

Excerpt from Recreation and Parks Commission Minutes of July 14, 2016

5A. Review and Recommend Alameda Soccer Club's Proposal to Repurpose and Maintain the Courts Adjacent to the Hornet Field at Alameda Point.

Amy Wooldridge gave the presentation on the proposal to repurpose and maintain the tennis courts adjacent to the Hornet Field. ARPD collaborates with the Alameda Soccer Club (ASC) on its fields to provide soccer opportunities to Alameda youth. The City currently has two leases with ASC for their use, operation and maintenance of the Lexington Fields and Hornet Field at Alameda Point. This has been a successful partnership that allows ASC to use these fields for hundreds of youth participants while also taking a financial burden off of the City for maintenance of the fields. ASC is proposing to renovate the unused and abandoned tennis courts which are in disrepair and repurpose them for use as soccer practice fields with synthetic turf overlaid onto the existing court surfacing. ASC will fully fund the renovation of these courts and intends to secure donations to assist with that effort. This is not a permanent use of this facility but is an interim use. It is a cost effective way to reuse an existing space to meet field demands. By using synthetic turf, ASC can utilize these fields year-round, regardless of weather.

John Pecson, Alameda Soccer Club, a non-profit organization whose primary the focus is on the Alameda soccer community for youths, gave overview of the organization and proposal. Mr. Pecson explained that the fields are locked to prevent vandalism and to keep the fields clean. The Alameda Soccer Club's goal is to provide soccer for kids at the least amount of cost.

Speaker Richard Bangert, Sierra Club, concerned about the use of recycled tire crumb rubber as the health and safety to exposure is not a settled matter due to the PAH content and encouraged the Alameda Soccer Club to use another material that is proven to be safe. Also said the Community Reuse plan from 1996, the Enterprise Park was designated as a regional park and that goal has not been amended.

Speaker Irene Dieter was concerned about piecemealing the park when the overall master plan was meant to be an East Bay Regional Park with an Urban Campground. She is not opposed to soccer having the space, she just wanted to make sure we have all the data before proceeding.

Director Amy Wooldridge said it is not confirmed to be operated by the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) and that the City would need to first negotiation with EBRPD and it would then take additional time for EBRPD to implement those plans. The Alameda Recreation and Park Department currently has 12 million dollars in projects under construction and Enterprise Park was not one of the projects on the top of the list. Due to the volume of the present workload, she sees the proposal from the Alameda Soccer Club a good solution since it is intended only for the interim.

Director Amy Wooldridge read a letter from Y. Ivanoff opposing the soccer field and is in favor of keeping the area open and not lock it since it is public property.

Chair Tilos agreed there could be an alternative to Crumb Rubber. He also said there were many plans at one time for using the space, but since it hasn't been maintained and no one else has come forward with a proposal, it is good that a group wants to go in and take care of it with no expense to the City of Alameda. He expressed his concern is that we do not let organized sports take over all the field use so that non organized sports enthusiasts can enjoy the fields also.

Vice Chair Delaney said a number of the comments have been thought provoking and he supports the soccer program but due to the many comments, it would be better to hold back until there is more information.

Commissioner Limoges wanted to be sure it is an interim solution. He does not want to see it piecemealed and he would like to know more about the East Bay Regional Parks' interest and agreements with the City as he wants to be sure the decisions made are for the best and highest use of an area with amazing views of the Bay. He also expressed concern about the safety issue of using crumb rubber and wants to be sure another surface material is used.

Vincent San Nicolas, Alameda Soccer Club, reassured the Commissioners that the Alameda Soccer Club is open to other options for the turf and they are ready to step up now and invest their time and money to improve the area with a short time lease of 4 ½ years to benefit the community. It would be added as an amendment to the existing Hornet Field lease.

Amy Wooldridge said they used TPE at Estuary Park because it is a safe alternative.

Chair Tilos commended the efforts of the Alameda Soccer Club and sees the proposal as a winning situation for the City of Alameda. He suggested exploring the possibility of using TPE instead of Crumb Rubber. Chair Tilos does not see the proposal as piecemealing as it is fulfilling a temporary need and solution of taking an area that is in disrepair and turning it into a beautiful field for the approximate 1,400 soccer players who would use it. He confirmed that the proposal is just for the tennis court and not the basketball court. Chair Tilos also thinks it's a good idea to start engaging East Bay Regional Parks to see what their actual interest is in Enterprise Park.

Vice Chair Delaney made a motion that the Recreation and Park Commission recommends that the Alameda Soccer Clubs' proposal be presented to the City Council as long as there are guidelines including making an amendment to the present Hornet lease and that recycled tire crumb rubber not be utilized but an alternative fill, as approved by staff, be used.

M/C/S Vice Chair Delaney / Commissioner Limoges All present in favor with a 3 – 0 vote.