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05/13/2008 07:56 AM

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cc
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Subject Fw: Skate park



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05/12/2008 03:05 PM

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Subject RE: Skate park

Hi Jordan,

Unfortunately, due to a previous planned appointment I cannot be at tomorrow's public hearing addressing the skatepark issue. I would hope that the information I have included will help you work with decision makers to find a good outcome at tomorrow's BOS discussion on the future of the skatepark. I am aware there are limited resources and time available to work towards the solution. Yet, I think a collaborative effort from the community can make a difference. I feel users of the skatepark as well as youth doing the unacceptable behavior in the area of the skatepark need for the community to find a creative solution to create a safe environment for users and a path to better decision making for youth with unacceptable behavior.

As I offered, I spent time today researching the grant opportunity sent to me last Friday after my recent discussion with William Roby, El Dorado Community Foundation, in concern to the current BOS agenda item. I just had a wonderful conversation with one of the Assistant Directors, Mickey Vuckovich at the Tony Hawk Foundation. I read over the grant opportunity http://www.tonyhawkfoundation.org/grant_application.asp, forward from William. After reading over the grant requirements and confirming my thoughts with Mickey, I have learned the grant opportunity was not designed for the funds to be used to identify solutions for existing parks with problems. Yet, I have included the grant qualification here because I thought it was interesting. I feel our community has had this same perspective as the Tony Hawk Foundation of keeping our park safe and accessible during daylight, 365 days of the year. I know Rotary Club in the beginning engaged youth in the designing of the park. In summary I think our community has listen to youth and taken a very progressive approach to managing our park. That is a positive. I would hope we would look to our youth now to find a solution to the more current situations. At your Park and Recreation Commission meeting a week ago, I was very impressed with the youth that spoke at the meeting, as their comments and ideas were in the same perspective as the Tony Hawk Foundation. I think these youth and others could provide leadership for other youth to help find a constructive solution working with local law enforcement, the Board of Supervisors, the Youth Commission, and other community base organizations. (e.g. Green Valley Church)

The discussion with Mickey confirmed the grants are for preplanning and putting in a park. Yet, after talking to him I did learn some good points to support the effort to keep the park as accessible as possible to youth through a variety of options. Plus our conversation help confirm many of the ideas of youth in our community that have come out of local conversations in the meetings conducted to discuss the skatepark since 2004. I realize our skatepark has faced considerable challenges but again, the challenges are often in the perimeter area due to the youth that congregate there. I think the focus has often been on the population using the park, yet it is not clear the users are the problem. Whereas, it seems the problem is beginning to be identified as youth in the perimeter that are doing unacceptable behavior. That behavior should be addressed, I would hope definitely for the safety of park users/ others in the local area, law enforcement would be involved. I would hope though, consideration would be made to look at how that population could be addressed from a youth development approach to help them change their unacceptable behavior.

I have attached the comments from our conversation. I have cc'd this email to Supervisor Dupray, as the liaison for the YC, and Supervisor Sweeney as he has been one actively involved in finding a solution for the park. I have cc'd Laura Gill, as it is my understanding in talking to Bob Smart, she is actively working with the Board to find a solution too, especially in response to the latest incident happening near the park.

Thanks, for your time and I hope you find this useful.

Carol

GRANT APPLICATION

PLEASE READ THIS PAGE IN ITS ENTIRETY BEFORE COMPLETING THE ONLINE GRANT APPLICATION.

The primary mission of the Tony Hawk Foundation is to promote high-quality, public skateparks in low-income areas throughout the United States. While we realize that not every area can afford to build big, expensive skateparks, we feel strongly that public skateparks should be designed and constructed by experienced contractors. We also believe that local officials should treat public skateparks the same way they treat public basketball courts or tennis courts, meaning that anyone may show up and use them anytime, unsupervised. The foundation primarily considers skatepark projects that:

1. are designed and built by qualified and experienced skatepark contractors.
2. include local skaters in the design process.
3. are in low-income areas, and/or areas with a high population of "at-risk" youth.
4. can demonstrate a strong grassroots commitment to the project, particularly in the form of fund-raising by local skateboarders and other community groups.
5. have a creative mix of street obstacles (rails, funboxes, launch ramps, etc..) and transition/vert terrain (quarterpipes, bowls, snake runs, halfpipes, etc..).
6. don't require skaters or their parents to sign waivers.

