

**From:** [Heather L. Hillman Mutz](#)  
**To:** [City Council](#)  
**Subject:** Of course you should save Polley Field!  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 01, 2022 12:37:02 AM

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Dear Sebastopol City Council,

Never in a million years did I think I would have to write this letter. I have lived in Sebastopol for 10 years and our 3 boys have played baseball for the last 5 years. For one of those years, we took one of our kids over to El Molino's Little League. We love the good people of El Molino dearly! And they put their hearts and souls into their baseball program. But the experience highlighted for us what a treasure Polley Field is. It is probably the most beautiful, personable and "finished" looking ball park in the entire county! Nothing else holds a candle to it. And with all due respect, Clahan Field feels far-flung, disconnected, barren, and ugly. Polley Field feels like it's where a baseball field ought to be: in the center of the hum of a family-oriented city like Sebastopol.

I've looked at your possible plans, paying particular attention to Plan B vs Plan C. I am a huge fan of compromise, including something for everyone. Plan C has the most event space but Plan B has a great amount of event space, while allowing for Polley Field to co-exist there! Plan C has a dog park - but our dog trainer told us that dog parks are terrible places for dogs! It's very stressful for them to have to negotiate interactions with multiple unfamiliar dogs, even though people think it's all cute and good fun to watch the dogs mill around. If someone REALLY wants to take their dog to a dog park, Ragle Park has a dog park, so nearby! Why would we need two of those in close proximity? Isn't it enough that people would continue to be welcome to walk their dogs through Ives Park? "Fairy Tale Forest" . . . I have a Masters in City Planning and I am HIGHLY suspicious of elements in a plan that sound that much like Disneyland. If we are trying to increase the natural wonder of Ives Park for the children of our community, then put that intent into the entire park, not some contrived little section called the "Fairy Tale Forest". You are already making Ives more wonder-ful by restoring the creek, making it more beautiful, natural, and more accessible to park visitors. It's going to look great! Let the magical creek speak for itself as well as the greater number of redwoods you will be preserving with Plan B and any other enhanced landscaping you can do in Plan B. If families want a REAL fairytale forest, they oughta hop on a bus or drive out to Ragle Park and hike the trails there; THAT's what kids want! THAT's where Mother Nature's Broadway show is on full display. I don't think we can make Ives Park into a national park nor Disneyland and we shouldn't try. Let's make it a gorgeous salad of mixed uses!

Imagine this: a Saturday afternoon baseball game is winding down over at Polley. The families then wander over to enjoy whatever musical event is happening at the event space. And/or a family shows up early for the event happening that evening and ends up catching the end of a baseball game. One or two of the kids have never seen baseball in person before and THAT's what sparks their excitement to sign up for the next Little League season! Or a family goes to the park so one child can play baseball while another child gets to go swimming or play at the playground with their mom or dad. The combinations are endless! The point being that Ives is such a great hub of multiple activities; let's not amputate baseball from the synergistic happy-family dynamics happening there! We'll want a baseball field there more than ever, after you do those great renovations.

And I need to add:

Baseball is so much more than a bunch of cute kids playing a game. It's the volunteerism that goes into the coaching, scoring and running of the snack shack. It's my boys experiencing their Dad in his element, sharing his love of sports with them and the pride they feel, when he's giving so much of his time to support one of their passions. It's the countless conversations that parents have with other parents in the bleachers, sharing funny stories, advice on a good plumber, or commiserating about our latest pandemic challenges. I have forged so many friendships in the bleachers while my kids and husband are forging friendships on the field. All those little moments weave the fabric of our community, day by day. What kind of message do we send our kids when we wipe out those places that they hold dear? Places where they have crafted treasured memories and forged aspects of their character? I know for my kids it would be traumatic to watch their beloved field disappear - and for what? What could really be worth that injury to our community?

Thank you for reading this lengthy communication. It is hard, maybe impossible to fully describe what Polley Field provides to the lifeblood of our community. Please don't take it away, don't snuff out one of the brightest lights in

the constellation of Sebastopol. Let's compromise and find a way to keep it while hitting most of what you want and need to do elsewhere in Ives Park.

Respectfully,

Heather Mutz  
(she/her)

