

From: Donald Herman
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Executive Officer – Adam Turner

February, 2020

Martha's Vineyard Commission,

I am excited that your committee is considering application of a synthetic turf field at our high school. I know this process has been long and not without controversy.

I have coached football on Martha's Vineyard for thirty years. During that time I have played on every type of surface available.

I can honestly say that a synthetic turf field is the way to go, especially here on our island. I started coaching and teaching physical education here in the fall of 1988 and consider myself the local expert on the conditions of our existing game fields. My teams have played on all types of surfaces during this same time: natural grass, artificial turf, and various types of synthetic turf. During my tenure I have witnessed every attempt to make our game field surfaces better. Sadly, all of those efforts and costly expenses have failed. Our grass fields incur too much use, we have so many teams using the same fields during the fall and spring seasons it does not allow for proper recovery and growth. The only true growing season is the two and a half months in the summer, which is not the optimal time for grass growth.

Every year, on the day before the football teams first home game, I have the players line up on one end of the game field and we walk the entire length of the field looking for holes. Each year we find dozens of holes, that if not filled in, could lead to serious injury. This year was no exception. This is a non-issue with a turf field.

My three grown children played soccer, field hockey, baseball, and softball here while in high school. Our field surfaces made it difficult to play the game the proper way. Players never knew when the ball would hit a divot or hole and take an errant bounce. This is a non-issue with turf fields.

One of the real benefits to synthetic turf over grass is the ability to use the field in all conditions. One rain storm before a game and the grass field is destroyed for the season, possibly the entire year.

The maintenance cost of synthetic turf is less than grass. There are no needs for: loam, sprinkler systems, grass seed, fertilizer, mowing, lining, and labor to maintain grass.

The new fourth generation synthetic turf fields using the two inch thick shock pad, included in the Huntress design, lowers concussions, knee and ankle injuries. The MIAA (Mass Interscholastic Athletic Association) will not allow tournament games, past the second round or

after Thanksgiving, to be played on grass fields for fear of poor field conditions or frozen ground. Our entire community deserves this and will benefit from having a synthetic turf field.

I appeal to you to not let any personal agendas interfere with how the majority of our island towns have voted on this issue. With the monies for this facility coming from donations and not taxpayers, I don't see how you can turn this opportunity down. I look forward to talking, in person, to your committee.

Respectfully,
Donald Herman
Head Football Coach
MVRHS