7. encourage skaters to look after their own safety and the safety of others without restricting their access to the park or over-regulating their use of it.
8. are open during daylight hours, 365 days a year.
9. don't charge an entrance fee.
10. are in areas that currently have no skateboarding facilities.

SUPPLY VS. DEMAND

As skateparks grow in popularity, the demand for grants from the Tony Hawk Foundation is far exceeding our available resources. We have received as many as 450 applications in a single year, with the vast majority requesting our maximum \$25,000 grant. In other words, the competition for THF funds is stiff, so please don't get your hopes too high. If your proposed skatepark is not located in a low-income area, if you are not able to illustrate strong community and grass-roots support for the project, and if your project does not meet the criteria listed above, you are unlikely to receive a significant



Skatepark M. V. 051208.doc

May 12, 2008

Conversation: Carol Martin, 4-H Youth Development
Mickey Vuckovich, Tony Hawk Foundation

Here are some highlights from our conversation:

- 1) Skate Park is not the cause of the problem, it is a large facility, youth congregate there for various reasons, and it is to the advantage of local law enforcement that youth are in one concentrated area, making it easier for police to watch over youth activity. Thus the skate park can become a tool for law enforcement to monitor youth activity through a "drive by" plan of action.
- 2) A collaborative community approach through a grass root solution is recommended over hiring an outside firm. If I had time I could find the research that shows a local community solution works better than an outside solution. I think Green Valley Church along with other community based organizations (CBO) could facilitate a good youth development solution, with a strong volunteer presence. Also if volunteers just keep a watch, not supervise, but are there to pay attention, demonstrate adults in the community care, then they are not supervising the park, thus the California Skate Park Law protects the city/county from liability.
- 3) Good youth development practice is to have a safe place for youth to spend time. He recommended more time should be vested in encouraging youth participation in the park. Statically, more youth are injured outside of the park when riding on public roads. He shared that 20-50 youth, almost a youth a week during a year reaching the higher statistic, die each year from car-skate board related accidents. He hopes the community could view the skate park as an asset. If safety for youth is important keep the park open and accessible as much as possible.
- 4) On the down side of paying staff. He shared the example; San Diego City has 3 parks with paid staff. The cost of staff is \$380-400,000, a year, the income generated from charging a fee for all three parks is \$75,000 a year. Thus with the current budget crisis through out CA, San Diego is looking to cut the budget for the staffing of parks. This may be something to research, if they do cut the budget, it be interesting to see the effect it has on usage and safety. Of course, this will happen over time.
- 5) According to Mickey, police have identified that the high crime time for youth is the hours of 2:00-6:00 PM. Youth are mostly unsupervised because family members are working. He recommends this is the time to concentrate effort on having someone watch the park.
- 6) <http://www.publicskateparkguide.org/> The Public Skate park Development Guide is focused on preplanning. The most successful parks have been the parks where youth have been actively involved in the decision making. Though our park is an existing park, one suggestion was to look at the use of the park. What type of park do we have? Does it have elements that attract BMX riders, scooter riders, in-line skaters, etc? Then we can look at this population, many times the users will be older, and engage them in the problem solving too.
- 7) Last point to consider is the issue is not the skatepark itself but the perimeter outside the park. The skaters, as he pointed out, our victims. The park is a community asset. The youth that use the park need protection. Additionally, the users of the park need the tools to be able to protect themselves from the people that do not use the park or perimeter of the park productively. By engaging good youth development practices, and looking at youth coordinators in the community, possibly Public Health Department, schools, University of California Cooperative Extension, community based organizations, etc, a group could organize to teach youth how to solve a problem in their community.