

Non Toxic Communities

To the Martha's Vineyard Commission

March 20, 2021

Non Toxic Communities is a national nonprofit that focuses on eliminating pollution from landscaping practices. We advocate for organic natural grass athletic fields, and organic parks, playgrounds and schools, and we've been in touch for several years with members of your community.

I am writing not only on behalf of our organization and to support the residents of Martha's Vineyard, but as a resident of a coastal New England area where this same issue has been ongoing.

In the city of Portsmouth, NH, much like Martha's Vineyard, we are wrestling with how to address inadequate playing fields.

Because of this, several groups have been very aggressive in pushing Portsmouth towards artificial turf. The main source of information presented to city staff and residents has come from the engineering consultants who stand to make a commission on the construction of the fields. They repeat messaging straight from the synthetic turf industry, and they have never given fair discussion to the use of natural grass.

Many of our local residents are in favor of investing in natural grass fields, but they have confided they are afraid to speak out publicly due to the aggressive behavior of some of the people associated with the local athletic groups.

Resident concerns about synthetic turf include effects on the health of our children using the fields, the high cost of installation, replacement, and disposal, and the effect on the environment.

Many promises have been made regarding recycling, and PFAS-free synthetic turf, but upon investigation these claims have been proven to be without any support.

It's up to the buyer to beware of the deceptive tactics being used to sell synthetic fields.

Whether we live in Portsmouth or on Martha's Vineyard, we all share the same values:

- We all agree we need good quality athletic fields
- We all want them to be safe
- We all want them to be cost efficient
- And we all care about the environment

Only one field surface is proven safe., When it's maintained properly, it's cost efficient, will give us durable use and won't harm the environment.

A connection to nature is vital to human development and well-being. Plants and soil provide this benefit, while plastic cannot. We urge you to choose natural grass fields.

Thank you for your consideration.

Diana Carpinone
President
Non Toxic Communities