

From Deanna Spehn:

A special meeting of the Open Space Committee, Tierrasanta Community Council and Planning Group and the Tierrasanta Recreation Council will take place on Wednesday, August 7th at 6:30 pm at the Tierrasanta Recreation Center so that members of all 3 groups that would be impacted by the proposed changes to the Serra High School facilities can discuss a potential community response. Relocating the tennis courts and the Upper Field may mean no more joint use of those facilities at Serra.

I don't anticipate votes being taken at this meeting on August 7th. Instead it would be an opportunity to hear from the 3 community groups exactly how the changes would affect league play and league practices etc., and the impact to the Open Space budget etc. That would allow us to be better prepared to speak at the School District's September 5th meeting from 6 to 8 pm in the Media Center, Building 400 at Serra where the architect and other key stakeholders will be present to discuss the general design of the school and how the proposed site improvements can best serve the students and community.

Background:

Serra is in the midst of a major upgrade to its facilities. As we know, some of the facilities at Serra are subject to a Joint Use Agreement between the City of San Diego and the School District that benefits our community. It allows community access from 4 pm on during school days and is open to community use during the weekends and holidays. Scheduling of use is handled through the Tierrasanta Recreation Center.

Due to some major changes in the number of sports available for girls through the federal Title IX program, and due to the fact that the Serra gym is already fairly regularly in use for boys sports and other events, the District wants to build a second full sized gym. The District is also considering the construction of a full sized theatre (500 seats).

The District will be starting school later in the morning (the new Healthy Starts program) at some point in the future. New restrooms will be added to the school and the stadium rebuilt to accommodate ADA.

It is my understanding that Serra's joint use field (the upper field) is the only joint use field still under a Joint Use Agreement between the City and the School District. There is a strong possibility that the upper field will be needed by the District and that the joint use agreement will end.

Also, the tennis courts at Serra are under the Joint Use Agreement and our Maintenance Assessment District is responsible for maintenance and repair, etc., of the courts. Where the courts are now is where the new gym will likely be constructed. The new location for the courts has not been finalized but it is "likely" the tennis courts would not be part of a Joint Use Agreement.

Instead, use of any facilities at Serra would be handled by the School District through the District's rental office.

The timing on all these changes is likely to be 1-1/2 years from now. The designs would likely be completed this summer and work would start after the construction of the new classroom building is completed.

The good news is that our students would have full access to a larger variety of sports, enhanced classrooms with all the high tech features other school sites are also getting, and more opportunities for girls to participate in a wider variety of sports. The downside is that the community and several of its youth leagues will lose access to the upper field – or would have to arrange to rent it through the District. Also, additional fencing would be added to the site.

Deanna

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