

Marblehead Piper Field

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To: Adam Turner <turner@mvcommission.org>; Alex Elvin <elvin@mvcommission.org>;

Cc: Chris Huntress <chris@huntressassociates.com>; Mark Tarmey <tarmey.mark@marbleheadschoools.org>;

Dear Mr. Turner and Mr. Elvin;

I was made aware that the Martha's Vineyard Commission has questions about our fields here in Marblehead, and specifically our experience with the synthetic turf field installed at Marblehead High School in 2014. I will defer specific comments regarding usage hours to our athletic department, but I would like to comment on some very tangible benefits to the turf surface at Piper Field. Those benefits extend above and beyond the added playing area.

I am presently the Vice-Chairman of the Marblehead Recreation and Parks Commission and have been for the last 10+ years. The turf field is been a valuable resource for the Rec and Park Department in many ways. First, the turf is a much more versatile surface and has allowed for many more hours of use than a traditional natural grass field. In the three years prior to the installation of the synthetic surface, the Recreation and Parks Department spent over \$30,000.00 on field maintenance and replacement of significant areas of sod at Piper Field. This is above and beyond normal maintenance, which included time spent by the staff spreading seed, fertilizer, cutting and trimming the area. All of this was due to normal use and wear of the field. The most obvious benefit to our community is a safe, stable surface that can be used for many more hours than grass.

During periods of inclement weather, youth sports groups have now agreed to re-distribute usage from some grass fields to Piper (turf) in order to preserve the state of the natural grass surfaces. As a member of the Recreation & Parks Commission, this has been an unexpected benefit to having a synthetic surface. As you all know, playing in cleats on grass fields in the Spring and Fall, the busiest times here in Marblehead, is damaging to grass surfaces. Our natural surfaces have reaped the benefit of less usage and stress due the availability of the synthetic surface.

Finally, I am also a founding member of the Marblehead All Sports Foundation, a non-profit group that raised over \$1.2 Million in total for the research, testing and finally installation of the turf surface at Piper Field. This non-profit group was able to raise these funds in about 18 months through a very focused, intense effort that crossed the entire community, sports and otherwise. We approached it as a benefit to the entire community. In addition to Marblehead sports activities, the field is also used by the Marblehead High School Marching Band, other community groups and allowed for the first outdoor High School graduation in Marblehead in many, many years.

Thank you for your time and effort in review of our field sin Marblehead. Please let me know if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,
Derek Norcross
Sr. Sales Executive

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