

Dear Mr. Ehlers:

We are disappointed that MC is back with yet another attempt to provide permanent lighting on its athletic field. While we appreciate that this private school is attempting to expand its already significant neighborhood footprint into the nighttime for the benefit of its athletic recruiting and potential commercial enterprises, I once again write to voice our opposition. MC has proven it will continue to push and push to expand its property usage, creating additional noise, traffic, and light pollution to the detriment of its surrounding community, until someone says no and apparently says it over and over again.

MC is certainly an esteemed private high school, regularly having its pick of Marin County (and beyond) male and female top athletes. The school is a powerhouse regularly taking top honors across its different sports programs, of which there are many. We understand that continuing to have winning sports programs completes the circular quest to attract better and better athletes and encourage larger and larger donations. MC's strategy has been a resounding success for its own interests and a disaster for its neighbors. Having been a Greenbrae resident for almost 35 years now, we have watched and listened from our porch and various rooms facing the campus as bigger and better athletic fields and facilities have been constructed and record donations roll in.

We have a significant number of objections to MC's campaign for field lights. It is important to understand that along with field lights comes permanent extra noise, permanent and extra traffic, and permanent extra neighborhood disruptions. The hills above MC essentially act like a giant funnel collecting and amplifying any and all noise on and around the athletic fields, parking lots, and common areas. We can literally hear the quarterback calling his plays, the ringing of the baseballs off the aluminum bats during batting practices, each and every whistle ending a down or signifying a goal, and all of the loud music blasting during games and some practices, the cheering and even the conversations in the parking lot after an event. We have no real complaints with the weekend games, noise, and congestion. It is a part of living in this community. Nighttime field lighting and everything else that comes with it is not a standard part of this neighborhood and never has been. It would represent a significant and dramatic expansion of MC's footprint and a significant detriment to its neighbors. Here are just a few of our objections:

1. The noise and glare is overpowering in the Greenbrae hills above MC. We know there is a sophisticated and aggressive campaign being rolled out and lots of folks (mostly that will not be directly impacted) supporting the lights. It is a well-run campaign, perhaps professionally, and at significant expense. I appreciate that they have a significant and expansive goal at stake, but also that the vast majority of the organized supporters will not be impacted if field lights/noise/disruptions are allowed, if you are not up above MC where the lights and noise are directed, the impact is likely minimal.

2. MC is a private high school with an extremely small percentage of its student body coming from the adjacent (and directly impacted) neighborhoods. The last time MC rolled out a campaign for field lighting, I reviewed its student directory to see how many of its students actually came from the neighborhoods that would be most impacted by the lights/noise/disruptions. The percentage was quite small, I think around 6-7% were in fairly close proximity to MC, but only around 1-2% being from the neighborhoods to be significantly impacted, perhaps even less. My guess is that as MC's ability to attract better and better athletes from a broader geographic area, that small percentage will decrease further. The result of this imbalance is that a local community is being further burdened for a large and ever expanding private high school while receiving little to no benefits from the further expansion and disruption. Perhaps one important evaluation tool to be considered in this decision would be to take MC's current student body records and determine just how many or what percentage of its students actually reside in the neighborhoods that will be directly and detrimental impacted if the lights are allowed. I think you will be shocked by how few students actually reside in the "impact zone" if you take the time to check.

3. Unfortunately, MC has never been a very good neighbor. Over the years MC has built locked gates and fences that prevent the local community (the ones that are burdened by MC's operations) from using the soccer fields, tracks, etc. While I am guessing that there could be liability issues at play, 20-25 years ago the facilities were open and could be used by local families for exercise or to sharpen the skills of their kids. That is no longer an option so the negative impact of MC really is not offset by any corresponding benefits we are aware of.

We have watched and heard the expansion of MC's sports programs for over three decades. The programs have expanded into later and later practice times with more and more teams, as well as expanding at the other end of the clock as well. The summer football practices that start at 6am wake up my family every morning during practice. While I have persuaded the coaches to stop blowing their whistles after constant complaints each year, there is still significant yelling, clapping, and cheering. I can usually get the coaches attention after a few calls each season, but am really surprised that MC does not do a better job supervising this activity when it has known for years that their program is disrupting their neighbors. I am sure that MC's use of the requested lights would follow the same pattern of disruption, complaints, and little action being taken to minimize the impact on the quality of life of MC's neighbors.

4. MC is a private and expensive high school, not a public high school educating the community's children. The current campaign in support of the lights is seeking to compare MC to Marin public high schools and is also laser focused on promoting that the lights will benefit female sports programs. I am glad that MC is focusing attention on female sports and hope the focus will continue even after the field light issue passes. On the public verses private comparison, it is certainly easier to justify a negative impact on the local community when a school is educating the youth of the local community. A private school, however, does not provide that same local benefit and accordingly, should enjoy a much higher burden of proof before it is allowed to take yet another step to the detriment of its neighbors. MC is not a public high school and is educating very few students from the impacted neighborhoods (and at

considerable expense), MC should stop comparing itself to a public high school in support of its campaign. While I have not fully researched the issue, it is also my suspicion that as a private religious school, MC is exempt from paying property taxes so it truly provides very little in the way of positive benefits to its local community while extracting significant and ever increasing burdens.

5. Again, while I have not fully done my research on this issue, it is my belief that MC is making significant profits through the offering of summer and other season sports camps. A few months ago, I went online and found that MC was involved in offering a variety of summer session sports camps at a significant cost. One of the sports camps being offered on the MC campus was through an entity known as "Next Level Sports." I saw that MC was allowing Next Level to offer more than 20 weeks of camps for various grades (grades 1-8th – non MC students) for \$310 each. I have no idea how many students were enrolled in each week's classes, but we are talking about tens of thousands of dollars being made on flag football alone. I regularly saw and heard pre-high school baseball and lacrosse teams practicing and playing on MC fields complete with coaching, whistles, etc. Again, it does not seem right that a tax-exempt school is being allowed to burden its neighbors with additional noise and traffic conditions at all hours, when it does not pay property or other taxes into the community it is burdening. It also seems clear to me that MC is willing to utilize each and every inch of its athletic fields, courts, and tracks, not only for its own student body, but also to promote fee generating clinics, programs, etc. It now wants to use every tick of the clock as well. There should be no question that if it were granted the unjustified privilege of having nighttime field lights, that MC would yet again expand its use to the burden and detriment of its neighbors.

We are not asking for MC not to be able to use its athletic fields and facilities. MC clearly existed (with far fewer programs and hours of use) and had sports teams when we purchased our home around 35 years ago. But we are asking that MC once again be denied its quest for nighttime field lights. MC has already overburdened our community with its massively expanded sports programs, hours of facility use, and commercial enterprises to the point that I would conservatively estimate the amount of usage and noise increase is likely two to three times what it was when we moved here. Enough is enough, it is time to say no to MC and respect the local community that is already significantly burdened by MC's operations with little to no corresponding benefit.

Mark W. Epstein