

Paul Foley

From: Beverley Ridpath [baridpath@comcast.net]
Sent: Monday, October 03, 2016 2:35 PM
To: Paul Foley
Cc: mdandrea@mvyps.org; sdingley@mvyps.org; rlionette@gmail.com; Janet Miller
Subject: Concord's experience with Artificial Turf playing fields
Attachments: GFSS signage

To the Martha's Vineyard Commission

As members of Grass Fields for Safe Sports (GFSS), a citizen's group in the town of Concord MA, we would like to share the experience we had with a public/private partnership, CC@Play, which was set up to make major renovations to the athletic facilities at Concord-Carlisle Regional High School. These included the installation of an artificial turf football field. As with MV@Play, CC@Play hired Gale Associates to design and construct the facilities. While CC@Play was lauded for their public-spirited goals and efforts to improve the facilities, the project became controversial for a number of reasons.

The project was voted on at the Town Meeting in 2012, before most people became aware of the potential dangers of artificial turf, as well as its disadvantages. The artificial turf field was built in 2015 as part of CC@Play's Phase II plans, despite growing objections to its installation.

Following the installation of the field, one of the neighbors experienced flooding on his property. He repeatedly appealed to the Natural Resources Commission to resolve the issue and finally a new engineering firm was hired to correct the errors of the faulty installation. With the severe drought this year, the new system has not yet been tested.

Phase III was supposed to include a concession stand and locker rooms, with solar panels on the roof to make the project more environmentally friendly. However, CC@Play has not been able to raise sufficient funds to build it, at least in part because they did not know the State's regulations regarding restrooms. It is uncertain whether CC@Play will ever have the funds to build it.

In response to the concerns about the safety of artificial turf, both on a state and a national level, GFSS brought an article to this year's Town Meeting asking for a moratorium on the installation of any artificial turf and infill in the Town of Concord for a period of three years. It passed unanimously.

We understand that MV@Play is proposing to use plant based fill instead of crumb rubber but there are still many questions to answer. Plant based fill will decay naturally and additives, such as antifungal agents, are used to prevent that. The patent for plant-based fill allows for unspecified flame-retardants and anti-fungals as well

as rubber particles and a long list of other additives that ends with the word “etcetera”. What are these chemicals and what is their toxicity? Many chemicals in artificial turf fields have never been tested for safety.

Unlike natural grass surfaces, artificial turf contains no natural mechanisms to break down contaminants such as food, sugary drinks, feces of birds, dogs and other animals or human contaminants such as blood and vomit. To minimize such contamination, artificial turf fields have to be fenced off, and all food and drinks (except water) banned. As a result, they are not a community resource as you can see from the attached signage from our artificial turf fields.

Please take these thoughts into consideration before deciding on whether to approve the plan to build artificial turf fields on Martha’s Vineyard. We think you may agree that the risks could well outweigh the benefits.

Sincerely

Janet Miller, Beverley Ridpath

Grass Fields for Safe Sports



FIELD USE REGULATIONS

- USE BY PERMIT ONLY - NO UNAUTHORIZED USE
- FOR INFORMATION CALL: 978-318-3035
- NO DOGS OR OTHER ANIMALS PERMITTED
- ACCESS TO PLAYING SURFACE LIMITED TO PLAYERS, COACHES, OFFICIALS, TRAINERS & AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL
- ONLY SNEAKERS OR MOLDED PLASTIC CLEATS ALLOWED
- NO RECTANGULAR SHAPED CLEATS
- NO METAL SPIKES, METAL CLEATS, OR SCREW IN CLEATS, OF ANY KIND, PERMITTED ON THE FIELD
- NO CHAIRS (PORTABLE, FOLDABLE, OR OTHERWISE) PERMITTED ON THE FIELD
- GOALS TO BE LIFTED AND MOVED AS NEEDED, NOT DRAGGED
- TRASH MUST BE DISPOSED OF PROPERLY
- NO SHARP OBJECTS PERMITTED ON SURFACE (I.E., TENT STAKES, CORNER MARKERS)

ABSOLUTELY
NO DOGS
ALLOWED
BEYOND
THIS POINT