

Hello everyone. Thank you for the time this evening.

My name is Rick Mello. I am the new IT director at the high school, but tonight I speak as the president of the MV Diamond Club in favor of the Phase One Project.

The Diamond Club is a non profit organization founded well over a decade ago to support the High School's student athletes who play softball and baseball. I am here tonight speaking on behalf of the Diamond Club in support of the Phase One track and field project to speak to the fact that yes an athletic facility on the campus of MVRHS can be done with donations and not burden the taxpayers with the improvements for our student athletes.

Our student athletes play on baseball and softball diamonds, but like those who run on tracks and rectangular fields, they are still directly impacted by phase one. Our Varsity Softball Head Coach has identified a short term fix for the displacement of some of our players in phase 1. The school administration has provided the preferred solution ensuring a place for all softball players to play, and we have every confidence the administration will map out a long term solution for the softball program, because For the first time ever, MVRHS has a master plan for the athletic campus, thanks to the School Committee and a committed administration. We are very grateful for that road map.

With that roadmap in place, it is of utmost importance to remind the community that the MVRHS has committed that Phase One will be privately funded. They have asked the MVC to place a condition requiring that this project be privately funded in the DRI approval. The construction and the replacement costs for the synthetic turf surface will be included in that private funding and there will be no adverse impact or burden to the taxpayer. In fact, the use of private funds for this project will literally save millions of taxpayer dollars that would otherwise be needed to improve our failing athletic facilities and make needed improvements to ADA accessibility throughout our campus.

The programs and the tone of the facility that the varsity baseball team has the joy to play on is a prime example of a success story on-island of a high school athletic facility being built with donations. The varsity baseball facility was built with donations given to the Sharks. The Sharks agreement with MVRHS results in an improved facility for its student athletes at no cost to taxpayers. The field, fencing, bleachers, scoreboard, dugouts, outbuildings and maintenance are all funded by donations. Our players for over a decade have thrived in top notch athletic facilities, thanks to the generosity of those donors and the school's partnership with the Sharks. We are indebted to the Sharks organization and grateful to the leadership of the MVRHS for negotiating the agreement with the Sharks, which is truly a quadruple win - the MVRHS gets an incredible facility, the MVRHS baseball players benefit from use of the facilities, the Sharks players have a location to play which provides entertainment value to the whole island, and the taxpayers are not burdened with the cost of this facility.

Please vote yes and build the track and synthetic turf infield, let this project be another success story of providing for all our athletes, by providing a solution to our grass maintenance dilemma - that being the inclusion of one synthetic field, whose cost to maintain is a \$17,500 savings a year, fitting well within the existing facility maintenance budget.

I would like to thank the MVC for your due diligence in this process, and for testing all components of the synthetic turf infield. Thank you for hearing me this evening, and thanks in advance for considering during your deliberations that Phase One will not burden taxpayers - not in its construction, maintenance, replacement, nor its recycling with the \$50,000 bond. There is no change on the impact to municipal services as there is no additional use proposed. There is no adverse impact to taxpayers as your third party review firms have proven. If you remember these points in your deliberations, then you will be able to say for certain that the benefits of this project outweigh any perceived detriments on your criteria for approval, and with that, be able to state that the proposed development will favorably affect the provision of municipal services with no burden on the taxpayers.

Thank you for your time.