

MV Commission
Oak Bluffs Planning Board

Feb. 4, 2021

Thanks for the chance to share my opinion about the effort to install a synthetic playing field at MVRHS.

I am a life-long sports fan, a frustrated former athlete, and the father of a boy who became a successful college soccer player. I think I understand the appeal of a turf field: useable in any weather, easy to maintain, more predictable performance (i.e. truer bounces, more consistent footing).

The point has been made that our Vineyard athletes are at a competitive disadvantage to kids at schools that have turf fields. I would argue that the skills of soccer players and field hockey players, for example, can actually be accelerated by playing on grass: you become quicker when you don't know precisely how the ball will bounce.

I also think there are serious financial and environmental drawbacks to the proposed project. Even before the pandemic made economic inequality in this country even more obvious, it seemed unnecessarily extravagant to spend money on something that is not a necessity and that benefits only a small subset of the wider school and Island population. And it's hard for me to find a rationale for using *anything* made of plastic when a natural alternative is available.

Thanks for your time,

Whit Griswold

West Tisbury