

MV Youth Lacrosse, Presentation to MVC 4/1/21

My name is Joe Mikos and I'm the President of Youth Lacrosse. Our program serves roughly 200 island families. My players use the high school fields every day from about March to mid June. The high school has graciously allowed us to use their fields because without them our program wouldn't exist. Back in 2019 we used the Oak Bluffs School fields, the crown jewel of the field fund's work, and our 8th grade boys team made huge holes and bare spots on the fields in just a few months..... Now we only let our youngest players on those fields to reduce their impact.

I've been to every LUPC meeting, I have attended every one of these commission meetings, I have attended every school committee meeting on these fields and I have learned a lot about the proposed plans at the high school over the past several years but I also think a lot is getting lost in this process.

Having meetings every two weeks, this process has dragged on for months! Nobody here may remember all the amazing things Coach Ryan Kent said about our unified athletes and how they needed sure footing, nobody remembers the incredibly passionate words from Mackenzie Conden talking about the mental health aspects of sports and the underprivileged kids in our community and how much sports means to them and how many of them can't afford the luxury of going to Tabor or Milton or Philips Exeter..... I REMEMBER THEM!

See., those of us working with these kids, as Lou Paciello said, hear some unbelievable stories about what they have to deal with at home. We are the ones out here coaching and running these organizations and we're looking for a safe place for our kids to play. If I told you all that I've heard, you'd be brought to tears. Sports are everything for these kids!

And then I get lost in the science of all of this? My children are going to be on these fields too! How am I or you to decide what's right for the Vineyard?

Well, you hired Horsley Witten and Tetra tech, they came back and said the turf field's environmental effects were "De minimus" which means "so minor as to disregard" . We also heard from a world class toxicologist who

used the word “inert” with regards to the turf field. There’s SO much fact and science here I’m shocked nobody has talked about the carbon footprint! Not one expert came forward and said this is what the carbon footprint is, the HOLY GRAIL of what the cost is to the environment. What is that number? Well, according to the highly respected, Athena Sustainable Materials Institute it is 55.6 tons over its TEN YEAR life span. That’s installation, maintenance and disposal.. That sounds like a tremendous amount! Well, what is the avg car for example? The average mini van has a carbon footprint of 63.7 tons over that same 10 year time frame. So putting down a synthetic turf field is like putting one more car on the road!

So for one more car on the road we’re going to deny our children the mental health that sports brings, a safe place for our community to walk, a safe place for our kids to play, for ONE MORE CAR!

I don’t understand the opposition to this? We’re talking about one car! I’m here to tell you I’m surrounded by plastic every day. The very tools of my trade, that I use every single day, are plastic and that isn’t going to change. We all want to get rid of single use plastics!

The turf field that is being proposed is NOT a single use plastic. It’s the epitome of multiple use plastic! 3000 hours a year I’m told. Over the span of its life, that’s over 30,000 hours of retirees walking, kids exercising and learning life’s team works lessons, the very reasons why we put our kids into sports in the first place. That’s worth one more car on the road...TO ME..

I’m not so hypocritical to say that plastic isn’t a part of my world, it is. There are good plastics and bad plastics. The medical field is the perfect example of a good plastic and one that’s NEVER going away. A bad plastic are the single use ones at restaurants and grocery stores.

So, I’m gonna paraphrase a little, part of the charter of the MVC is to decide if the proposed field is in keeping with the vineyard. Obviously some say no, but so many more say yes. Back in 2019 - 5 out of 6 towns voted for this.. why???

TURF IS ALREADY HERE!! One look at the Donaroma's website shows it's already here in greater numbers than the school is proposing many times over.

This incredible home on West Chop already has a roughly 3000 sq foot putting green on it which is bigger than the foot print of my home!

Here's another just a few feet from the Harbor! Turf is already here but you can't see it. It's hiding behind evergreens and white picket fences, The wealthy on The Vineyard have had turf since it's inception.

How can we say it's ok for the Abel's Hill Association to have it on their tennis courts, but not our kids!

For the equivalent carbon footprint of one more mini van on the road, please approve the plans and Let our kids play!

Thank you.