

Ann Parode Dynes
c/o Torrey Pines Golf Course
Attention: John Howard
La Jolla, California 92037

October 20, 2017

Mr. Paul Robinson
Chair, Mission Bay Planning Committee
600 W. Broadway, Suite 800
San Diego, California 92101

Dear Paul:

Thank you for the telephone conversation this week and for Robin Shifflet's further input about the impact of current plans on the Mission Bay Golf Course (MBGC). I write on behalf of the City of San Diego Municipal Golf Committee (MGC), on which I currently serve as Chair. Our Committee was appointed by the Mayor and City Council to serve as a citizens' advisory group to the City of San Diego's Golf Division with respect to the public golf courses directly operated by the City--Torrey Pines, Balboa and MBGC. MBGC is a 62-year-old public, 18-hole, 2700-yard golf course operated by the Golf Division using the resources of the Golf Enterprise Fund (which is not a part of the City's General Fund).

On behalf of the MGC (not the Golf Division which cannot take a position) and the thousands of users of MBGC, we write to first question the basis on which MBGC was included in the De Anza Revitalization Plan (Plan). As we understand it, along with other recreational facilities in De Anza Cove 46-acre MBGC was added to your Plan in late 2015 or early 2016 taking the Plan area from initially 76 acres to 166 acres. Since MBGC is a regional park, not local to Mission Bay or even Pacific Beach, and because it is located on former tidelands which we understand were dedicated to park and recreational use by the State, we question whether your Committee is on legal ground to include the course, and perhaps the other recreational uses at De Anza, in the Plan at all. Can you arrange to provide us with confirmation that MBGC is appropriately included in the Plan process at all? It seems very possible that the Revitalization Plan should be restricted to areas in De Anza which are not already dedicated recreational acreage.

Secondly, if MBGC is properly included in the Plan, we believe that the omission of representation by the golfing community in the Plan process is a serious oversight requiring correction. Once the golf course was belatedly included in the Plan area, the omission of any representative of, nor even consultation from either the MGC or the golfing community at any level of the process, has compromised the opportunity for a complete, fair and thoughtful review of the options for golf at De Anza. We believe that there are thoughtful options for maximizing the role of MBGC, while leaving its functionality intact, which deserve consideration.

The Golf Division, and accordingly the MGC, was first informed that MBGC had been included in the footprint of the Plan only in spring 2016 at which point the Plan Subcommittee had been formed and public workshops were already underway. We did not then understand the manner in which MBGC constituencies had been omitted from the decision-making process while environmental and commercial interests seem to have been favored. Representatives of the MGC and the golfing community attended all public workshops convened by the Subcommittee and consistently

communicated the case for retaining MBGC substantially unimpaired to the City's Planning staff. We think that it is inappropriate that ReWild Mission Bay is prominently featured on the web site for the Plan while MBGC, a current operator in the Plan area, is not. While there were numerous consultants on the Subcommittee with various (we think but do not know, mostly environmental and Pacific Beach commercial) competencies, none of them appear to have had an adequate appreciation for public golf nor were they skilled in the complexities and cost of "shrinking" a golf course. While one of the options currently pending seems to retain the substance of MBGC, the Subcommittee's current recommendations pertaining to the course require direct input from the golfing community, parallel in kind to that apparently obtained from other interested groups. We feel strongly that there is an appearance, if not a fact, of unfairness to San Diego golfers.

Had there been appropriate representation on the Subcommittee of the golfing community like it did with Audubon, Pacific Beach merchants, Campland and other voices, the Subcommittee would have had access to significant information which is essential to a fair and thorough review of the options for MBGC (assuming that it is appropriately in the footprint of the Plan at all). Such information includes an understanding of the unique role which MBGC plays in San Diego youth golf and in affordable and accessible public golf generally. Because it is the only night lit course in the City, because it also offers disc and foot golf, and because it is the principal practice facility for at least 12 high school golf teams, MBGC is a one-of-a-kind training ground for future golfers and outdoor sports generally. MBGC clearly offers a healthy alternative all year, and especially winter, long to our youth instead of video games, television and other modern distractions. San Diego prides itself as a golf destination for the world and MBGC is a huge part of the pipeline for entry level golfers; there can't be players at Balboa let alone Torrey Pines without learners at a full-service course like MBGC. According to a recent study, golf has become a growth sport among young people; they must play on a full golf course, including par 4 holes (MBGC has four of them), with associated practice facilities, to become proficient at the sport. There simply is no other course of this character and affordability for our youth.

