

DRI 352-M4 MVRHS Athletic Fields

Experts to provide testimony on behalf of the Field Fund

Submitted Feb. 1, 2021 (written statements added by staff, Feb. 4, 2021)

**Speaker: The Field Fund/Dardanella Slavin/**Founding Member and Treasurer of The Field Fund

**Topic:** The benefits and detriments of a plastic field vs. a grass field

**Written statement:** Click [here](#) for presentation

**Time:** (15 minutes)

Dardy grew up in Chilmark and graduated from the MVRHS in 1993. She played field hockey and ran track. She went on to attend Connecticut College where she majored in mathematics and played field hockey and ice hockey. Dardy became the assistant field hockey and lacrosse coach at Hartwick College for 2 years, then returned to Connecticut College for a year as assistant field hockey coach. Dardy graduated, with honors, from New York Chiropractic College in 2005 with a doctorate in chiropractic. She has been co-owner of Integrated Health Care, a multidisciplinary practice on the Vineyard, ever since. Dardy is married to Sean Slavin, a police officer in Chilmark, and they have two boys. In addition to being a founding member of The Field Fund, Inc., Dardy spends her free time volunteering as a coach for youth soccer and hockey and as a board member of the Vineyard Birth Collective.

**Speaker: Amy Griffin,** Elite soccer player and coach

**Topic:** Experience with plastic fields as an elite soccer player and coach

**Written statement: PENDING**

**Time:** (5 minutes)

Amy Griffin is one of the most respected and successful soccer coaches and goalkeeping specialists in the nation. A U.S. Youth Soccer Hall of Famer, Griffin was the NSCAA's Assistant Coach of the Year in 2014. Griffin spent five years playing for the U.S. National Team, winning the first Women's FIFA World Cup in 1991. She has earned five gold medals and a silver from the Olympic Sports Festival. Griffin was one of the first nine women to obtain a United States Soccer Federation (USSF) level "A" coaching license. In 2012, Griffin was a goalkeeper coach for the United States under-20 women's national soccer team and helped guide the team to gold at the 2012 FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup. She coached at the University of Washington for over two decades and is active in the Olympic Development program. She is currently the head coach of the United States Deaf Soccer Women's National Team.

**Sarah-Jeanne Royer,** Scientist

**Topic:** Plastic pollution; gas emissions

**Written statement:** Click [here](#) for letter and [here](#) for presentation

**Time:** (5-7 minutes)

Sarah Jean Royer is an oceanographer and currently doing a post-doctorate on plastic and microfibre degradation at [Scripps Institute of Oceanography](#) with [Dimitri Deheyn](#). In addition, prior to this post-doctorate, she investigated on the emissions of greenhouse gases from plastics in the environment at the [Center for Microbial Oceanography, Research and Education](#). She also worked with Prof. Nikolai Maximenko on marine debris at the [International Pacific Research Center](#) at the University of Hawaii where her research was linked to the pathways and fate of marine debris and plastic accumulation in the ocean in relation with the North Pacific Garbage Patch. She has been highly involved with the organization named [Sustainable Coastlines Hawaii](#), which is the biggest organization of beach cleanups in Hawaii. For three years she served as the science advisor and started using data

collection from volunteers for citizen science projects. Her goal is to pursue plastic research to understand better the degradation and fragmentation processes of plastic and fate in the ocean in addition to the plastic accumulation on the different islands of Hawai'i. Her long-last objective is for policymakers to use data from scientists and volunteers to design better laws and policies to reduce plastic production & consumption. In addition to her background in environment and marine biology, she was the first female sergeant leading a group of 40 people in the first French Canadian regiment of the Canadian Army. She served for the [Voltigeurs de Quebec](#) for 13 years and participated in two missions in Kabul and Kandahar (Afghanistan) on international development and lead a project on Afghan women.

**Amanda Farber**, Board Member, Safe Healthy Playing Fields

**Topic:** Plastic field disposal

**Written statement:** Click [here](#) and [here](#) for letters, and [here](#) for presentation

**Time:** (5-7 minutes)

Amanda Farber has a Masters in Occupational Therapy from New York University and is a Board member of the Safe Healthy Playing Fields, where she has been researching the disposal of plastic fields for years. Safe Healthy Playing Fields is a nationally recognized advocacy group "that seeks to explain to you - with facts - why grass and natural surfaces are the best choice - for financial, environmental and public health reasons." They look at the five major areas: cost, injury, heat, toxicity to environment, and toxicity to athletes, especially kids.

**Jerad Minnick**, Founder, Natural Grass Advisory Group

**Topic:** High use grass field design and maintenance

**Written statement:** Click [here](#) for Review of Documents and Design

**Time:** (10-15 minutes)

Jerad Minnick, a long time natural grass sports field manager, brings his on field experience, innovative spirit and passion for improving natural grass fields to Natural Grass Advisory Group™ as the company's Founder and Lead Advisor.

