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To: [Tim Carroll](#); [Jim Malkin](#); [Bill Rossi \(billrossimv@gmail.com\)](mailto:billrossimv@gmail.com); marie.chilmarkselectboard@gmail.com
Cc: [Suellen Lazarus](#)
Subject: Tennis Proposal
Date: Monday, January 15, 2024 10:43:11 AM

Dear Bill, Marie, Jim, and Tim,

As the longest serving Executive Director of the Chilmark Community Center in recent history, I have context and many questions about the tennis petition being presented at the meeting on Tuesday (unfortunately I will be teaching and unable to attend).

To further contextualize my questions and concerns, my relationship with the CCC is 4 decades long, from being a camper, counsellor, parent, and eventually the Executive Director from 2017-June 2021. My family has been coming to Chilmark for 44 years and my parents moved here year-round in 2001. I've been a teacher for 24 years and have been the Director of 4 education non-profits on Martha's Vineyard. All this to say, I have deep roots in our community, a long history with the CCC, and much experience as an educator.

The Chilmark Town Affairs Council (who oversees the operation of The Chilmark Community Center) has stewarded summer programs in Chilmark at the community center for almost 70 years, of which tennis has long played an important part. CTAC's investment includes building the clay courts and, most recently, a new tennis building to further support and enhance this popular program.

While I was the Executive Director, it was my understanding that the clay courts and the tennis building were built and operated by CTAC (on town land) and the all-weather courts, while belonging wholly to the town, were approved for use by the CCC during their operating weeks each summer. Further, that if tennis were to occur on the town courts in the off-season it either needed to a) happen under the auspices of CTAC or b) go out to bid to vendors. If more tennis programming is to be added to the town's all-weather courts, I assume the summer months are not part of this conversation as tennis continues to thrive at the CCC.

The proposal before you raises many troubling questions, particularly the request to change the bylaws and to have access to funds that are not overseen by the Finance Committee.

It also raises questions that seemingly ignores CTAC's long relationship with the town and that CTAC has no plans to stop running the Chilmark Community Center each summer:

1. Am I correctly reading the "transition" line to mean that this new committee would have exclusive use of the courts year-round and CTAC would no longer be allowed to run their longstanding and tennis programs?
2. Are the petitioners proposing to take over the clay courts and the new

tennis building from CTAC (recently built with donations to CTAC), or just the town's all-weather courts?

3. Why would the petitioners be approved to run a business on town land using facilities built by donations and funds raised by the CTAC nonprofit?

4. What is the rationale and the legalities of removing CTAC's long grandfathered ability to run tennis programs in the summer?

5. If this were to go through, what is the financial liability for this new entity to pay CTAC to compensate them for the loss of their property?

6. What will be the legal and insurance complexities of having two organizations sharing communal access to the campus and who is responsible if one of their patrons gets injured going to and from the tennis area when CTAC is otherwise responsible for all liability at the community center during their weeks of operation?

7. With so many kids theoretically sharing the same small campus, it would be challenging for the staff of each program to effectively keep track of which kids belong to which program. For example, when we were in the height of the pandemic, CTAC carefully collaborated with the town to make sure that our kids were on our campus, while the front-line workers' children were at the school, and we never shared spaces like the playgrounds so that there would be no doubt when a child was not where they should be. How would this sharing of space model safeguard the safety and supervision of the children?

8. Further, who will keep their patrons from using CCC equipment and facilities so that if someone is injured, there is no liability dispute between the two entities' insurance companies? The feasibility of keeping children off the playground and basketball court, for example, while going to and from the tennis courts is challenging, and if a child enrolled in the tennis program were injured, where does the responsibility and liability fall?

9. Where will the new organization's patrons park? There is no room during CCC operating weeks to share the existing lot.

10. Where will their patrons go to the bathroom? For safety and liability reasons it would not be advisable to allow their patrons to use the CCC restrooms.

11. Where would CTAC store their boats in the off-season? The building was designed to support tennis operations in the summer and store boats and outdoor furniture for the majority of the year.

12. Does this proposal mean that town residents can no longer play tennis on the all-weather courts for most of the year without paying a fee and/or

going through the proposed new entity?

13. If this tennis committee gets enough signatures to call a Special Town Meeting, and the citizens vote that a new organization should run tennis, does that automatically mean the petitioners, or would this go out to bid?

With gratitude in advance,
Alexandra