

From: [scmaclean](#)
To: [Mary Gourley](#)
Subject: From Sebastopol Citizen: Susan MacLean
Date: Tuesday, February 01, 2022 8:58:45 AM

In reference to the Ives Park issue: for the Council Members.

I live near Ives Park and frequently walk there, alone, with my dogs, with friends. I have often thought how much more the park, with its creek, could offer. The plan to return the creek to a more natural path, eliminating all the dangerous concrete, would offer opportunities for enjoyment not only for walkers and picnickers, but for the schools nearby with science classes. Studying nature within walking distance is a great opportunity. I see kids hopping over the fence to try and reach the creek and worry about their safety with all the concrete to fall off of and on to. I caution them to stay outside the fence, but the call of the creek is overwhelming. If the creek were more naturalized it would undo the need for all the restricting concrete and sluice gate structure, a favorite of small children to hop on and fall off of.

I am old enough to remember when there was a pond with ducks before the fence went up. That whole central area is now wasted. What a shame.

As to the ball field, it is definitely a beautiful field. My son played on it. The Little League group maintains it beautifully. It is an area fenced off from use for anyone else. People in my neighborhood help keep it so pristine. I walk in all seasons, at different times of day. I have seen it in use about 10% of the time. It is used seasonally and at limited times of day. I understand the attachment and feelings this "Field of Dreams" inspires in folks who grew up with it. I would like to see that feeling inspired in more people about a park they can use and a natural stream they can see and learn from. While there are other ball fields the league can use, there is nothing like the opportunities Ives park offers for all, not just ball players.

It would be great to see the park opened up for more varied activities. I miss the music, the plays, the events that we used to have. Some have shut down for Covid, but some have moved to places, like the Barlow, that allow bigger audience space and more room for vendors who help sponsor the events. All would benefit from a bigger event space, including the Apple blossom festival.

I hope the smaller space with the stage we now have would remain as well. Currently it and the grass area near the playground are the areas most in use. I know grass is a maintenance and water issue, but for many it is the only grassy area available for playing, sitting, chatting in the neighborhood. Lots of young people come there after school to sit and chat in the areas by the stage and the flagpole, and the grass area by the playground is often used by families with smaller children. The current stage area and adjoining grass area always has people enjoying it at all times of day. It is a lovely area with mature redwoods and a sunny lawn. There are always people at the picnic tables and the lawn.

I can't conclude without mentioning the dog walkers. There are always walkers in the park, with or without dogs. This is the only accessible grass area for dog walkers in the area. Everything else is private or school property and dogs are not welcome. For the most part the dog walkers are extremely polite with people and other dogs, and pick up after their dogs. Whatever time I go, I see people walking their dogs. I hope the plans include the awareness that dogs like the park, too. Currently all grassy areas other than the lawns by the stage, the

flagpole and the playground are mainly burr clover and storksbill, green briefly and unusable when the burrs and little corkscrew seed pods imbed themselves into dog feet and ears. This is especially true of the area where the new sculpture pads went in. I hope there will not be a diminishing of lawn areas. I can't really tell by the plans posted.

Good luck tonight with your meeting. I know you will hear from many on this issue.

Sent from my Galaxy Tab® S2