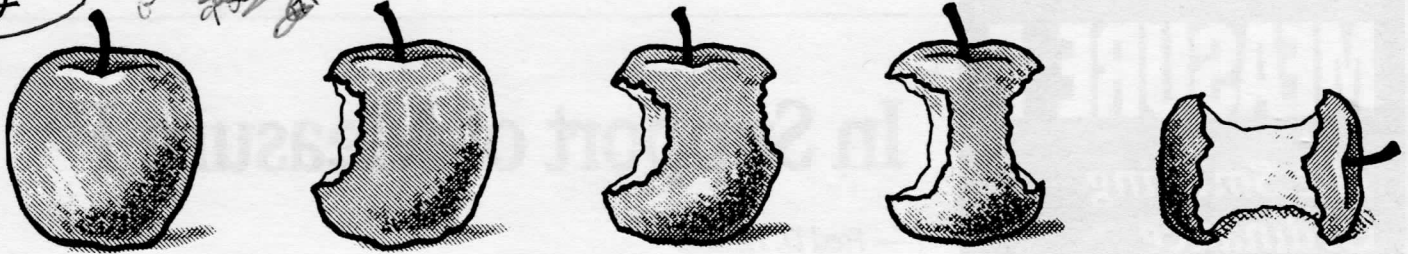


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SEBASTOPOL TOMORROW

June 1992

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Staff Report

Laguna Park Plan Controversy

Sebastopol's lack of park land is provoking confrontation between supporters of Little League baseball and supporters of the new Laguna Park.

At the May 6th public hearing before the Parks and Recreation Commission we learned that the city has *half* the State recommended park land for a city of our size. Clearly Sebastopol needs more park land for active and passive uses. With the 1200 kids involved in Sebastopol Little League, it is increasingly difficult to schedule games, especially for the Senior League players, 13-18 years-of-age.

Little League has long counted on adding a new Senior ball field in the area now planned as the educational gateway to the Laguna Park. League officials feel that since 1986 the city has promised the site for their new Senior field. At that time, two new fields were constructed at the site of the old city dump. Concentrating their resources (\$100,000) and volunteer labor on the difficult and costly rehabilitation of the dump site forced the League to postpone the Senior field until new funds were raised. With Clahan Park completed and additional money raised, work on the Senior field is ready to begin.

Speakers for Little League emphasized that they support the Laguna Plan, but they feel the new ball field site can be accommodated in the design.

Laguna Park Plan supporters (including the Sierra Club, the Native Plant Society and Fish and Game) stressed the unique character and location of the land in question as a gateway to the Laguna.

This upland area is designed to include a small amphitheater facing demonstration ponds, and is the starting point for a network of trails (including handicapped accessible trails) leading into the Laguna. The Laguna Park has the potential to be an educational resource for the entire

community. Just as the Little League needs more ball fields, supporters feel that students (of all ages) need environmental learning sites. The few nearby sites available for environmental education are often booked seven days per week.

The environmentalists feel the amphitheater and trail heads could be even more extensive but for the lack of space. They say the Plan is already a compromise.

Plan supporters also emphasize support for more ball fields, but wish to preserve the Laguna area for the educational activities which fit uniquely at that location.

Following the May 6th meeting, Sebastopol Tomorrow invited Mindy Marshall (L. League), David Turchin (Parks & Rec), Cindy Ketelsen (Design Review) and Howard Levy (Planning Commission) to meet with them to learn about the conflict and look for possible solutions.

Mindy Marshall provided background to the League's predicament (explained above), and detailed previous efforts to locate and maintain various fields.

The Turchin Amendment

Commissioner Turchin explained his earlier suggestion that the smaller of the existing Clahan fields be slightly re-oriented and expanded into a Senior field, leaving the amphitheater area of the Laguna as planned. The planning consultants, Hyden & Associates, will present the feasibility of this suggestion at the June 3rd meeting. Little League has identified Pine Crest and Twin Hills Schools as possible sites for the small field. Pine Crest officials have expressed a willingness to share facilities and receive the benefit of League improvements and maintenance on their field.

Replacing the small field would require an additional \$20 - \$30,000 the League doesn't have. Will the community unite to raise the funds if a solution is feasible?

See **TURCHIN AMENDMENT** on Page 4

Downtown Plan Approved

—John Kramer

The City Council approved the plan to reinvigorate the downtown and support local merchants. Councilpersons Hamilton, Magnie and Stewart supported the plan, Councilman Johnson opposed, and Councilman Roventini was absent. In response to the plan, property owners surrounding the proposed plaza are already planning a \$2 million five-plex theater (annual estimated taxes to the city of \$200,000), and renovation of the old Tuttle Drugstore complex.

At the city council meeting all but three speakers supported the plan, including Sebastopol Tomorrow, downtown merchants, and developer Harvey Charnofsky. The Chamber of Commerce urged unanimous adoption of the plan.

Opposing the plan were council candidate Jim Chess and speakers from the "Our Town" organization.

Sebastopol Tomorrow has participated in and supported the planning of this vital project. We are gratified that so many of the original critics have finally come to see the merits of good planning and local economic development. The City owes a note of thanks to the Planning Commission for its unanimous support, and to Councilpersons Hamilton, Magnie and Stewart for their steadfast support—particularly to Councilperson Magnie for articulating the vision of a revitalized downtown.

■ **Laguna Park Public Hearing**
 Wednesday, June 3, 6:30PM
 Brook Haven School Library

■ **General Plan Meeting**
 Saturday, June 13, 10:00AM-NOON
 Pine Crest School Multi-purpose Room