

**CEAC / PHAC Joint meeting on Waste Tires
August 23, 2016 (part of PHAC meeting breakout)**

Attendees: Gayle Prest, Anna Abruzzese (CEAC), M Meleah Houseknecht (CEAC), Jenn and August Grove (CEAC), Dr Craig Hedberg (PHAC), Joey Colianni, (PHAC), Tom Freeman (Faegre Baker Daniels), Jon Duesman (MPRB), Lee Setter (MPS), Dianna Kennedy (Play It Safe Minneapolis), Nancy Brown (Play It Safe Minneapolis)

Introductions were made and handouts distributed including:

- Play It Safe PowerPoint presentation
- City Council's Health Environment and Community Engagement July 11, 2016 Request for Council Action memo on Play It Safe presentation, and directions to PHAC and CEAC to study the issue
- 2008 PHAC and CEAC crumb rubber recommendations

Diana Kennedy and Nancy Brown of Play It Safe Minneapolis kicked off the meeting by presenting information to the committee members and guests. The group is a parent-led effort to replace shredded tires in playgrounds at Minneapolis Public Schools and elsewhere with a non-toxic alternative. They expressed a willingness to share their knowledge and offered technical assistance as the group proceeds in its work.

There are basically two types of waste tire material used around children at elementary, middle, private schools, churches, nursery schools:

1. Tire mulch: chunks of waste tire often used in playgrounds
2. Crumb rubber "artificial turf": much finer size than tire mulch typically used on sport fields

Diana and Nancy's presentation major talking points include:

1. History of federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) involvement in developing market for waste tires.
2. Children typically exposed through ingestion, dermal absorption and/or inhalation.
3. Two environmental concerns: 1) Water (stormwater and potable) - Because it moves easily and degrades to dust than to leachate that runs into stormwater drains, but also is carried into homes, and down drain to city sewer system. 2) Heat Island - Studies have shown that synthetic turf fields are up to 60 degrees hotter than grass fields. Heat causes chemicals to outgas more quickly. Heat stress and skin injuries (burns) are medical concerns as well.
4. There have been a number of studies including 2015 Yale study which found 96 chemicals in samples of mulch and crumb rubber. Just under half have never been studied for health effects. Safe levels are set for adults, not children. Longitudinal studies not done, no studies to date have been good. Many of these chemicals are carcinogens. This is not a regulated industry so quality and type of waste tire products vary greatly by source.
5. Knowledge has changed. Eight years ago the material was deemed safe by most. Now major groups that claim it is safe are Synthetic Turf Council, US Consumer Product Safety Commission

(CPSC) and EPA. The MPRB manages its playgrounds in accordance with CPSC's Public Playground Safety Handbook. Also, the EPA did limited sample study in 2008 and their website now states "Concerns have been raised by the public about the safety of recycled tire crumb used in playing fields and playgrounds in the United States. Limited studies have not shown an elevated health risk from playing on fields with tire crumb, but the existing studies do not comprehensively evaluate the concerns about health risks from exposure to tire crumb."

6. Briefly reviewed findings by others including Spain, Italy and Mount Sinai along with other US cities' actions to ban, remove or replace crumb rubber/tire mulch.
7. The Duluth School Board recently voted to move forward with plans to replace the rubber mulch that's used on most district elementary school playgrounds.
8. There are alternatives and while they also have problems they are not toxic. These include engineered wood fiber (yes they get moldy and it freezes but so does artificial turf).
9. Grass without chemicals is another alternative. Alternatives can cost no more, some have less maintenance (one overlooked fact is that artificial turf is often watered down to cool off).
10. Eight years ago CEAC and PHAC took a precautionary wait and see approach. But now other cities have taken action they encouraged the groups to support their recommendation.

Earlier this year, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)/Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) launched a multi-agency action plan to study key environmental human health questions; a preliminary report is expected at end of this year.

- Minneapolis Public Schools: 66 separate playground areas and 47 currently have engineered rubber mulch covering 204,170 Square Feet. The cost to convert all 47 rubber mulch play areas to engineered wood fiber: \$1,143,352 (cost likely to increase with needed border changes). The only synthetic turf field with crumb rubber is at Washburn High School. All other fields are grass. They do not have any immediate plans to add more.
- **MPRB: 6-7 existing artificial turf fields, no playgrounds use crumb rubber (# not yet verified)**

Next Steps:

- Agreed to switch off meetings as a joint effort between PHAC and CEAC monthly meetings
- Next meeting will be at CEAC meeting Thursday Sept 8, 430-5:30 p.m. with presentations by Minneapolis Public Schools and MPRB staff
- The group is interested in also hearing from experts. Dr. Hedberg volunteered to bring forward some options at the Sept 8 meeting. Also staff will check in on status at Minnesota Dept. of Health.