



September 27, 2007

Mr. Tom Politeo
Co-Chair, Harbor Vision Task force
1246 West 14th Street
San Pedro, CA 90731

SUBJECT: PRESERVATION OF KNOLL HILL

Dear Tom:

I am writing in response to your letter of August 12, 2007 concerning the preservation of Knoll Hill as open space and its' temporary use for Eastview Little League. As you correctly indicate in your letter, Knoll Hill is going to be dedicated for open space, and the planning for this will begin early next year, keeping in mind that we do not yet own all the properties. We have made that commitment and we intend to carry it out and would look for your help in this planning process. We do not believe that the temporary placement of Eastview Little League at this location will preclude future development of this area as a park, although as you and I have personally discussed, providing "roadless" access we believe is too restrictive for parkland in our urban setting.

In April, the Council Office, you and a number of community members met with us in an effort to solicit help from the Port in locating a spot for Eastview Little League at 22nd Street. However, as you are aware, this site received significant opposition from some elements of the community. The Port was then faced with the choice of turning our back on a local non-profit volunteer organization, which serves hundreds of San Pedro families, or helping them by allowing them to temporarily use Knoll Hill. Recognizing that a long-term site would ultimately need to be identified, the Port concurrently approached the Navy about use of their property. Using the Navy site would require more funds than Eastview currently has and therefore additional fundraising would be necessary. Certainly, if another location was available in the community in the time frame needed, then this would not have been an issue. At this point we believe that we are the only entity that can save this valuable community program and to stop work at this time would not allow adequate time for Eastview to find another site in time for their next season. Recognizing, however, that ball fields are not consistent with the Port's long term plan for the site, we will incorporate language into the Eastview agreement that establishes milestones for relocation to the Navy site, or another community site, along with fundraising milestones coupled with our approval for use of the site for each of the three years. This will ensure that the ball field is positioned to relocate to an alternative site at the termination of the three-year lease.

Antonio R. Villaraigosa, Mayor
City of Los Angeles

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Additionally, we have seriously considered the environmental issues you raise in your letter. We found that the construction of the baseball fields, roadway and associated parking facility for the temporary use by Eastview Little League to be minor alterations of land and exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The reconstruction of the roadway will be along the existing nonconforming road, and grading for the fields and parking will not involve import or export of grading materials. A majority of the surface of Knoll Hill has been significantly disturbed by past grading activities, housing construction and demolition, and even construction of the dog park. We intend to have a paleontologist on-site during the entire construction period should any resources be discovered during construction. The trees that would be subject to removal are nonnative species and will be replaced with species consistent with future plans developed for Knoll Hill. Finally, the air quality issues you raise relate not only to Knoll Hill, but to all our waterfront areas and virtually all of the Los Angeles Basin. We are fortunate that this location, which is elevated from street level, is next to a facility that has 70% of its ships using shore power and 100% use of propane yard equipment. The use of this facility as ball fields is not only temporary but also conducted largely in the evenings and during weekends when port activity is lower.

Again, we thank you for your letter in regard to the future of Knoll Hill, and sincerely hope that the Sierra Club will join us and the Central San Pedro Neighborhood Council to plan for the long-term use of Knoll Hill.

Sincerely,


GERALDINE KNATZ, Ph.D.
Executive Director

cc: Honorable Antonio R. Villaraigosa, Mayor
Honorable Janice Hahn, Councilwoman, 15th District
Los Angeles Board of Harbor Commissioners