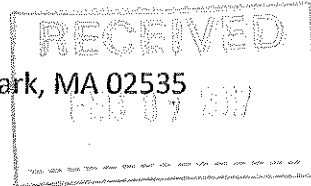


Mollie Doyle PO Box 142 Chilmark, MA 02535



February 1, 2017

Martha's Vineyard Commission  
PO Box 1447  
Oak Bluffs, MA 02557

Dear Martha's Vineyard Commission,

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on the artificial turf question.

With the question of artificial turf, you have a big decision to make: do you want to uphold traditional Vineyard values, be environmentally conscious and conservative, or do you want to go big, buying into the bells and whistles of size and technology, plastic, and committing to too many unknowns?

I must confess that when I look at the raw numbers for 16-year annualized costs:

Natural soil-based field \$33,522

Sand-cap grass field \$49,318

Basic synthetic field \$65,849

Premium synthetic field \$109,013

I cannot understand why anyone would choose to pay almost double or triple for something fake rather than something real. I mean, in the supermarket world, who would pay twice or even more than three times as much for a processed cheese made with unknown, untested ingredients in an unknown place rather than buy a cheaper locally made organic cheese?

While I am a relative newcomer to living on the island full-time (only 9 years), I have come to the island since I was in utero. It seems to me that the draw of this place is that we do choose real. We, as a community have chosen, again and again, to have farms, preserved land, local food and fresh water over McDonald's, Dunkin' Donuts and big box stores. This artificial turf feels like the equivalent of allowing Walmart to open a store on our island. And, like it or not, a decision of this magnitude -- opting in to artificial turf on 41 acres of land -- opens the door for us to opt in to the big box stores and chains we have resisted for so long.

Vineyarders are known for their scrappy, repurposeful nature. I know several people who have built houses with materials from the dump and driftwood. And while that may be extreme, we do have a tradition of thriftiness and resourcefulness -- look at the way we got the new Agricultural Hall built, look at the way Thimble Farm has been repurposed, look at how

environmentally conscious new large structures like the YMCA are. So why would we choose to import more than 600,000 pounds of synthetic material per field that cannot be repurposed and will need to be disposed of in a landfill in 8 years? The island just made an important choice to ban plastic. Doesn't this fly in the face of that?

But my greatest concern is that synthetic fields are not regulated or tested. The EPA and the CPSC have admitted that synthetic turf fields cannot be described as safe. The synthetic turf industry has even admitted that their products contain lead. A known carcinogen. Why would anyone choose to subject the island's children to toxins and hazardous materials? That seems absolutely crazy to me. Especially, when we islanders ALL go to the greatest lengths to support our island children with excellent educations, programs and services here. Why take such a risk?

Yes, the grass fields need some updating, expansion and maintenance. Ok. So let's do it. Now that the community knows that this is a need, I am confident that it will be met. That is the magic of this island: when there is a need for something like a new hospital or updating the Boys and Girls Club or someone's roof gets blown off in a hurricane, whatever the cause, people here do rise to the occasion and help out. So let us take a natural course and work together for a grass solution. This is one case where the grass is greener on this side.

Sincerely,

Mollie Doyle  
Chilmark