



February 23, 2023

VIA EMAIL

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Councilmember Steve Madison @ smadison@cityofpasadena.net
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Re: Proposed mini golf course and expansion of driving range at Brookside Golf Course

Councilmember Madison and Messrs. Widen and Fox:

The Board of West Pasadena Residents' Association ("WPR") thanks Messrs. Weiden and Fox for their presentation to the WPR board meeting in October 2022 regarding the building of a proposed mini golf course and expansion of the driving range at Brookside Golf Course. Members of our organization also attended the recent public meeting regarding the CEQA report. Finally, on February 20, 2023, I spoke with RBOC President Steve Haderlein, who explained the RBOC's responses to our major concerns.

In sum, we applaud your efforts to achieve self-sufficiency through new revenue sources. We want the Rose Bowl to thrive and recognize that identifying new revenue streams is critical to its long-term success. However, we are writing to reiterate that we oppose the project at present.

The WPR has identified two areas of the proposed project that are of major concern:

- The filing of the CEQA MND document that does not provide an accurate, stable and finite description of the proposed project, and
- The Project lacks specific financial and other details, as outlined below.

From our perspective, RBOC is marching down the CEQA path without having delineated the proposed changes to Brookside and without having demonstrated to the community – which will foot the bill if the projections are too rosy – that these changes are a good investment of public funds. The recent public meeting also highlighted that neighbors remain concerned about the collateral effects of any mini golf course or expansion of the driving range. We take note of Nina Chomsky's arguments concerning a variety of legal issues, which we would also like addressed before any decisions are made.

If this were a project by any private entity, then we would have seen plans at the same time as the CEQA review. Because the RBOC is a public-benefit corporation that's treated as part of the

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city government, it exercised its power to make up different rules for its own project. My conversation with Steve Haderlein clarified why: if RBOC devoted the hundreds of thousands of dollars needed to draft detailed plans before obtaining CEQA approval, then RBOC would have been open to attack for squandering resources if it did not obtain CEQA approval. Further, the “CEQA first, plans later” approach was blessed by RBOC’s lawyers, who presumably said that RBOC had legal authority to obtain CEQA approval before nailing down plans. From a pure “business” perspective, taking the smoothest route makes a lot of sense. However, RBOC isn’t a regular business; it’s a public benefit corporation with obligations that extend beyond balancing its budget.

As I noted to Mr. Haderlein, choosing to save money by pursuing CEQA approval first has a substantial non-economic cost: Brookside’s neighbors understandably are concerned that they will have little impact on whether the project should be built and any design features once RBOC has cleared the CEQA hurdle. We recognize the need for fiscal restraint, but this approach certainly hasn’t built any trust in RBOC in the eyes of its neighbors.

We think it’s worthwhile highlighting an alert we recent sent to our members, which identified the following concerns that we continue to hold:

- Because the course is projected to operate 14 hours (6 a.m. through 10 p.m.) every day of the week, it will likely cause significant light pollution until 10:00 PM, along with traffic and possible amplified sound in the Arroyo.
- Creating the course will likely require removal of many (45) native and mature trees and contribute to the degradation of the adjacent animal habitat and the historic fabric of the Arroyo Seco.
- Initially, the RBOC estimated the cost to build the course at \$2 million with no final design or specific components of the cost estimates.
- The financial projections offer little comparative analytic data of similar projects in cities like Pasadena.
- The project has yet to release a thorough “proof of concept.”
- The Rose Bowl Stadium and Brookside Golf Club are on the National Register of Historic Places.
- The proposal may violate the Arroyo Seco Master Plan and/or the Arroyo Seco Public Lands Ordinance.

We invite you to reconsider your approach and invest in plans and financial analyses that will demonstrate to the community that these proposed changes will add to RBOC’s bottom line without an undue impact on your neighbors.

Thank you for your consideration of our points of view.

Respectfully,

/s/ Evan J. Davis

Evan Davis, President
West Pasadena Residents' Association