

July 25, 2016 SD City Council Meeting

Council President Sherri Lightner's transcribed comments prior to vote:

As a long-time soccer mom, it's encouraging to see so many children and youth come down to share their feelings about Surf Cup. I want to thank staff and the City Attorney who worked on the lease and answered so many questions.

Surf Cup sport passion is undeniable. Youth sports are important in the city of San Diego. We need to make sure that children and youth have a safe, convenient place to practice and play, but we're also responsible for ensuring it's in an appropriate location. I can appreciate the frustration of the neighboring homeowners who are dealing with traffic and noise impact on a regular basis. I do have concerns about the lease and whether this is the right location for Surf, given the information I've received over the last several weeks about the history of this property, its deeds, its leases and special event permits.

Per the original grant deed, it's clear the intent for this land was to be for open space in a natural condition. There is considerable contention on what constitutes noncommercial recreational use and large assemblages of people or automobiles. Based on the language in the deed, I do not believe Polo's use in the past or Surf's proposed future use is appropriate. If it were up to me, the City would dedicate the polo fields as open space, given how precious our open space is in San Diego. There are also the CEQA issues raised by FSDRV. There has never been any traffic study done that addresses the uses of the field except for the categorical exemption for this lease. The only referenced environmental document was a negative declaration with the original lease in 1986.

I've considered the issues between the City and Surf Cup Sports, and I've been aware of the community's concerns with various uses at the site since I took office. Given the restrictions outlined in the grant deed, and the deed's apparent intent, it would seem the uses proposed by Surf are not compatible with the deed.

Prior to moving forward on the lease with Surf, I really believe Surf should seek adjudication to define permitted noncommercial recreational uses and large assemblages of people or automobiles and a comprehensive CEQA analysis, either an MND or an EIR, should be performed to avoid any questions of piece-mealing. Despite my strong support for youth soccer, I cannot support this item today. I don't believe the terms of the deed allow for this type of intense use on this property. As I mentioned before, at a minimum, we need adjudication regarding how to interpret the language in the deed first, along with proper environmental review, before we enter into a 28-year-long lease for this site.

I want to thank everyone once again for their participation today. It was very respectful.

Note: put my concerns on the record. Thank you very much.