



# WHY VOTE YES ON ARTICLE 13

To be Pro-active

**Do we really need synthetic turf?** A Natural Grass field that is WELL-MAINTAINED and WELL-DRAINED can provide EXTENDED USE for SHS by providing up to 300 events per year which is more than 3 TIMES the number of events that are actually being held (less than 100 events per year) on the current field which is in Fair-to-Poor Condition with drainage issues.<sup>1</sup>

**Why would we choose a more expensive, plastic alternative to the real thing?** Natural grass is significantly cheaper to install and maintain. According to UMass Lowell's Toxics Use Reduction Institute (TURI), 25-year and 50-year life cycle costs for synthetic turf, particularly with plant-based infill, are at least 2.5x as large as those for natural grass.<sup>2</sup>

**Aren't we trying to minimize waste?** The field is over 600,000 lbs of synthetic material. Out of the 180 fields removed in 2012, 90% of them went into landfills.<sup>3</sup> Every 8 years, each plastic carpet must be shipped off, disposed, replaced indefinitely.

**Did you know synthetic fields are not regulated or tested for safety?** Synthetic fields are subject to NO health or safety standards and are not regulated by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) as children's products.<sup>4</sup> We cannot rely on industry to decide a safe level of toxic exposure to our children and environment. No long-term studies regarding the impact on children's health or runoff have ever been conducted.

**Do you want your children exposed to toxins?** The CDC states there is no safe level of lead. Under sworn testimony in March 2016, the synthetic turf industry admitted that their product still contains lead.<sup>5</sup> According to the CDC, as the turf ages and weathers, lead (used as the color fixative) is released in dust that can then be ingested or inhaled.<sup>6</sup> Other toxins are also present in the plastic carpet, shock pad, infill, and maintenance chemicals. Owner's manuals state that chemicals must be applied regularly to maintain the carpet warranty.<sup>7</sup> Antimicrobials (many of which were just banned by the EPA due to long-term health risks<sup>8</sup>), herbicides, and sanitizers (used to clean vomit, spit, sweat, blood, animal droppings and spilled drinks), must all be applied eventually making their way into our athletes and waterways. Because synthetic turf is made out of highly flammable petrochemicals, they are treated with flame retardants.<sup>9</sup>

**Are there other health risks?** Synthetic fields are made of petroleum-based fibers that absorb heat, reaching extreme temperatures, regardless of infill or frequent watering. Athletes suffer from heat exhaustion and stroke, dehydration, burns, and heat blisters. As fields heat, noxious materials can be absorbed in gases that can become 10-20x more toxic than the materials themselves.<sup>10</sup> Though they are marketed as usable 24/7, synthetic turf fields are often prohibitively hot before sundown during the summer months. Players also note ACL injuries, turf toe, concussions, and slower recovery times.<sup>11</sup> Further, synthetic turf qualifies for all five of the CDC's MRSA risk factors;<sup>12</sup> just the high risk of turf burn alone makes players 7x more likely to contract MRSA.<sup>13</sup> Grass, in contrast, provides a cooling effect, naturally disinfects and offers a range of positive benefits to human physical and mental health. <sup>14</sup>

1. School Committee Meeting, 10/19/16

2. UMass Lowell Toxics Use Reduction Institute. "Cost Analysis." 9/16. [http://www.turi.org/Our\\_Work/Home\\_Community/Artificial\\_Turf/Cost\\_Analysis](http://www.turi.org/Our_Work/Home_Community/Artificial_Turf/Cost_Analysis)

3. SynTurf.org. "Current theory and practice of dealing with used synthetic turf fields." 6/16. <http://www.synturf.org/disposal.html>

4. PEER. "U.S. CPSC Stumbles on Artificial Turf." 2/15. <http://www.peer.org/news/news-releases/u.s.-product-safety-commission-stumbles-on-artificial-turf.html>

5. Testimony by FieldTurf Mid-Atlantic Sales rep to MA General Assembly's Ways and Means Committee. 3/16. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OHpzL9Y7YQw>

6. Center for Disease Control. "Lead contamination in synthetic turf." 6/13. <https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/tips/artificialturf.htm>

7. FieldTurf. "Maintenance Guidelines" (scroll to bottom of page to download). 9/16. <http://www.fieldturf.com/en/service/maintenance>

8. FDA. "Antibacterial Soap? You Can Skip It -- Use Plain Soap and Water." 9/2/16.

<http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm378393.htm>

9. FieldTurf. "FieldTurf launches fire-retardant infill and fiber synthetic turf components." 11/14. [www.synturf.org/images/Antimicro\\_FieldTurf.pdf](http://www.synturf.org/images/Antimicro_FieldTurf.pdf)

10. PEER. "Synthetic Turf Field Heat Dangers Require Safeguards: Synthetic Turf Temps as High as 200 Degrees Pose Particular Peril to Children." 9/12.

