

Jan. 12, 2021

Richard Toole  
89 Tradewinds Rd.  
Oak Bluffs, Ma. 02557

Letter to the Martha's Vineyard Commission re. MVRHS Athletic facility proposal

Dear Commissioners,

Except for a few of you new Commissioners, you all know me. Having served on the Commission myself for over fifteen years, I am well aware of the multitude of issues the MVC has to weigh in on and the impact it can have on our Island community. As you know it is a balancing act, benefits vs. detriments. How will this affect that and will it be in line with the goals of preserving our Island Character, economy and long term sustainability.

The current pandemic and the political chaos we are experiencing right now point out more than ever the need to provide our children and grandchildren with the best education possible in a safe and healthy environment. I am happy to see that our school leaders have recognized the need for improving the regional high school facilities both the school buildings themselves and the athletic fields. I ran cross-country and track at my high school and rowed crew in college. These activities kept me healthy both physically and mentally.

In order to make the needed upgrades our Island taxpayers are going to have to agree to these improvements and how we apportion the funds from our six Island towns. A final plan and price for a renovated school building has not been determined. If done properly this could save taxpayers money, as it will reduce energy and maintenance costs while providing a healthier environment for students and teachers. As has been presented, the reason the proposed athletic facility is moving forward ahead of the much needed school building improvements is because of private donors offering to pay for initial costs. As great as this at first appears, the true costs to us as both taxpayers and residents are unknown. The future financial burden is one thing but the negative environmental costs to our community, our drinking water and our ocean could be far worse. The artificial turf proposed goes against everything the MVC has been fighting for since it was established. Protecting our sole source aquifer, our watersheds, our ponds, waterways and the Island's reputation and mission to be a leader and to set a good example for most importantly, our children but also the thousands of visitors we attract and depend on each year. Please do not approve this plan as currently proposed. Thank You.

Richard Toole