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CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU
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TOMMY WATERS
CHAIR AND PRESIDING OFFICER
DISTRICT 4
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EMAIL: tommy.waters@honolulu.gov

January 25, 2022

TO: The Honorable Laura Thielen
Department of Parks and Recreation

FROM: Chair Tommy Waters

RE: Kahala Community Park and Kalani High School Baseball Program

I appreciate the fact that you have restored the permit to allow Kalani High School to play at Kahala Community Park for this season, as they have for decades, following the introduction of Resolution 22-10 and Bill 5 (2022).

In light of recent correspondence between community stakeholders, Kalani High School, the Oahu Interscholastic Association ("OIA"), and the Department of Parks and Recreation ("DPR"), I feel the need to clarify some points that have been made.

Firstly, DPR has perpetuated an erroneous impression that I am supportive of efforts to restrict Kalani High School's baseball activities at Kahala Community Park, despite my unequivocal denial of this position. In addition to Resolution 22-10 and Bill 5 (2022), which should make my position on this matter abundantly clear, I would also refer you to Request for Investigation and Service Report ("RISR") Request #2021-1266 (Attached as Exhibit A), which DPR seems to be pointing to as some sort of claim of my policy stance.

As you are aware, RISRs are the primary mechanism through which constituent inquiries are transmitted to the City Administration for follow-up and response. In RISR Request #2021-1266, it is abundantly clear that my office was utilizing the RISR for the purpose of relaying a request from a constituent. Due to DPR's claim that this is somehow my position or stance on the issue, I want to make sure it is clear that I do not support denying permits to athletic teams that have utilized the field for decades. I'd also like to present the following question: Councilmembers utilize RISRs as a primary mechanism to transmit constituent concerns to Departments. Is it DPR's stance that any RISR request from a Councilmember is the policy position of that Councilmember?

Secondly, while I know that DPR attempted to offer Koko Head District Park as an alternative site for baseball games, I believe that there is a need to clarify Kalani High School's concerns for

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utilizing that field. In the January 21, 2022 letter (Attached as Exhibit B) that was transmitted to the OIA, but not Kalani High School. In that letter, DPR states:

“Mr. Gregory Van Cantfort, KHS’s Athletic Director, has informed us they do not want to use Koko Head District Park and are cancelling their scheduled JV Baseball game for Saturday, January 22, 2022.”

This seems to imply that the basis for cancelling the game was due to a matter of preference as opposed to other, more critical factors. As a matter of providing clarity on the record, the email that Mr. Van Cantfort, transmitted to Mr. George A LaRosa Jr. of DPR on January 21, 2022, makes it abundantly clear that the concerns are due to health and safety concerns for the players.

Mr. Van Cantfort specifically states the following concerns:

- The pitcher's mound is incredibly worn and does not meet a high school pitcher's mound minimum height standards.
- The infield and outfield are both overgrown so that a baseball cannot roll.
- There is a significant slope between the infield grass and the dirt infield, clearly a tripping hazard for the players.
- There appears to be a sprinkler leak on the infield grass between the 2nd and 3rd base with standing water and a muddy marsh area.
- The entire center field is essentially a swamp with standing water around the sprinkler heads.
- There are tire ruts in the outfield 1-2 inches deep and filled with standing water.
- There are no bleachers for spectators (if we were allowed to have spectators).
- The nearest bathroom is over a quarter a mile away from the dugouts.
- There is no storage area for us to secure our game field equipment.
- The home and visitor bullpens are actually inside the fence line of the field with no protective screen for a pitcher warming up.
- There is no batting cage.

Mr. Van Cantfort further notes that due to health and safety concerns and the pitching mound does not meet the minimum requirements for high school baseball, KHS had to cancel the game for Saturday, January 22nd, 2022.

Finally, I want to thank DPR for expressing its willingness to permit KHS’s baseball games and unmodified practices to return to Kahala Community Park provided that the permittee, OIA, approves the resumption of activities knowing that it will be responsible for any and all damages per the permit Terms and Conditions. I do want to note, however, that since November when the permit was denied, it was made clear that any claims were never covered by the City, but by KHS.

Request for Investigation and Service Report (RISR)**Request #2021-1266****Requestor Information****Date:** 05/12/2021**Requestor:** [REDACTED]**Phone:** 768-5043**Department:** CITY COUNCIL**Unit:** DISTRICT 4**On Behalf Of:** WATERS, THOMAS K**Processed:** 05/12/2021**District:** 4**Constituent:** [REDACTED]**Address:** [REDACTED]**Location:** Kahala

Honolulu, HI 96816

Email: [REDACTED]

Service Requested: Constituent is very concerned about foul balls flying into residential properties around Kahala Community Park (see below). Despite the recent fencing project, constituent says that several homeowners find balls in their yards and believe the fence should have been higher to prevent stray balls from reaching properties and bystanders.

DPR/DDC: Please investigate this matter and provide an update on the fencing project for Kahala Community Park baseball field. Mahalo.