<http://www.peer.org/news/news-releases/artificial-turf-field-heat-dangers-require-safeguards.html>

11. Lawsuit against FIFA and the Canadian Soccer Association. [http://equalizersoccer.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/141001\\_2\\_Application-Sec-24-Schedule-A.pdf](http://equalizersoccer.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/141001_2_Application-Sec-24-Schedule-A.pdf)

12. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "MRSA and the Workplace." 8/15. <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/mrsa/>

13. Oxford Journals: Clinical Infectious Disease. "A High-Morbidity Outbreak of Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus among Players on a College Football Team, Facilitated by Cosmetic Body Shaving and Turf Burns." <http://cid.oxfordjournals.org/content/39/10/1446.full>

14. Journal of Environmental Quality. "The Role of Turfgrasses in Environmental Protection and Their Benefits to Humans." 6/94.

[http://www.water.ca.gov/wateruseefficiency/landscapeordnance/pubcomments/Jurgen%20Gramckow/0571\\_0001.pdf](http://www.water.ca.gov/wateruseefficiency/landscapeordnance/pubcomments/Jurgen%20Gramckow/0571_0001.pdf)

**Passage of Article 13 is an important first step of the town sending a message to the School Committee that Natural Grass is preferred in Shrewsbury because of the potential risks that Artificial Turf poses to our residents' health and our town's water supply.**

**A YES vote positions the town as Pro-active rather than Re-active.**

# [Martha's Vineyard] School Committee Formally Backs Grass Fields Alternative

by Alex Elvin, Vineyard Gazette, May 13, 2017



**The regional high school committee formally agreed this week to change tack and pursue a plan to upgrade the playing fields using natural grass.**



At a meeting on Thursday, the district committee voted unanimously to back a plan by the community group Vineyarders for Grass Fields. **A plan by the group MV@Play, which involved a three-phase project to revamp fields using artificial turf, has been postponed indefinitely.** The grass fields alternative was unveiled to the school committee last week as a counter proposal, days before a hearing was set to begin at the Martha's Vineyard Commission on the turf plan. In formal presentation Thursday, spokesman Dardanella Slavin described more fully the plan to upgrade 17 public playing fields on the Island, including the badly deteriorated track and fields at the high school. The group has set up a fund through the Permanent Endowment of Martha's Vineyard to support a comprehensive, **organic approach to field management**, including equipment, maintenance and training.

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The group plans to **engage the services of two grass experts:** Jerad Minnick of Growing Green Grass and Jeff Carlson of the Vineyard Golf Club. Ms. Slavin said maintenance will include aeration, fertilization, mowing and overseeding. The proposal is framed as a regional approach to field maintenance, taking into account the need for certain fields to rest during the summer and opportunities for sharing equipment.

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The school committee has a signed license agreement with MV@Play but Mr. D'Andrea said the committee could withdraw from that agreement with MV@Play at any time. When the new plan surfaced last week, leaders at MV@Play said they would step aside to allow the new plan to be vetted. They also offered to share engineering drawings for the track, but a few days later it was revealed that they could not share the drawings because the rights are owned by **Gale Associates, the Weymouth engineers who drew the turf plans.** Ms. Doyle said her group is in discussion with Gale about possible use of the plans.

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The committee took no action other than to authorize Mr. D'Andrea to work with Vineyarders for Grass Fields on a new agreement. The new proposal may require review by the commission. Committee members on Thursday roundly supported the plan and also acknowledged the efforts of MV@Play. **"We find ourselves at another point of transition, where we have something in front of us that takes that and grows it even further,"** Mr. Lionette said. High school athletic director Mark McCarthy also expressed gratitude for the work accomplished so far, but emphasized the work ahead, including a more detailed maintenance plan. "There is a lot more work that needs to be done," he said.

For the full story go to: <https://vineyardgazette.com/news/2017/05/13/school-committee-formally-backs-grass-fields>