

I know that I have asked many questions of those opposing the lighted fields at Westtown School, but I have three reasons for being so vested in this matter.

1. According to the site map, my property is the closest to these proposed fields. I don't have any residences or other buildings blocking my view. It is literally a straight shot from my driveway to the Westtown fields. I saw the lights in question the night the fields were lit and I didn't think anything of it. This was because the lights were shined directly on the field. It didn't create a whole bunch light pollution. It looked like a very concentrated spotlight on the field. So, as the closest Westtown resident to these proposed fields, I don't have a problem with them being lit at night.

2. My children are Westtown Lifers, which means they have been attending Westtown School since Pre-K and Kindergarten. While my son just graduated last month, my daughter will be a junior there this year. That means, I have been paying a Westtown tuition for 13 years and I still have another two years to go. I don't even like to do the math to think how much we have spent on their education, but I do know that it has been worth every penny.

The school recognizes that it's a delicate balance between charging enough in tuition to keep the school running, but making sure families can afford it. What people don't realize is tuition alone NEVER covers the cost of actually running a school. This is not just Westtown; but any educational institution, public or private. Public schools make up the shortfall between the tuition and the cost through taxes and government funding. Private schools have to fundraise and find other sources of income.

Now, Westtown School has fundraised successfully for years, so that their endowment can provide for those in need. This enables the school to attract a socio-economically diverse student population, regardless of their financial status. However, tuition and endowment does not cover the annual expenses to run the school. This is why we have seen so many tournaments on the weekends, and summer camps, and renting of the facilities to outside groups. If Westtown School does not find a way to supplement the costs of running it, then they are forced to increase tuition, again and again. I can tell you as a Westtown parent, it's a tough pill to swallow when the tuition increases 3-4% a year, because it adds up over time. And I know the teachers aren't well paid, so those tuition increases barely cover the school's annual increased costs. This is why they need NON-TUITION REVENUE!

Renting the fields to outside clubs is an essential way to provide this revenue. I know it's nice to think that Westtown School is a steward of its 620 acres, but it's a business first. It's

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in the business in educating young minds. If land needs to be sold or rented to keep the doors open, then that is what will happen. Keeping Westtown School running and affordable for students is their number one priority.

3. I'm the former Parks & Rec Chair of Westtown Township. I served in that position for 7 years. Besides planning yard sales and movie nights, the one issue that was constantly repeated was the need for more playing fields for this area's youth, whether it was for baseball or soccer. We did surveys, we had task forces, we had committees, we polled people, we evaluated all the open space owned by the township, and this went on for years and years! We knew we needed more playing fields, but we couldn't find the space for it. Well, now we have a solution in front of us. It seems crazy to me that this is even up for debate, considering the amount of time that has been spent on this very topic.

We have heard from MANY experts that these practice fields, when lit, will provide little impact to the neighbors, because of the technological advances in lighting that have been made. These fields will be used regularly for just practices, not games, and the lights will dimmed at 9:30 pm and be turned off by 9:45 pm. I'm not sure how conversations have digressed to include traffic at 926 & Westtown Road, or the noise, or all the other topics we've discussed. The issue is the light at night, and as the closest resident, as a Westtown parent, and as the former Parks & Rec chair, I think this is something the township should definitely approve for the good of the community.

Thank you.

*Respectfully submitted by
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