

Dear Chairman Hill,

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter as part of your preparation for a determination regarding Board of Zoning Adjustment Case #20643: Maret School.

I think that my main objection takes the form of 'first do no harm'. For example, can Maret School assure the families of the children who play on the fields that they will not sustain, as has been reported all too often on petrochemical by-product turf, injuries that are not more severe than they would have been on a grass field? That abrasions will not contain bits of this petrochemical product? That the off gassing from the 3.5 acre field will not affect those children with respiratory issues? Will the families of these children need to sign something that says Maret is not responsible for injuries sustained while playing on a synthetic field? And then there are the neighborhood families whose health may be compromised by living with the off-gassing from this 3.5 acre chemical field 24/7.

Come to think of it, will the students of the Episcopal Center for Children be safe while using this facility?

I include the following from Doug Ruskin of West Tisbury, MA. whose community has been wrestling with a similar issue for their highschool's playing fields. This from his letter which appeared April, 2021 in The Martha's Vineyard Times.

For decades, the world used DDT as an insecticide — until we learned better. We used lead pipes to carry water — until we learned better. We used CFCs (chlorofluorocarbons) as refrigerants — until we learned better. There are numerous additional products with similar stories. You have heard expert testimony regarding the possible side effects of an artificial turf field. I need not enumerate them here, but the point is, no one really knows for sure — and therefore, why even take a chance if a well-known, viable, safe (and cheaper) alternative is readily available?

I understand that one of the goals of the Maret community is to lease the property to other athletic organizations in hopes of paying down the cost of this multi-million dollar project and that artificial turf can sustain many more hours of play than a grass field, which needs time to recover. This is not true, as the West Tisbury community has learned. There are grasses/grass mixes that can withstand such sustained play.

And finally, how does the installation of a 3.5 acre artificial turf field and accompanying parking for 50, benefit anybody but Maret School, many of whose athletes will go home at night to a different neighborhood without game lighting installations and artificial turf fields, while leaving behind a former green space that served the neighborhood by simply existing, harming no one at all. Surely there is a safer way to ensure that the unique population served by ECC has a home for the foreseeable future without a price tag of unknowable size to its student body and their school's surrounding neighborhood resulting from the overly ambitious and costly project of it's new tenant, the Maret School.

Yours respectfully,

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