Questions

How many artificial turf fields are in the District?

The District maintains and operates 52 artificial athletic turf fields with an infill material composed mostly of sand and crumb rubber. The fields vary in age from one year old to more than 15 years old.

Does the District currently have a moratorium on crumb tire rubber field materials?

Yes, the District has not installed any artificial turf fields with crumb rubber since 2016. While the District maintains a number of crumb rubber athletic fields, the infill used for repairs or replacement fields does not use tire rubber.

What is a GMAX test?

GMAX testing is the standard method developed for testing and determining the shock attenuation of artificial and natural turf athletic fields. Impact testing of synthetic turf is important as GMAX values correlate to the safety of the playing surface. Higher GMAX values indicate harder playing surfaces, leading to higher probability of concussions and other injuries from users or players impacting the surface. The American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) International's standard, the most commonly used standard, establishes a GMAX value of 200 as the maximum allowable limit.

How often are fields maintained and tested?

The 52 artificial fields in the District are maintained and tested by a third party vendor (FieldTurf). This vendor performs a GMAX test for

each field once annually. This vendor also performs maintenance on the fields which includes but is not limited to; surface brushing, surface aerating, surface raking, surface sweeping, complete inspection (line markings, seams, and high-traffic areas) and infill top dressing.

How many fields were out of compliance with GMAX testing?

One field at Janney Elementary School tested out of compliance during two rounds of GMAX tests by two different vendors. Six DC Public Schools (DCPS) elementary school fields received conflicting GMAX test results, and will undergo another round of testing in the coming weeks with analysis to follow. Four fields at DCPS and Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) facilities are currently undergoing repairs, which will be complete by August 23.

How does a field not meet compliance with GMAX testing?

Each field receives monthly maintenance in accordance with the field manufacturer's recommendations but over the course of time a field surface gets harder and repairs and replacements are necessary. An out of compliance result is not activity specific, so limiting activities on the field is paramount for safety.

How will the District address out of compliance fields?

One field at Janney Elementary School tested out of compliance with two rounds of GMAX tests. The field is restricted to limited use (contact sports are prohibited), and then closed for replacement.

Six other fields received conflicting GMAX test results, and will undergo another round of testing in the coming weeks with analysis to follow. Out of an abundance of caution, those six fields will be restricted to limited use until analysis is complete.

What is the replacement material of the field at Janney Elementary School?

The field is being replaced with another synthetic surface compliant with the District's moratorium on crumb rubber.

What is the replacement schedule for a field that requires replacement?

The Janney Elementary School field will be replaced by October 1 or sooner in coordination with DCPS. Generally a field replacement takes four to six weeks.

Did the testing include artificial playground surfaces?

Currently the District does not test any playground surfaces, only artificial athletic turf fields.

What is the District's policy on artificial athletic turf fields?

Currently the District does not have a policy on artificial athletic turf fields. The Department of General Services, DCPS, and DPR will meet with stakeholders this fall and winter to create formal policy to ensure safe field use. Whenever possible, field repairs and replacements will be scheduled for minimal impact on school and community activities.

For more information, please contact the DGS Communications Department at dgsprojects@dc.gov

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