Having grown up on a family farm in the village of Lock Springs, Missouri, plants and soils are in Jerad's bloodline. His transition from growing soybeans to grass on a sports field took place early in life at 13 years old when he and his brothers built a baseball field in the pasture next to their house. That progressed into starting a mowing company and working at the local golf course in high school.

Jerad earned a Bachelor's of Science in Turfgrass Management from University of Missouri while serving as Associate Sports Field Manager of baseball and soccer at Mizzou. He started his management career at Kauffman Stadium with the Kansas City Royals as the Manager of Grounds. Just after his 28th birthday, Minnick was named Director of Field Maintenance for Major League Soccer's Sporting Kansas City. With Sporting, Jerad established one of the top field management programs in MLS. But Jerad became more widely known during his time as Director of Grounds and Environmental Management for the 24 field, 160 acre Maryland SoccerPlex. At SoccerPlex, Minnick and his management team re-defined what is possible for high traffic natural grass fields and re-wrote the the book on field maintenance techniques. From aggressive aeration to the creation of Universe® Frazee Mowing. And from reduced fertilizer inputs to renovating fields using Kentucky bluegrass seed on bare sand to play in 35 days: All things that traditional thinking "experts" and Universities say can not be done. These possibilities opened Jerad's eyes to the need for forward-thinking, creative support and innovation for natural grass field managers faced with high-use on their surfaces.

This realization lead Jerad to launch [Growing Green Grass](#), an independent blog where he shares ideas on the possibilities of natural grass fields. The launch of Growing Green Grass created an entirely new world of possibilities for natural grass fields. Soon after, Natural Grass Advisory Group™ was established to provide the education, advisory, management and analytics that had not previously been available. Now with the establishment of Natural Grass Performance Analytic™, data and numbers simplify the challenge of high-use natural grass fields. That data has Jerad extremely excited about the future for high-use grass fields and for the respect and health of the field management industry.

In addition to his advisory work, Jerad is a featured motivational speaker and subject matter expert at dozens of events, conferences and workshops throughout the year. Hope hopes to see you out on the field somewhere soon!

**Jack Higgins**, Agronomist, Earthworks

**Topic:** Soil science, nitrogen

**Written statement:** Click [here](#) for letter and soil reports

**Time:** (5-7 minutes)

Jack Higgins has a degree in turf grass science from Penn State University. For the last decade, he has worked as an agronomist with Earthworks, focusing on building stronger soils for fields, golf courses and lawns in the Northeastern US. He has also done a 6th month tenure with St. Andrews Links Trust in Scotland.

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**CHEMICALS AND TESTING, again, assuming that no one is going to be talking about testifying publicly until the 18th of February.**

**Kristen Mello**, Chemist

**Topic:** Chemicals and drinking water

**Written statement:** Click [here](#) for letter

**Time:** (5-7 mins)

Kristin Mello has a Bachelor of Science degree (w/honors) in Chemistry; a Master of Science degree in Analytical Chemistry with a focus on Chemometrics, data analysis, and artificial intelligence/expert systems. She has given presentations at regional, national, and international conferences on these topics. Her work has been published in peer-reviewed, international journal publications. She co-founded and is currently Director of Westfield Residents Advocating For Themselves (WRAFT) where she has requested and sponsored petitions and letter writing campaigns to get PFAS blood testing for Westfield residents. She has also been a member of the National PFAS Contamination Coalition since its creation in June 2017 and been one of only two Community Representatives invited to be on the MassDEP PFAS MCL Stakeholder Group. She has regularly met with MassDEP, EEA, EPA, MA and federal legislators regarding Westfield's water contamination and voiced residents' concerns at City meetings including the Planning Board, City Council, Water Commission, Conservation Commission, and Board of Health. Kristin was also a member of the City of Westfield's 2018 Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee.

**Jeff Gearhart**, The Ecology Center

**Topic:** PFAS chemicals

**Written statement:** Click [here](#) and [here](#) for letters

**Time:** (10 minutes)

The Ecology Center, Jeff Gearhart, M.S., has worked for over 20 years on a wide range of environmental issues, including air quality, pollution prevention, life cycle assessment, consumer product testing, and green chemistry.

For over 16 years, he has worked with the Ecology Center. Jeff has spearheaded numerous chemicals policy market campaigns, co-authored multiple peer-reviewed articles on toxics in consumer products, pioneered citizen science in the use of x-ray fluorescence technology for toxics testing in products, and developed the now internationally recognized [HealthyStuff.org](http://HealthyStuff.org) product chemistry disclosure project and its extensive website of robust advocacy resources and product testing results for more than 100,000 products. Jeff likes to create and build things, and it is this compulsion that drives him to develop campaigns that gather and present new knowledge so the world will have better products and an improved environment.

Jeff is assisted by numerous student interns to achieve the work of the HealthyStuff.org program, providing critical exposure for young people to cutting edge technology for chemical testing.