

Allison B. Cohen
Los Feliz Ledger
4459 Avocado Street
Los Angeles, CA 90027

Mr. Adam R. Lid
Legislative Assistant
COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES
Arts, Parks, Health, Aging and River Committee
City Hall
200 North Spring Street, Room 395
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Sent Via: FAX: (213) 978-1079 and E-mail

PROJECT: **FINAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE GRIFFITH PARK CRYSTAL SPRINGS BALLFIELDS PROJECT (W.O. E170110B; STATE CLEARING HOUSE #2013011012**

Honorable Committee Members O'Farrell, LaBonge, Buscaino, Cedillo and Price:

Ramon Barajas' July 31, 2014 letter in reference to the appeal filed in regards to this project has answered all appellant's questions and concerns by way of little new data but by fully illuminating concerns with answers already provided in the project's F-EIR.

I urge you to find the Recreation and Parks Board of Commissioner's certification of the project's F-EIR as proper, deny the appeal, adopt the Commissioner's findings and concur with their approval of this project.

To date, \$240,000 of city funds have been spent in an effort to satisfy the expected appeals to this project, which was previously classified as "Neg-Dec," meaning no environmental report was recommended or required. Such a report is highly irregular. Many city projects, larger in scope and with more of a potential impact, have sailed through without such scrutiny. The city's due diligence, conducted with an abundance of caution, has been thus exhausted and accomplished.

The F-EIR has painstakingly detailed mitigations for every aspect of this project, even concluding construction will cease during the area's bird nesting season. The city has painstakingly detailed no picnic tables will be lost; painstakingly considered numerous alternative sites and found each objectionable; painstakingly provided mitigation measures for impacted trees, of which all but two a certified arborist testified April 2, 2014 are simply not "heritage" at all.

The question: Is the City of Los Angeles willing and can its councilmembers be politically liable to spend more tax payer dollars for more environmental study—that will come to the same conclusions—that essentially places an open field (two ball fields) within an open field only because a minority group opposes and for fear of lawsuit?

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Recent headlines suggest the City continues to face tremendous financial hardship by way of a crumbling infrastructure; a demand by the Los Angeles Police Dept. for an increase in wages; lost revenue due to MTA “fare evasion;” the failure of collection of millions of dollars by the City’s Bureau of Street Services amounting for “a vast backlog of work;” and the financially strangling payment of City pensions including that for ex-councilmember Richard Alarcon, despite his felony conviction.

Regarding the appellants pursuit for the City undertaking an EIR for the Performance Stage at the Old Zoo again, if your committee concurs with appellants, tax payer funds will be wasted for a extraordinarily transparent and innocuous project that essentially amounts to a concrete flooring, four supporting pillars and a transparent awning.

Those favoring of the Crystal Springs ballfields—which will be used by 14 elementary and middle school aged students in the area, the far majority with a Title One status— outweigh those against, including influential members of local, national and worldwide youth empowerment organizations, baseball professionals non profits concerned with childhood education, obesity and the transformation of the trajectory for at-risk children. Additionally in support are, Los Angeles City Councilmembers Tom LaBonge and Mitch O’Farrell, the Dodgers, LA84, LAUSD’s Bennett Kayser and six neighborhood councils representing over 200,000 constituents.

As a long supporter of this project (since 2006), I can no longer support more tax payer money being thrown at this project for the appeasement of a few and to stave the City’s anxiety of a lawsuit.

In closing, find the certification by the Mayor-appointed Commissioner’s proper; deny the appeal, adopt the Commissioner’s findings and concur to approve the project’s F-EIR.

Sincerely,

Allison B. Cohen

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Publisher
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