

From: Jan Hemming <hemmingjan@gmail.com>

Sent: Thursday, January 25, 2024 9:05 AM

To: Mayor <mayor@slcgov.com>

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Subject: (EXTERNAL) Re: Meeting with Yalecrest Neighborhood Council re: U baseball stadium

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Mayor Mendenhall: One correction to my previous email. The city owns Smith's Ballpark and the LHM Company has a lease agreement. This certainly affects the dynamics of the situation but it may give the city more leverage to explore creative ways to address these baseball-related impacts on two neighborhood communities.

Jan

On Jan 24, 2024, at 5:34 PM, Jan Hemming <hemmingjan@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Mayor Mendenhall: The Yalecrest Neighborhood Council is appreciative of your emphasis on public parks and their place and necessity in the fabric of a healthy city. We commend you for your vision to promote and win approval for the \$85 million GO bond that will fund new parks and rehabilitate older ones.

We are especially appreciative of your firm stance — on at least three previous occasions — to decline requests from the University of Utah to lease, sell, gift or transfer land in Sunnyside Park to the U for their use as part of a new, proposed collegiate baseball stadium.

However, it has come to our attention that the University of Utah will pay the city \$4.2 million to lease a sizable portion of Sunnyside Park property for a new baseball stadium. We understand the land deal is imminent. If approved, the public will lose precious open space in the park — a major existing baseball field, a lacrosse field, mature trees and portions of an existing soccer field. When not in use by athletic teams, these spaces are popular places for dog walkers, runners, casual park visitors, informal sporting organizations, and all who cherish our diminishing green spaces on the East Side.

We vehemently oppose this land transaction.

- It contradicts the intent and spirit of the East Bench Master Plan.
- It ignores community and public opinion.
- It breaks a promise the U gave the Yalecrest Neighborhood Council in 2018 that it would never build a baseball stadium on the baseball practice field property.
- It dismisses the reality of thousands of students who will occupy new housing units along Sunnyside Avenue (some built; some under construction) with pent-up needs to use Open Space in Sunnyside Park.
- It dismisses the fact that the proposed collegiate baseball stadium doesn't fit the small practice field and *should never be located there*. The alternative to this land transaction is a monster 35-40 foot wall in left field which we've heard that even Layton Construction company thinks is ill-advised from an engineering standpoint.
- It violates Salt Lake City Code 21A that relates to Open Spaces, specifically, 2.90.070 (Removal of lands from Open Space inventory) which requires the mayor to "explain why the proposed sale or transfer is in the best interests of the city" in writing; "hold a public hearing before the mayor and the City Council;" "provide adequate public notice of the proposed sale or transfer;" provide a myriad of public notifications through mailers to nearby property owners, published declarations, and public signs;" **and prevents the sale or transfer of public lands prior to the six month period following a public hearing.**

We respectfully ask the city to adhere to its own laws governing open space transactions.

We also respectfully ask the city to postpone any deal with the university until:

1. Immediate disclosure of the proposed land deal — in the spirit of government transparency.
2. A meeting with the city, impacted neighborhood councils and interested community residents.
3. A transparent public engagement process.
4. Compliance with all city codes pertaining to the sale or transfer of public Open Space land, which includes a public hearing and a six month waiting period.

With recent news that the Oakland As is interested in using the new professional baseball stadium in Daybreak under construction by the Larry H. Miller Company — which owns Smith's Ballpark where the U has played baseball for years — it seems prudent to pump the brakes on any imminent transaction. This could lead to the Salt Lake Bees and University of Utah having use of Smith's Ballpark for three more years — and give the U additional time to find a more suitable location. In other words, a win-win.

This is a time sensitive and urgent matter. Please let us know when you would be able to meet with us along with several concerned community councils and affected residents.

Respectfully,

Janet (Jan) Hemming
Chair
Yalecrest Neighborhood Council

CC:

Amy Hawkins, Chair, Ballpark Community Council

Anthony Wright and David Leta, Chair and Vice Chair, East Bench Community Council

Esther Hunter, Chair, East Central Community Council

Ian Arnold, Chair, Wasatch Hollow Community Council

Ellen Reddick, Chair, Bonneville Hills Community Council

Kimball Young, Chair, Foothill-Sunnyside Community Council

Shelby Herrod, Chair, Sunnyside East Association

Mary O'Connell, Friends of Sunnyside Park

Robin Carbaugh, Lynn Pershing and Jim Webster, former YNC chairs