

To prepare students for lifelong success through excellence in education



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To: State College Borough Planning Commission
From: Robert O'Donnell and Edward Poprik
RE: Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment
High School Track Facility
State College Area School District
Date: February 15, 2019

The Planning Commission recently requested that the State College Area School District provide additional information related to its consideration of amending Park K Lighting, Section 2706.D.(6) of the Borough Zoning Ordinance concerning the maximum height of luminaries for outdoor facility and events in a residential zone.

The district agrees with the proposed ordinance amendments as drafted with Borough planning staff. In addition, the district supports an operational agreement between the district and State College Borough administration. Furthermore, in recognizing its role as a community partner, the district has taken into consideration questions and concerns from members of the surrounding neighborhoods.

The specifics of our proposal are as follows:

Details of Athletic Practices and Events

- The South Track facility only will be used with lighting for SCASD events.
- The lighting would be turned off by 9:30 p.m., with events ending by 9 p.m., except in the case of a overtime game or other rare extenuating circumstances (e.g. — a short weather delay).
- The need for adding lighting exceeding the allowable height of 25 feet is related to providing equitable and safe opportunities for our student athletes and marching band.

Benefits of 70-foot lights

Having taller lights at the track would enable the district to:

- Conduct consistent marching band rehearsals.
- Provide flexibility for athletic practices and competitions.
- Avoid parking challenges in the north parking lot.
- Expand our window of time for use during months with shorter days.

Impact of the field remaining unlighted

Currently, the district does not have an adequate facility outside of the South Track to accommodate the marching band with its more than 200 members. If the track is not utilized, the marching band would be faced with its only rehearsal option: returning to a parking lot that would simultaneously be used for parking for the high school campus as well as the north athletic field. Cars remaining in the lot would create inefficient spaces for marching and challenges in conducting rehearsals.

Furthermore, the marching band receives instruction and stores equipment in the rear of the new high school on the south side of the campus. In order to use the north parking lot, students would be required to carry their equipment and instruments from the back of the south building to the north parking lot, across Westerly Parkway. This raises logistical and safety concerns for the students.

Additionally:

- Student practices and competitive events would need to end earlier if lighted fields are not available, or when we experience wet field conditions.
- This impact is in direct opposition to the district strategic plan for every student to engage in activities outside of the traditional school day.
- Pedestrian and parking conflicts as well as safety issues while hosting athletic events would arise if the band needs to use the parking lot for rehearsal.
- An unlit field restricts which athletic events can be hosted at the South Track.

Event usage and schedules with 70-foot lights

Specific events and groups which would use the South Track field equipped with lights, including ending times:

- Fall sports practices and competitions would end at approximately 9 p.m., and no public address system would be used (estimated at 15-17 occurrences):
 - Middle school football
 - Ninth grade football
 - Junior varsity football
- Spring sports practices would end at approximately 9 p.m., with no public address system used (estimated at 20 occurrences):
 - Middle school and high school track and field
- Spring sports competitions would end at approximately 7 p.m., and would use a public address system (six occurrences):

- Middle school and high school track and field
- Fall marching band rehearsals would occur between August and November. The public address system would not be used. Only a handheld megaphone is used and rehearsal would end at 9 p.m. (estimated at 24 occurrences, with approximately eight using lights).

At a maximum, we would be using the lights at the South Track facility less than 65 days per year.

70-foot vs. 40-foot comparison of footcandle level outlines

Our proposal includes 70-foot height lighting based upon the recommendation of our contractor, Musco Sports Lighting, as appropriate lighting for competitive sports activities. As requested, Musco has provided zero footcandle level outlines at 40-foot height lighting. At the 40-foot height there would be substantial increased light spillage into the adjoining neighborhood compared to the 70-foot lights.

Memorial Field Project impact

Please note that the estimated number of uses does not take into account the present uncertainty of the Memorial Field renovation project timeline. Because the field will be offline for certain periods, there could be temporary increased use during the construction. To be clear, this would end when the project is complete.

The timeline will be determined in March following the acceptance of the bids. Completion of the Memorial Field project is expected in June 2021 at the latest, with a possible earlier completion in August 2020 depending upon the acceptance of a bid alternate.

The district appreciates your consideration of this request and values our continued partnership with the Borough and the community at large.

40 Foot Height

**Proposed Light Locations
(2 each side)**

**"Zero" Footcandle
Level Outline**

