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"Dedicated to improving the quality of the waters and the environment surrounding Lagoon Pond".

February 4, 2021

Martha's Vineyard Commission
Town of Oak Bluffs Planning Board

Ladies/Gentlemen,

The LPA Board of Directors has reviewed and discussed all the issues/concerns/opinions/scientific research that surround the current debate of turf vs grass at the high school field. There is one thing we agree on: The student athletes deserve better playing field conditions.

Several years ago, when this question was "shot across our bow"; the Board's decision was to let the MVC and OB Planning Board do the research and vet the data and do what is best for the island environment and future generations. This has become, however, more than an environmental question to many. What surface is safer for the athlete? Will the athlete perform better on artificial turf? Which product is more cost effective for the school? If properly constructed will a grass field be able to hold up? Are we sending a wrong message to our youth who are being taught to limit the use of plastic in their day to day lives? Do we really want more plastic introduced into our fragile environment? So many questions!

This is a very emotional topic with "tons" of information provided by both sides of the issue. And each side is extremely passionate in their beliefs. Our primary concern is the groundwater/watershed of Lagoon Pond. And while the answers to most questions are available, we still have concerns.

Questions:

1. What is more harmful to the island environment: Fertilizers and water runoff or a plastic woven grass that may or may not break apart and enter the environment?
2. Will the Brock infill (a new product) function as expected? Might the "wood product" fill become moldy, how will that be treated?
3. Will the sock filters work?

4. Will the monitoring wells be tested properly and what happens if contamination is found? Who is responsible and what is the cost to assure proper testing is done?
5. What is the long-term maintenance plan and is there someone on staff who is qualified/certified to oversee the maintenance of an artificial turf surface?

As regular citizens and not engineers or scientists, some decisions are simply above our pay grades. We are left depending on the “experts” (you) to assist us in formulating an opinion which is tempered by our own individual character traits and emotional triggers.

In conclusion, our stance is the same as where we started: We put our trust in and will rely on the MVC and the OB Planning Board to fully “vet” this issue and do what is right for the environment, its sensitive ground water, and the future generations of the island.

Respectfully Submitted,



Doug Reece
LPA President