

Sebastopol Little League and our community are shocked that there is a serious proposal to remove Polley Field from Ives Park. We believe that there are some major misunderstandings that are possibly driving this proposal. It is unfortunate that Sebastopol Little League was not made aware of this potential plan until January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022 because we could have cleared up these misunderstandings earlier in the process, had there been outreach to us. We would like to address these misunderstandings now as we begin to voice our strong opposition to removing Polley Field from Ives Park.

*1) Not many people get to use and enjoy Polley Field*

- Each year Sebastopol Little League gets 300+ participants, which amounts to roughly half of the population of Sebastopol between the ages of 5 and 14.
- Considering that not all participants play every year (many do), we estimate that 2/3-3/4 of our young people (and their families) participate in Sebastopol Little League at some point in their childhood.
- Polley Field is available for rental and use by anyone in the community, for family baseball or softball games.
- A baseball game at Polley Field adds to the positive atmosphere and energy in the park.
- The adult softball league plays at Polley Field every Fall, because it is the only local field with lights.

*2) There are many other ball fields. Why can't they play somewhere else?*

- Sebastopol Little League maintains and primarily uses three fields, Laguna/Clahan (at the community center) and Polley. Of these, two are Little League dimensions with 60' base paths. These two are Polley Field and Clahan Field.
- Schools do have fields on which they obviously get priority. We already rent at least two of these fields every Spring to use for our younger players, usually Parkside and Sunridge (Pinecrest).
- West County softball uses the ball fields in Ragle Park and at Brookhaven School, as well as Analy's JV field, so those fields are not an option for us.
- There are no other realistic options where our kids can play baseball.
- It would be prohibitively difficult, if not impossible, for Sebastopol Little League to continue to operate if one of our two fields with Little League dimensions is destroyed.

### *3) Polley Field is underutilized*

- Every Spring (March through June) there are children playing baseball at Polley Field between 5:00 and 9:30 every day except Sunday.
- Every Fall (August through October) there are adult coed softball games weekdays between 5:30 and 9:30 and Fall Ball Little League games every Saturday 10:00am-9:30pm. Fall Ball comprises teams from various Santa Rosa Leagues and we consistently receive feedback from parents and players regarding the amazing experience of playing under the lights at Polley Field. It is truly a community treasure.

Polley Field is the crown jewel of Sebastopol Little League and it is where players culminate their Little League experience as 12 year olds. They begin with Tee Ball, then Coach Pitch at the school fields we rent, then move up to Player Pitch divisions at Clahan Field next to the Laguna. From there they move to the Majors division and play at Polley, often under the lights.

Polley Field adds to the park in its current configuration and should be the centerpiece of the new Ives Park. In fact, the original 2013 plan documents call for upgrading the perimeters of the field and visually integrating the ball field and the pool with the whole park.

Sebastopol Little League typically hosts “Friday Night Lights”, where players and families in our younger divisions get to play under the lights at Polley. These are magical experiences for the kids and are a community gathering place each Spring.

Due to the Covid pandemic our 2020 season was canceled, and we were not able to host “Friday Night Lights” last season. We will be resuming these community events as conditions and county health directives allow.

It is possible that the canceled season and lack of normal snack shack operations last season may have created the impression that Polley Field is underutilized. In “normal” times there are baseball or softball activities between 4:30 and 9:30 every day but Sunday throughout Spring and Fall. Polley Field has been a well-utilized resource and community treasure for generations.

We are fully supportive of the Ives Park renovation project and restoration of Calder Creek. We also feel that keeping Polley Field is compatible with that project. Polley Field is a community gathering place that should be treasured as the jewel that it is. Loss of

this amazing asset would be to our city's detriment. It is our sincere hope that with this input from us and our community we are able to put the Ives Park renovation project back on track, and that current and future generations of our children are able to play baseball at Polley Field.