

MVC final draft

Thank you commissioners for your investment of time and energy in this process. I respect this process and appreciate the opportunity to voice my thoughts.

Its no secret that I've been opposed to this project since its inception. While I recognize the efforts made by MV@Play, the Superintendents Office and the proponents of artificial turf to make this safer and more environmentally responsible I believe that fact is that natural turf is the only truly safe field for our athletes and our island.

Tonight I am not going to add to the science which has already been presented. When I first wrote this statement it was with sadness that I might be a lone wolf and I was willing to be that, in my 65 years I've never shied away from that and I sure wasn't going to start now. When Freedom Cartwright spoke at the last meeting I felt hope that this might not be so lone wolfish.

In the last few years the ugliness of our country has been laid bare in a way that should be impossible to look away from or dismiss. The racism, the prejudice, homo and trans phobia, the misogyny, extremism, xenophobia and rampant violence force us to see, hear, feel and know what many have known for hundreds of years. So what does this have to do with artificial turf you might be asking right about now?

It has to do with resources and privilege. Resources are finite and privilege is being exerted by the loudest and most powerful voices. Our school budget is not a bottomless resource. We know that monies need to spent on

decaying physical facilities. We know that will be significant and we know that will benefit ALL students and not be limited to those who participate in sports.

We also know that the only way to bring equity, justice and understanding into our country begins with education. This island is so rich in diversity, we need to be educating our students with the hard truths of history - age appropriate of course - from their first years in school. It may offend some when I say this but we are not the star spangled perfect culture some think we are. Mistakes, gross injustices have happened, been allowed to flourish while others feigned ignorance. That must stop. So allocate funds to revamp curriculum for all grades, get specialized teacher training if necessary. Teach kids from the beginning that ignorance is no excuse for injustice. Teach them the strength in our country can be found in facing the bleakest, cruelest parts of history, owning it and moving forward with a promise to be better, do better. Teach them that hate is weak and love is strength.

In conclusion I know we need safe, healthy fields for our athletes and that's what they deserve. Each of them has worked hard and sacrificed to nurture their abilities. This island has an abundance of professionals who can grow, rehab and manage natural fields so that our kids have healthy surfaces to compete on. Just look at some of our verdant pastures, and golf courses. Make field maintenance part of the horticulture department, call on parents and community members to contribute time and sweat equity for our kids. The professionals who live, work and grow here are the very best to take care of the surfaces. Finally..theres been a lot said about what the kids want, I get wanting something, but as community elders our responsibility is to give our youngsters what they need, sometimes that's

different from what they want and that's how we show we care. By making the hard choices. I hope the commissioners will make the hard, right choice and vote for natural turf only on this project.