

From: Chris Porterfield

Date: February 18, 2020 at 12:01:23 AM GMT+8

Subject: Support for the new track and athletic facilities rehab at MVRHS

Dearest Friends at Oak Bluffs Planning Board and the Martha's Vineyard Commission,

I am writing in support of the Phase 1 rehabilitation plan for the new track and athletic facilities at MVRHS. As a long time member of the Little League Board of Directors, Youth Travel Basketball Director and Coordinator for Youth Flag Football, it is important to understand the value and need for facilities to support the direction of our youth. It is quite obvious looking at the plans how dated and disorganized the facility is currently. The overlapping space and fight for use of space is at its peak. The conditions of the surfaces for safety and year round use are impossible to maintain with the amount of teams sharing the spaces. The High School has been generous to allow us the use of the practice area with lights for flag football after hours because lack of availability of space and the need for lights during the time we can count on volunteers after work hours to support our youth programs. The field space is basically dirt instead of grass from the amount of play and it is filled with divots and holes. They allow us one special night for the championships to play on the varsity field so we do not wear and tear it up for High School sports games. Many other youth feeder programs use the spaces as well like youth Lacrosse, Babe Ruth (which I coach) and Girls youth softball. We are grateful for the use of the space and their perspective that these are all Island kids that either are, or will be attending our regional high school. After all, it is for all of them, not just one town.

I don't think I need to go on about the value of youth sports and how important they are to their health & wellness. The social aspect is so important, especially in our days of technology we are so removed from direct contact with each other. Review aspects from programs like the Positive Coaching Alliance or USA Sports Alliance. We come and watch, coach & support kids playing, but very few know what life is like at home. This is their outlet. This is where they come to break away from challenges. This is where they get support. This is where they learn celebrate winning & overcoming losing.

I am so involved in youth sports because it is great to see what the kids are capable of when given chance, opportunity and early development. I ask you to please support this process to catch us up with other programs. To make the home field, home field advantage because we can actually practice on our home field without fear we will kill the grass. Give the players equality so when they compete at all the off island high schools, they have prepared on the same surfaces. Give them a safer surface to play on.

One suggestion, pull up images of both the newer South Plymouth and North Plymouth High Schools. Look at their facilities. They are outstanding and purposeful. Our track should be a Purple Surface with White Striping. Indicative of our home and school pride colors.

When visitors set foot on MVRHS campus they should feel our pride and know they are in Vineyarder's Country. The light towers should have lights on the back side facing the soccer/hockey/lacrosse fields.

Again, as a Parent, Coach and Youth Sports Program Coordinator,
Please from the bottom of my heart know this is the right thing to do making progress forward and investing in our youth.

Thank you for listening and making time for this,
Sincerely, Chris Porterfield

Also, I was fortunate enough to pay for my own college because of a track & cross country scholarship!