

**Subject:** Re: Lower Columbia Project Update  
**From:** Debra Varnerin <davarnerin@gmail.com>  
**Date:** 9/2/2025, 3:14 PM  
**To:** Bill Dillon <bdillon@bhpsnj.org>

Sure. That would be great! When is the next meeting?

Sent from my iPhone

On Sep 2, 2025, at 2:32 PM, Bill Dillon <bdillon@bhpsnj.org> wrote:

Next BoE meeting should work. Would you like for me to ask that you be added to the agenda?

On Sep 2, 2025, at 2:23 PM, Debra Varnerin <davarnerin@gmail.com> wrote:

That's a good question. Should I come to your next BoE meeting or I can provide an update at the next Town Council meeting?

On Tue, Sep 2, 2025 at 2:21 PM Bill Dillon <[bdillon@bhpsnj.org](mailto:bdillon@bhpsnj.org)> wrote:

Thanks for the update. When will this be shared with the public? I am still getting many questions on the topic through our Athletics Committee.

On Sep 2, 2025, at 2:14 PM, Debra Varnerin <[davarnerin@gmail.com](mailto:davarnerin@gmail.com)> wrote:

Good afternoon everyone,

I hope you enjoyed your summer. I am writing to you today to give you an update on the Lower Columbia field project. After initial discovery, it is highly probable that the area where the turf field would be installed will be classified as wetlands by the NJ DEP. After reviewing all options available, the most cost effective solution is to replace the existing natural grass with natural grass sod with improved drainage, irrigation and lights. The Berkeley Heights Recreation Commission's priority is to provide the Board of Education and residents of Berkeley Heights a safe, usable park and field in 2025 and not spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on NJ DEP permits and wait 5-8 years to install a synthetic turf field. I am hopeful that the Nokia developers will give the town enough land to install a synthetic turf multipurpose field that can be used by the Board of Education and all residents of Berkeley Heights. Once I have the new plans for the natural grass field I will share them with everyone.

If anyone has any questions feel free to reach out to me.



All the best,  
Debbie

**Subject:** Re: Lower Columbia Project Update

**From:** "Nicholson, Jennifer" <jnicholson@bhpsnj.org>

**Date:** 9/2/2025, 4:50 PM

**To:** Natasha Joly <njoly@bhpsnj.org>

**CC:** Debra Varnerin <davarnerin@gmail.com>, dvarnerin@bhtwp.com, "Dr. Kim Feltre" <kfeltre@bhpsnj.org>, "Bradford, Gale" <gbradford@bhpsnj.org>, Dipti Khanna <dkhanna@bhpsnj.org>, "Hendricks, Carlos" <chendricks@bhpsnj.org>, "seanmcdonnell@aol.com" <seanmcdonnell@aol.com>, Angie Devanney <adevanney@bhtwp.com>, Liza Viana <lviana@bhtwp.com>

Hello,

Confirmed.

Jenn

*Jennifer Nicholson*  
Business Administrator  
345 Plainfield Ave  
Berkeley Heights, NJ 07922  
(908) 464-1718 ext. 1400



On Tue, Sep 2, 2025 at 4:39 PM Natasha Joly <[njoly@bhpsnj.org](mailto:njoly@bhpsnj.org)> wrote:

Hi Debbie,

I've added what I believe is your township email as this is rather official. I've also included the Mayor and Liza.

So if I understand correctly, after 4-5 years of pitching this project, after a non-binding resolution pushing for the lease for the purpose of a turf field, after manufacturing an insurance issue and locking out the GL tennis team, after the threatening emails from the township attorney and forcing a negotiation in public, after advertising the immediate need for a turf field and rallying up the community and PAL to write to the BOE about the turf field, and after passing the lease via resolution rather than ordinance (still waiting on a legal opinion as to what that means), you only now discovered that you likely can't put turf on the property? Hmmm...

Jenn - please add this to the correspondence list for the next BOE meeting.

Please note the are my personal thoughts and opinions and do not reflect the opinion of the Berkeley Heights Board of Education.

Board members have been bcc'ed.

Thanks,  
Natasha

On Sep 2, 2025, at 2:13 PM, Debra Varnerin <[davarnerin@gmail.com](mailto:davarnerin@gmail.com)> wrote:

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**To:** "Dr. Kim Feltre" <kfeltre@bhpsnj.org>, "Bradford, Gale" <gbradford@bhpsnj.org>, Dipti Khanna <dkhanna@bhpsnj.org>, Natasha Joly <njoly@bhpsnj.org>, pstanley@bhpsnj.org, bdiffon@bhpsnj.org, dtorrero@bhpsnj.org, sbhargavi@bhpsnj.org, tforegger@bhpsnj.org, "Hendricks, Carlos" <chendricks@bhpsnj.org>

**CC:** "seanmcdonnell@aol.com" <seanmcdonnell@aol.com>

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