☒ Approved☐ Denied[REDACTED]
Agency Head or Designee

05/12/2021

Date

Referred to Department**Due Date****Action Taken**

Request for Investigation and Service Report (RISR)

Request #2021-1266

PARKS AND RECREATION

05/26/2021 The Kahala Community Park baseball field is located on the corner of Moa Street and Pueo Street. In July 2017, the backstop at KCP was replaced. At this time, there are no upcoming projects for the backstop or fencing at KCP.

On Tuesday, July 13, 2021, Lori Maumalanga, Waialae Complex Supervisor, spoke to Harold Mau of the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) regarding this issue. Below is the information that he gave regarding the baseball field at KCP:

The backstop at KCP is a Standard Type A baseball backstop. When designing with residential homes or parking lots in proximity to the field, the following standard development guidelines are normally used by DDC:

- distance from backstop to parking lot: [REDACTED]
- distance from backstop to park property line: [REDACTED]
- distance to outfield (center) from home plate: [REDACTED] standard active play area, 400 ft. for development

At the Kahala Community Park baseball field:

- distance from backstop to [REDACTED]
- distance from backstop to [REDACTED] in.
- distance to outfield (center) from home plate: [REDACTED]

DDC also advised that the project would not stop balls from reaching adjacent residential properties.

Harold said that they tried different layouts in an effort to make the baseball field "fit". The decision was made between DDC and District I to put the backstop in its original location and that usage would be adjusted because of the size and location of the field.

DPR staff will contact Kalani High School to inform them that due to public safety, their baseball team will no longer be able to utilize the field at KCP.

On October 15, 2021, DDC informed DPR that even with extending all the fence lines that would not stop balls from reaching adjacent residential properties as the field space is too small. At this time, there are no other available fields within District 1 for Kalani High School to utilize.

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS & RECREATION
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

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RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR



LAURA H. THIELEN
DIRECTOR

KEHAULANI PU'U
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

January 21, 2022

VIA FAX AND U.S. MAIL

Mr. Raymond Fujino, CMAA
Executive Director
Oahu Interscholastic Association
c/o Radford High School
4361 Salt Lake Boulevard
Honolulu, Hawaii 96818
Fax No: (808) 421-4395

Dear Mr. Fujino:

The Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) appreciates the Oahu Interscholastic Association (OIA) and the Department of Education's (DOE) continued communication and cooperation to reach an agreement regarding the use of the Kahala Community Park (KCP) baseball field.

DPR has received complaints from neighbors whose homes are in close proximity to the KCP baseball field regarding foul balls, from games played by older youth, damaging their property or almost causing personal injury. Although the backstop was recently repaired, due to the limited size of the park, field location and proximity to neighboring homes, the field is simply not the necessary size to support adult baseball. DPR was unable to construct a permanent backstop of sufficient height to stop high school baseball foul balls in park of this size and location.

After recent complaints, DPR instructed Kalani High School to cease baseball games at the field to protect the neighboring residents. DPR is allowing Kalani High School (KHS) continued use of the KCP baseball field for high school practices with modifications. We worked with our field users at Koko Head District Park, including ILH baseball which uses that field, to schedule that field for all of KHS Jr. Varsity games for the remainder of their season. KHS Principal asked if they could place temporary netting during the games to protect surrounding residences. DPR reached out to DOE Facilities Branch and committed to allow DOE Facilities to design and add improvements to the field to prevent foul balls from hitting neighboring properties in order to allow games to safely resume. We have met with DOE Facilities to discuss options, and have additional meetings scheduled with them.

EXHIBIT B

Mr. Raymond Fujino, CMAA
January 21, 2022
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As of January 20, 2022, Mr. Gregory Van Cantford, KHS's Athletic Director has informed us they do not want to use Koko Head District Park and are cancelling their scheduled JV Baseball game for Saturday, January 22, 2022. They are asking that we allow them to resume their permit activities at KCP baseball field.

As all of our communications to this point have been with the KHS's Principal and Athletic Director, we feel it necessary to additionally communicate with the OIA directly, as you are the entity who applied for the permit and is bound by its terms and conditions, which include:

Damages. A) Except for public assemblies, permittee shall be liable for loss, damage or injury to persons or property resulting from permittee's use of the park or park facility under such permit, as well as any breach of City regulations or ordinances, to the person or persons suffering such loss, damage, or injury, and to the City in the event the City becomes liable for such loss, damage or injury. Any and all damage to the park and/or park facilities must be fully and completely restored within 7 days after the end of the permitted event.

DPR is willing to permit KHS baseball games and unmodified practices to return to KCP provided that the permittee, OIA, approves the resumption of activities knowing that it will be responsible for any and all damages per the permit Terms and Conditions.

DPR continues to be willing to work with the DOE and/or OIA on improvements those organizations fund which can reduce damages or injury to surrounding properties or people from the permitted activities.

Please inform us in writing if you approve the resumption of the permitted activities under the Terms and Conditions of the existing permit. We look forward to hearing back from you. Should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at (808) 768-3001.

Sincerely,



Laura H. Thielen
Director

LHT:pe

cc: Keith Hayashi, Interim DOE Superintendent
Chair Tommy Waters, Honolulu City Council