In addition, senior golfers and working people need and value a local, affordable and accessible course to play. MBGC is flat and walkable for seniors unlike most other public courses. And hundreds of working men and women use the course on weekends and after work; it is playable in a couple of hours but still permits the use of every club in a player's bag. Sixty thousand rounds of golf are played there annually, plus another 40,000 users of the driving range. MBGC is a unique and irreplaceable resource to a very broad range of golfers, young, old and in between. I urge you to chat with Robin about the outpouring of youth, seniors and working people who spoke out at our last MGC meeting in September, each pleading to leave MBGC intact. As stated, MBGC is a regional resource with a draw far wider than visitors to Mission Bay itself. Unlike the assumption of some opponents of golf, MBGC is anything but elite.

We also submit that your Committee needs a better understanding of what would be involved in modifying MBGC as currently proposed. In its present form, MBGC is already an environmentally friendly location for migrating and other birdlife with old shrubbery and fresh water. MBGC does not have a mosquito problem as we understand the tidelands there previously did. Also, your Committee should be aware that \$7 million in Golf Enterprise funds are going to be invested in MBGC to replace the irrigation system, the club house and other facilities in 2019. The Golf Division does not plan to wait for the De Anza project to get finalized and funded to implement these repairs, planned years ago and now coming up for prioritization.

The point is that MBGC is not just another piece of De Anza Cove to be carved up to meet the demands of constituencies which became a part of the Plan before the golf community was even aware of the threat to diminish the course. MBGC is one of a kind because its current footprint which enables San Diegans and visitors to learn and practice every aspect of the game. We respect the fact that the Revitalization process might involve some compromise by historic users of De Anza like MBGC but supporters of MBGC simply have not been given a full seat at the table where that discussion has been taking place.

There also has been significant misinformation in the public dialogue about the impact of MBGC on public finances and its role in the Mission Bay Master Plan which, we understand, calls for a percentage of the Plan area to have commercial value to the City. MBGC is operated within the Golf Enterprise Fund which is paying \$450,000 to the general fund in 2017 for essentially rental and reimbursement of City overhead. Every acre taken away from the course will reduce that revenue stream and, in fact, increase City costs if land is reallocated to the Parks & Recreation Department (which spends \$14,180 per acre to operate other recreational facilities in the City). Yes, MBGC is operated by the Golf Division at a loss to the Fund, but this is a public recreational service. No one seems to expect that City basketball courts, softball fields or other public recreational facilities should be profitable but, in fact, MBGC is a profit center to the City's general budget thanks to the Golf Enterprise system.

In conclusion, the project's City staff have been politely receptive to public golf input, and Subcommittee workshops have given lip service to listening to the MBGC story, but the Subcommittee process became flawed once MBGC was included in the Plan area and direct participation by the public's educated golfing community was not incorporated into the decision-making process. Other interests have been favored from the outset and we have only just awakened to this injustice. We were going to request that your Committee take a step back and postpone the November 7th meeting until corrective action can be taken. However, you have assured me that November 7 is another information-gathering session at which neither of the pending proposals will be adopted. Our representatives will attend with that expectation and the hope that better involvement by the golfing community occurs going forward, unless of course it develops that MBGC was inappropriately included in the Plan in the first instance.

I understand that there may be aspects of our beliefs which might be misinformed because we have been in the dark until recently. I welcome the opportunity to clear the air if so and come to a mutually satisfactory understanding of the situation. Thank you for your consideration of our requests.

Very truly yours,

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Chair, Municipal Golf Committee
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cc: Mayor Kevin Faulkner
Herman Parker, Park & Recreation Department
Lori Zapf, City Councilwoman
Barbara Bry, City Councilwoman
Scott Sherman, City Councilman
Robin Shifflet, Planning Department
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