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N.Y. State Supreme Court  
Justice (Retired)

Also Admitted in N.Y.

Martha's Vineyard Commission

January 11, 2021

Commissioners,

Please consider my letter in support of the Phase one Master Plan for a new Track and Field synthetic turf field at our Regional High School. I am neither educated, trained nor experienced in the science and environmental aspects of synthetic turf. I am, however, a concerned parent, grandparent, taxpayer in Oak Bluffs for over 56 years and a strong believer in following the science as announced by the experts in their respective findings and reports. Furthermore I believe in trusting our elected and appointed officials and representatives to come up with the best for our students after a thorough "hard look " at the matter until the contrary is shown.

Here, I have followed, for the past several years, in the local papers and at meetings the "debate" between the School and the opposition to this very important project. I have also seen excerpts of Phase One of the Master Plan for a synthetic turf field. As a layman I find that Plan to be thorough, comprehensive and persuasive in it's conclusions. What I find impressive is that it is science based.

I'm an athlete having grown up on the football fields and H.S tracks of Southwestern Pa. These fields were grass turf and rarely in good condition due to the wear and tear sports inflicted. They were full of cleat holes, divots, partially exposed rocks, and often spongy. They posed a high risk of injury and were not much fun to play on. So I know from personal life experience what it's like to play on fields like ours at MVRHS. I have been to many sporting events at the MVRHS fields over the years. Sadly, the football, soccer and lacrosse fields were not in a good condition to support an active sports program. We need to do much better. I believe that we can. A synthetic turf field with companion grass fields will be the best course to take.

My support takes into account the following:

- 1 Experts in athletic field design believe that the H.S. fields cannot support the high use we experience with our sports programs and that use leaves our fields in their current poor condition.
- 2 Tax dollars will not be wasted on more grass fields when a synthetic turf field will complement the other grass fields. One synthetic turf field offers a place to use which will give the other grass fields a chance to survive the heavy use and rainy weather and allow them to grow in the growing season. The grass fields will be the very best around where their counterpart is a synthetic turf field.
- 3 The proposed synthetic turf field is a multi use field.
- 4 I find the support of 5 of the 6 Towns to be instructive on the merits of a synthetic turf field.
- 5 The experts report that the synthetic turf field is made from recycled materials and can be recycled after it outlived its use. Additionally the "fill" is not crumb rubber rather it is wood mulch from the "Georgia Pines," grown organically and harvested sustainably.

Sorry to be so lengthy but I wanted to pass on my reasons and thinking for supporting the synthetic turf field .

I respectfully urge each Commissioner to take that "hard look" and support the synthetic turf field. Our student athletes for generations will be pleased and well served.

Respectfully,

William F O'Brien III  
An Oak Bluffs Property owner since 1965.