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Subject: [EXTERNAL] Turf at Coffee Butler

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Madam Mayor and Commissioners,

I am writing to request that you vote no on the proposal to install artificial turf at the Coffee Butler Amphitheater. Artificial turf has a number of negative attributes. Even its few mentioned positives do not hold up under scrutiny, such as decreases in water use, it still needs to be sprayed down to cool it off. Similarly the claim that it increases use time falls by the wayside when you consider how often you are not able to use it due to heat.

Artificial turf measures 40-70 degrees hotter than air temperature on hot days. It can cause 2nd and 3rd degree burns on people sitting on it. There are reports of artificial turf melting football player's cletes in Texas (<https://www.safehealthyplayingfields.org/heat-levels-synthetic-turf>). We don't need to make any spaces hotter in Key West and raising the temperature certainly won't entice folks to use the amphitheater or any of our public spaces.

Artificial turf is toxic. It contaminates surrounding waters with PFAS and microplastics(<https://environmentamerica.org/pennsylvania/center/updates/dangerous-play-studies-find-harmful-forever-chemicals-in-artificial-turf-fields/>). Research found a connection between artificial turf and the brain cancer deaths of six former Philadelphia Phillies(<https://frontofficesports.com/investigation-links-astroturf-to-deaths-of-six-former-phillies/>). The US Consumer Product Safety Commission recommends washing skin after exposure and to avoid eating and drinking while directly on artificial turf (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2025/08/05/artificial-turf-heat-health-environment-cost/>). Don't we want folks using the amphitheater to eat and drink safely?

By installing turf we are actively spending money and using resources to make spaces less desirable and worse for the environment, but the good news is, we don't have to!

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Dakin Weekley

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Some additional research:
<https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/orangeco/2025/04/15/synthetic-turf-and-the-environment/>

<https://environmentamerica.org/pennsylvania/center/updates/dangerous-play-studies-find-harmful-forever-chemicals-in-artificial-turf-fields/>

https://www.espn.com/nfl/story/_/id/39479845/nflpa-howell-says-92-players-want-grass-fields-turf

<https://cleanwater.org/2024/09/16/turf-artificial-harm-very-real>

<https://plantscience.psu.edu/research/centers/ssrc/documents/heat-progress-report.pdf>

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/mar/10/phillies-ball-players-cancer-artificial-turf>

<https://nflpa.com/posts/only-natural-grass-can-level-the-nfls-playing-field>