

August 5, 2013

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Lemoore City Council
119 Fox Street
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Dear Council member



Recently I sent the attached document explaining the historical development of the Lemoore Union High School District pool to both the Hanford paper and the Lemoore Leader. I have provided the letter to you for your review and consideration. It is my understanding that Mayor Sigel demanded swim times adjusted for High School athletes in order to provide a group he is affiliated with to use the High School pool. To my knowledge this is the first time such demands have been made by a City Council member.

After reading the attached letter it should become clear that the High School pool constructed in 1990-91 is not a "community pool" and was paid for through the issuance of approved District bond funds. In fact you should know that the High School District does not have the authority to request a bond election for a City or community use project. District's can enter into a joint use agreement where the cost of a particular project can be share. The State Office of Public School Construction calls the arrangement a "Joint Use Project".

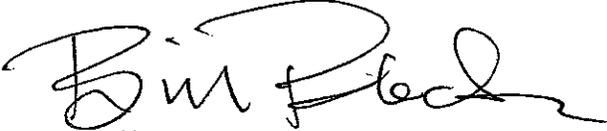
Over the years the LUHSD and the City have shared facilities they own, when it was in the best interests for each entity. Examples are the use of the High School pool during summer months by the City and the City golf facility during High School golf seasons. But for many years the burden of providing recreation facilities were left to the local School Districts.

The development of the youth complex at 19th and Cinnamon helped decrease the over-use of Elementary grounds. The High School still provides access for Youth Football and Babe Ruth programs as well as Swim, track, and youth basketball. Because State school funds are earmarked for District educational purposes the costs associated with up-keep and maintenance of facilities becomes more difficult each year.

I would like you to know that I do not represent the High School District or any of the area School Districts. The information contained in this communication is to help you form a historical and legal understanding of how school facilities are funded.

I am sure you recognize that our community is again growing and in need of additional recreation facilities. A community pool would be a fine addition and may be accomplished on land you own at the old Candle Wick Plant. The High School pool is now 23 years old and might have another 20+ years left before needed replacement. The community could also use a gymnasium and here again the small gym was constructed 57 years ago and the Event Center is now 11 years old. School facilities, just like City facilities don't last forever. The economy seems to be recovering and now might be the time to begin planning for the future.

Sincerely



Bill Black

We have some absolutely marvelous individuals in Lemoore. People who give of their time and money to insure that Lemoore area youngsters are provided opportunities to expand horizons, learn the importance being part of a team, and keep a young body and mind busy.

Hundreds of willing volunteers give hour after hour coaching teams, preparing facilities, providing uniforms, preparing snacks, or officiating activities. We also have some outstanding facilities because concerned citizens have stepped to the plate to create them.

When I first came to the community in 1973, I was amazed at the opportunities available to youngsters and all offered by involved, dedicated, and caring community members. We have an outstanding soccer and softball complex because concerned volunteers build a first class facility. We have expanded soccer and youth football facilities at the high school, because volunteers stepped to the plate and made it happen. The baseball parents have worked long and hard to provide a safe and attractive ballpark. These success stories can be repeated over and over again.

Rich Rhoads has added and expanded wonderful youth golf programs at our local course. On top of all these activities the 4-H community offers tons of opportunities for youngsters to learn and grow into productive, knowledgeable citizens.

But the basic problem is still with us, a lack of quality facilities, especially since our community has continued to grow. Recently I read the Hanford Sentinel article where some swim coaches and parents approached the Lemoore City Council in support of more swim time. I thought it might be time to provide some factual history regarding the development and construction of the High School pool.

I provide the following background regarding the history and construction of the High School pool in hopes that positive energies are refocused on correcting the lack of recreational facilities.

In 1988 the only pool in the community was constructed in 1940 by the High School District to accommodate swimming programs for District students. After 48 years of service the pool finally succumbed and was declared not suitable for current swim and diving standards. Realizing that the community could benefit from a safe and accessible community swim complex the Superintendent entered into discussions with both the City

Manager and President of West Hills College in 1988. Sharing the cost of construction, as well as operational costs would be a win for the community as a whole. District property, approximately where the Event Center now stands, was offered as the complex site. The idea was to create a complex that would house a general recreational pool, wading pool for toddlers, a competition pool for swimming, water polo, and competitive diving. After much hard work by the District, the end result of those discussions was the non-participation by the College and the City stating they did not want the responsibility of a swimming pool.

Left on their own the High School District proceeded to make plans to replace the original pool for District student use. We were the only school in the league that did not field water Polo teams, but had an active parent group requesting the new sport. A District group of parents' coaches, students, and administrators participated in the planning and development of a competitive pool complex. I say competitive because the depth requirement for water polo and swimming are deeper than a general use pool. The only way to finance the effort was to ask the community to help support the construction through a School District Bond election. The bond passed thanks to the community and the effort of some dedicated parents and staff. For about 3 years the students were transported to the base for swim practice and sometimes Hanford until the pool was opened in 1991. Although not fully suitable for recreational use the pool was offered to the city if they would pay the cost of maintaining the pool during the summer months and when not in use by organized high school programs.

The following comments are mine and mine alone and in no way represent any position by the Lemoore Union High School Board or their Administration. In 1988 the city was offered an opportunity to create a community swim complex on District owned land but refused the opportunity. The community's youth population has continued to grow with only token recreational facility development by the City of Lemoore. The basic fact is there are not enough recreational facilities to accommodate the multitude of organized youth activities in our community. If the City had stepped up in 1988 maybe there might have been a nice community swim complex for everyone to share. The High School pool is now 23 years and it is time for the City of Lemoore to put their energies in to creating facilities and not dodging the responsibilities. The City of Hanford has had a community pool since the 1940s, and continues until today to provide a public swimming pool. Lemoore should be able to do the same.

Bill Black