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April 16, 2021
Martha's Vineyard Commission
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To The Martha's Vineyard Commission:

I feel that I have to write one more letter to you adding just a few more comments after listening carefully to all 6 nights of discussions and testimonies from so many passionate people on both sides.

First of all, I think we have lost sight of why we started this whole process in the first place. It was because we had a track that was failing that our very successful track program was no longer going to be able to use. Getting that new track should be our number one priority above putting in a big complex with a very controversial synthetic turf field.

In my 36 years of coaching, I have coached field hockey, lacrosse and soccer all on grass fields. I can honestly say that the 21 years I coached at MVRHS the fields were always in bad shape. I know those fields well especially the field hockey field that was also my lacrosse practice field and the football field that was our lacrosse game field. I lined both those fields every year for my lacrosse team. Before coming to the Vineyard 26 years ago I coached in Philadelphia for 15 years. All of my players played on fantastic grass fields. Those fields were the same fields my mother played on when she was in high school so they had been around for a long time. They drained well and we were able to play on them all the time. We played during and after a rain or snow storm and the playing surface was perfect for both field hockey and lacrosse. But the key to those fields being in such good shape was that we had a dedicated groundskeeper, a wonderful older Irish gentleman named Patrick, who took great pride in making those fields perfect for our athletes. He

knew how to take care of those grass fields. As it was said in our last meeting, we have to have a trained, dedicated expert and perhaps a field maintenance team to make ALL our playing fields the best playing surfaces for all our athletes. We need to make this a top priority now to hire the right person(s) for this task and provide them with the equipment and support that they need.

Secondly, our field hockey program at the high school has been one of the most successful programs at our school. The coaches both past and present have done an excellent job with so many talented athletes. We have heard many of them with very emotional testimonies supporting Phase 1 with a synthetic turf field.

However, I am curious if any of our coaches or athletes have played field hockey on a synthetic field with this new Brock infill. Does the field hockey ball roll on the field the way they hope it will and will the field hockey stick work handle this new surface infill? I would suggest trying it out first before leading all these young players to think that this new field is going to be perfect for their sport. I am also a bit puzzled by the fact that lately the emphasis for the use of this synthetic field is mainly for soccer and lacrosse and of course for football. No mention was made in the final overview in this last meeting of field hockey. It seems to me that two very successful sports that involve our girl athletes, field hockey and softball, are being ignored in this Phase 1 plan. Are we fairly looking out for all our high school athletes?

Lastly, I feel it is important to mention that there are students, some athletes, some non-athletes, and teachers at the high school who do not want a synthetic turf field on their campus. Perhaps their voices have not been heard or are not as loud as those who rallied in front of the school for the synthetic field. When the superintendent, assistant superintendent, athletic director, principal, coaches and school board have all been so determined to convince all of the students and staff that this is what our athletes need and deserve, it would be pretty difficult for anyone at the high school to come out in public and say that they oppose this project. There are some of our students, athletes and non-athletes, who will go on to college and major in Environmental Science or Sustainability and will choose to have a career working to save our planet and protect our environment.

Environmentally conscientious students and adults are not bad people! We are the ones that care the most about our athletes, their success, their future, and their well being here on our wonderful island that we all call home.

Thank you Commissioners for the endless hours you have spent on this very controversial project.

Fondly,

Betsy Dripps