

February 5th, 2020

Chairperson Ewell Hopkins
Oak Bluffs Planning Board
P.O. Box 1327
Oak Bluffs, MA 02557

Executive Director Adam Turner
Martha's Vineyard Commission
P.O. Box 1447
Oak Bluffs, MA 02557

Dear Sirs,

I am writing on behalf of the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School boys lacrosse program. In addition to entering my 7th season as an assistant coach for the program I am also the parent of a former student-athlete, and graduate, of the high school.

In addition to my time coaching at the high school I have worked in the business of athletics my entire career. I am currently working on live sports production for ESPN but spent nearly 2-years working for the synthetic turf industry. Our company, Turf USA installed the first FieldTurf field of its kind at Ringgold High School in western Pennsylvania, and the first football field at a major university, The University of Nebraska.

One of the reasons I returned to the Vineyard 7 years ago was because of the community. It is a community that has always stood for one another and supported our kids. There is no better example of that than the amount of money that is raised for scholarships for our graduating seniors. We show our kids how we value them by how we support them. Academically, artistically and athletically our support at the high school is often shown through our facilities. Quite honestly our current fields fall below any reasonable standard to allow our kids to thrive and excel as athletes.

Our current fields are unsafe. Our practice field, in addition to being littered with rocks, ranges from a dust bowl to a swamp. Spring rains, our season, renders our field barely usable many days and bears the scars of overuse in the rain. Our game field has a grassy uneven surface that hides the divots and holes that ruin careers and damage lives. In my times at the high school we have yet to make it through a season without at least one major non-contact injury that has cost a kid a season. Let's work towards a solution and do right by our kids.

At the lacrosse program we believe in playing our part in developing well rounded kids. In addition to playing our part in preparing our kids for life after high school we want to win. We have coaches, and players, who are committed to making the most of our experience in the short period of time we are together. We are also steadfast in insisting that we represent our school and our community in the right way. For all of our teams to

thrive and to compete we need better, and safer, fields for our kids. As we hold our kids to the highest of expectations we also need to provide the best and safest environment the community can afford.

The high school boys lacrosse program, led by head coach Chris Greene, is firmly in support the Phase One plan for MVRHS athletic facilities. Synthetic grass fields will benefit all of our teams, as will the reduced wear on the renovated grass fields. They are safer. Fewer games will be lost due to the weather.

We have the responsibility to create a better experience for our students and athletes. We have the opportunity to create a facility that our community can point to with pride as we strive to create the best educational experience, with the best outcomes, for all of our kids.

Please vote in favor of Phase One of the project and let's help propel both the school and our community into the next decade.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'J Wilson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

John Wilson
Boy's Assistant Varsity Lacrosse - MVRHS
ESPN
PO Box 1905
Edgartown, MA 02539