

To: elvin@mvccommission.org <elvin@mvccommission.org>; Oak Bluffs Planning Board
<planningboard@oakbluffsma.gov>; MVRHS School Committee
From: Ena Thulin; ena.thulin@gmail.com
Date: Friday January, 22, 2021
RE: Opposition to the turf field

To the MVC, the OB planning board, and community members.

I am writing this letter in opposition to the turf project at Martha's Vineyard Regional High School. I have been a teacher at MVRHS for almost 20 years here. I am a mother of two island students and a resident of West Tisbury.

There are many reasons to be opposed to this project: fiscal, environmental and well as racial social justice. It is hard to prioritize these in order of concern. As a teacher at the high school, I witness first hand how badly our building is in need of repair and ongoing maintenance, including the athletic fields and track.

However, I am most concerned about the environmental and social equity aspect of this project, particularly during the removal and disposal phase. After reviewing much of the paperwork, it appears that the plan states that the vendor will put \$50,000 into escrow in case the "vendor" is unable to dispose of the materials, and will provide the "owners" the funds to handle the disposal. My question is what happens then? Who will be responsible for determining the process of disposal if the vendor is unable to handle this process. Is that a responsibility that falls exclusively on the high school administration? Will the school committee and the MVC be part of that decision?

I understand that there is a lot of language around "recycling" and promises of certification of "recycling" written into the plan provided by Huntress Associates. The vendor guarantees a minimum of 95% of the materials will be removed and recycled. We, as educated citizens, understand that the process of recycling is not itself ideal. The carbon footprint of removal, shipping and processing even recyclable materials such as plastics is a burden on the planet. And, under the worst scenario, it is our responsibility as an island community to determine the plan for the removal and recycling of this material, how do we chose what community we put this burden on? Have we determined whether we will send this material to Bangladesh or India or Philadelphia or Detroit? Who will truly be burdened with this environmental hazard?

I guess I ask, are we willing to burn this material here on the island? Are we willing to throw that material into a landfill that remains here. Are we willing to do our part to "recycle" this material here. I suggest that if the answers to those questions are no, then there is no ethic argument for sending this waste somewhere else to be someone else's problem. If the answer to those question is 'no, we won't keep this waste here', then I don't believe we can ethically, socially or environmentally say yes to this plan.

Thank you for reading my concerns and considering these oppositions before you make your final decisions.

Ena Thulin
West Tisbury