



"DAN PRESSBURG"
<ibencruzin@mail.com>

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To mayor@longbeach.gov, Bob_Foster@longbeach.gov,
Bonnie_Lowenthal@longbeach.gov,
Gary_Delong@longbeach.gov, "Melissa Morgan"
<Melissa_Morgan@longbeach.gov>,
pat_west@longbeach.gov, Rae
<Rae_Gabelich@longbeach.gov>,
Tonia_Uranga@longbeach.gov, Val
<Val_Lerch@longbeach.gov>, cityclerk@longbeach.gov
cc Dee_Andrews@longbeach.gov,
Suja_Lowenthal@longbeach.gov,
Gerrie_Schipske@longbeach.gov
Subject Sports Park

Honorable Mayor, Councilmembers and Staff,

I apologize for not addressing this issue in person but family issues require me to be at home.

I do not recall how many of you were involved with moving the Sports Park from El Dorado Park to where it is today but there are not very many of you who were involved. I believe the Council then was Oropeza, Lowenthal, Robbins, Drummond, Clark, Topsy-Elvord, Grabinski, Kellogg, and Shultz. The original plan was to utilize El Dorado Park and create something on the East side of town. Rather than give up park space for recreation the Sports Park was moved. Former Councilman Ray Grabinski compromised with Councilman Robbins under the assumption that at a later date Brownsfield dollars were possible to rehabilitate the location where the Sports Park would to go. This eliminated a drawn out enviromental battle and provided park land for the 7th District. Unfortunately, Brownsfield dollars have not been available or utilized to proceed with the clean-up. Since then, there have been two council people Donelon and Uranga who have helped look for dollars to bring the Sports Park online.

The 7th district like my area has a little more than (1) one acre per 1000 residents of open space. Where I live it is even a little less though Pops Davenport Park came online a few years ago. Trading park land for wetlands a costly proposition especially if you are trying to extract dollars as a tradeoff for the wetlands. However, the wetlands habitat is just as vital and necessary to Long Beach even though budgetary restraints limit what action may be taken.

The last landswap deal was said to be so beneficial to the welfare of the downtown it was declared a legitimate use in the tidelands by the City Manager. Many of us then stated that we needed to take a serious look at what the city was going to establish. The council overlooked our wait and look at the problem approach. It was quandary and in question then and a bad idea that is still in question today. Now the courts have ruled otherwise as well as the state lands commission. This has netted the city a less than favorable result and a net loss.

Trading one portion of the city for another, in reality, is not good policy and sets a precedent that is costly to our future human infrastructure, our children. It says one portion of town is more important than another. That cost is not replaceable by a monetary solution nor is the unintended consequences the swap might bring. Considering the limited recreational resources on the Westside, discounting the Sports Park and the needs of the 7th District for a land swap is not equal to an area that already has a 16 to 1 acreage ratio that is greater than the other. One must also consider if it is equitable to discount the needs of the Westside whether it is for goods movement or park land. The wetlands is a great idea but not when you are robbing Peter to pay Paul.

The land use puzzle for Long Beach is not an easy cookie cutter solution but taking from an underserved area and providing it for another is also not a answer. The cost of restoration to the wetlands is considerable but so is eliminating park land for the Sports Park and the 7th District. Please do not trade away this valuable piece of the recreation puzzle for the Westside. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Dan Pressburg

167 E. South Street

Long Beach, CA 90805

562-428-7710