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Published November 11th, 2009

## Measure WW Funds: Will Camino Pablo's Field Benefit?

By Sophie Braccini

The Moraga Town Council met jointly with the Moraga School Board on October 27th regarding the decision on how to use the funds the Town can receive from Measure WW, the East Bay Regional Park District bond measure. During earlier sub-committee meetings, the Town, School District and user groups had unanimously agreed that Camino Pablo Elementary School's (CP) field was the best place to invest that \$737,000. But when it came to a vote on the night of the joint meeting, the Town Council voted unanimously in favor of pursuing the project but the School Board did not vote at all, to the surprise of many. "We didn't list this discussion as an action item," said School Superintendent Rick Schafer, "we need to have additional discussion in a less contentious environment."

This delay appeared odd to the Council. "It was a bit of a surprise," said Council Member Mike Metcalf, who had worked on the sub-committee, "at the last meeting (of the sub-committee) we voted unanimously to pursue the grant."

"The entire Council was profoundly stunted and disappointed," said Vice-Mayor Ken Chew, and although he believes that the School Board will take the appropriate action to accept the WW funds for CP field improvement, he added, "there are other options for which the WW funds can be used to benefit our community."

The monies coming from the EBRPD as part of Measure WW, that was approved by voters at the November 2008 election, can only be used to preserve open space or for high priority community park projects. "The residents clearly indicated to us that they wanted more sports field," said Metcalf, referring to a town-wide study that was done a few years ago, "so we decided to find a field project that would have a significant impact."

The field at Rancho Laguna Park suffers a significant drainage deficiency and could have been a good candidate, but the study of what residents want this park to become is not completed yet. As Rancho Laguna is the only sport field that belongs to the Town, it was decided to involve the School District which owns all of the other locations used for organized sports in Moraga.

The field at CP emerged as the best solution since it is vastly underused because of drainage problems and offers enough space to be a great practice field for all sports. "This is the correct recommendation," confirmed School Board Member Dennis Kelleher, who sat on the sub-committee.

One element was not finalized during the sub-committee meetings: The joint-use agreement that the Town and Board must enter to satisfy EBRPD requirements.

Another component is the maintenance of the park. In a recent decision, the Town of Moraga decided to stop contributing to the maintenance of the school district fields within six years, despite a long practice of doing so. At a recent School Board meeting, members had taken stock of that decision, accepted it, and added that consequences would ensue. "This is not what caused us to delay our decision," said Schafer. However, the sub-committee did not address the cost of maintenance of the new field, and the question of who will pay is still up in the air.

The window to submit projects to EBRPD opens on February 1st.

For an update on the School Board discussion and decision, visit <http://www.lamorindaweekly.com> after November 10.

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