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News

New Paltz soccer field needs rest, school district says

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By WILLIAM J. KEMBLE

Correspondent

NEW PALTZ, N.Y. — The school district plans to give the high school soccer field a rest to compensate for the district's inability to use herbicides or pesticides.

District Superintendent Maria Rice, in a telephone interview earlier this week, said the fields have been in poor condition due to state regulations that prohibit the use of chemicals on the fields.

"I've been getting so many questions from the community asking 'Why do we have all this crabgrass all over our fields?'" she said. "We tell them that we can't use pesticides or fertilizers. They thought it was ludicrous."

The soccer field, where holes and divots are a [problem, is used through late fall by soccer teams and again from late winter through June by the lacrosse team.

"Our competition soccer field is in really poor condition," Rice said. "We don't have enough fields to rotate and let them rest enough. So we decided that what we'll do as soon as well can ...maybe in mid-June, is rope it off and irrigate it, poke holes in it, overseed it, and then let it rest until it's needed in October."

Rice said the football field fares better than the soccer field because it is in a gated area.

"If you look at our football field from the top you'd see crabgrass in there, but it's in better condition than the other ones because we allow it to rest," she said. "We don't let a lot of people use that field, and it's got a watering system. The others we do some spot watering and pray for rain, basically, to keep those in shape."

Rice said there are times when the district can use chemical treatments to avoid health hazards.

"The only time the ban is not in place is if you have something like an infestation of rodents or bugs or bees," she said. "If it's inside the building, then it's a different set of rules and laws. That's why we have a pesticide notification form that we notify everybody at the beginning of school that they can file, so if during a weekend we were going to spray a certain area of a certain building, we would notify all those parents who wanted to know that and be aware of it."

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