

How Should Lighthouse Field Be Used?

Should kids and adults be provided a place at Lighthouse Field where they can "fly kites, throw frisbees and even practice soccer and softball?"

The city of Santa Cruz Parks and Recreation Commission Monday got a recommendation from Rich Bunnell, the city's recreation director, that a 10-acre area be turfed and set aside for such uses at the park now being planned by state, county and city representatives on some 37 acres off West Cliff Drive.

The commissioners in general appeared to favor the idea, but not Michaelangelo Rosato, one of the citizen activists who led the successful fight in the 1970s to prevent a convention center, apartment complex and shopping village from being built on the site.

Rosato made it clear he is not opposed to kids or adults playing, but he told the commissioners that Lighthouse Field is a very special place because of its location.

"The location is what makes it valuable to the state, the reason the state paid millions of dollars for it. There is only one Lighthouse Field in the city, and we who fought to

save it as a valuable open space resource would like to keep it as unchanged as possible. There are other places in the city where you can put a playing field, but there is only one Lighthouse Field."

But Wayne Brumbach, UCSC physical education director, indicated there will be a growing community debate over whether kids and adults should be provided some play area on the field. He said:

"That field belongs to all the people of the state, specifically to the city, but nevertheless to all the people. Earlier representations made at workshops of what people want at this park were not indicative of desires of the city as a whole. I was aghast that these people wanted so little use there. This is a \$7 million piece of ground and I could not believe that a more equitable distribution of uses could not be made by them."

Brumbach said he has more than 1,000 petition signatures calling for open space where people can fly kites or hold soccer or softball practice. He stressed:

"We are not talking about a sports facility, a stadium,

but open space the people are welcome to use."

Commission sentiment appeared to favor a community debate over the issue, but commissioners held over to next Monday developing a set of recommendations it will make to the Lighthouse Field Advisory Committee.

Commission Chairman Jim Franks and Commissioner Carol Kreppel said they have received many telephone calls from persons wanting to be able to play soccer and softball at Lighthouse Field.

The commission recommendations will go to the Lighthouse Field Advisory Committee in time for that group's April 30 meeting. Rosato said that he believes no decision will be made on this or other issues before another workshop is held by the committee.

Rosato's suggestion that the field be left relatively unchanged went over like a lead balloon.

Commissioner Harriet Mainis recalled that when she was a girl her father called the Golden Gate Park "the eighth wonder of the world" because it had so much there for everyone to enjoy.

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