

January 13, 2021

Mr. Adam Turner
Mr. Alex Elvin
All MV Commissioners
Oak Bluffs Planning Board

Dear Sir/Madame,

I write to you today as an island resident living in the Lagoon Pond Watershed. As you know, Lagoon Pond is a large saltwater estuary in a current, poor environmental condition due to excessive Nitrogen as stated in the Massachusetts Estuary Project Report. But I do not write today to discuss this pollution. I am writing to voice my concerns and objection to another potential source of pollution in the watershed: the 2.5-acre synthetic surface field that is being proposed at the high school.

Microplastics from the proposed artificial surface will ultimately and most definitely find its way into the water table and surrounding environs. The plastic surface breaks down into microplastics and once in the ecosystem are basically unremovable.

I find it hard to understand that plastic bags are being banned in most towns, that single use plastic bottles are being banned in most towns and yet a vast field of plastic is being considered "ok" on our fragile island. There are many letters in your "file" from island organizations that describe the hazards of petro-based plastics, so I do no need to repeat the concerns. (See MVC correspondence from the Vineyard Conservation Society, MV Shellfish Group and West Tisbury Conservation Commission)

Lagoon Pond is not the only body of water that may be affected from microplastic particles and the other pollution associated with the chemicals used to clean the synthetic surf. Sengekontacket Pond is also a nearby watershed, the town of Oak Bluffs drinking water wells are approximate 1.5 miles to the west and the Greenland's conservation area that protects the Island's single source water aquifer is about 2 miles to the west. I ask that you not take this lightly. Any dispersal/introduction of plastic or chemical material into the environment will get into the ground water and find its way to your faucet or into the food chain!

I hope you will look closely at this project and how it may negatively affect all of us. Ask yourself, what if, 5 years from now/ 10 years from now, the ground water and drinking water is contaminated; like the ground water south of the airport. Who is responsible for the cleanup? Who is responsible for any health issues? I see on the "disclaimer" from the manufacturer supplying the material that "we (being they)do not assume RESPONSIBILITY and EXPRESSLY DISCLAIM LIABILITY for loss, damage or expense arising out of or in any way connected with the handling, storage, use or disposal of the product".

There is a lot of discussion about the positive financial aspects of this project and the safety for the athletes. And while these are important discussions they are easily disputed. A simple "Google" search lists article after article from sport and scientific groups with statistics that show there are more injuries on artificial turf.

2008 article https://www.hss.edu/conditions_artificial-turf-sports-injury-prevention.asp

A 2019 Study: [Natural grass vs. artificial turf: which surface poses an increased injury risk? - Science for Sport](#)

Regarding the financial question and this just my opinion. Dollars saved today without considering the cost to the environment and future generations is not the correct approach. And, this is ultimately an environmental question. Please make the correct decision and vote NO on this proposal.

With this said, should you choose to approve this project, I implore you to require some type of bond or insurance policy from the installer/manufacturer that will cover the cost of any environmental contamination/cleanup that results from its installation. In addition, you should require test wells be installed around the complex and ground water analyzed often to monitor any introduction of chemical pollution into our groundwater. Unfortunately, when it is detected, it may be too late!

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