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August 31, 2010

RE: Carson City Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey

This information is submitted in response to the Carson City Board of Supervisors Agenda Item 11 for the September 2, 2010 meeting. Since I may be unable to attend this meeting due to my work schedule, I request that this be read into the record, and my written comments be made a part of the minutes of the meeting.

I reviewed the results of the survey and the recommendation by Mr. Moellendorf which indicates that the priority should be an indoor facility focused toward teen activities including basketball and volleyball.

While I appreciate the efforts of Mr. Moellendorf and the Parks and Recreation Department, I believe this needs assessment lacks critical information. Specifically, the number and types of existing recreational facilities in the community. Without knowing the number of existing indoor and outdoor basketball courts, tennis courts, walking facilities, etc, how can a determination be made as to what is truly needed?

For the last several years, there have been no commercially available racquetball courts in Carson City. The local gyms removed them or won't invest in them because they can squeeze a dozen or more machines into the same space one racquetball court would occupy.

Racquetball is a sport enjoyed by people of all ages, including teenagers. There are a large number of players in Carson City who have stopped playing, or are forced to travel to Reno to play. I was one of those who used to travel to Reno to play, but now don't play at all because of the travel costs. I know a great number of other players who feel the same way.

The survey conducted in 2005 by the Parks and Recreation Department substantiated the need for racquetball courts, and this survey shows again that there is still a need for racquetball courts in Carson City. However, comments regarding any racquetball courts in a community recreational facility are absent from the recommendation by the Parks Department.

I would like to point out that a high school sized basketball court (playing area of 84' X 50') takes up 4,200 square feet. One racquetball court (20' X 40') takes up 800 square feet. 5 racquetball courts could exist in the space of one basketball court. Considering only 10 basketball players can play on a court (5 per team) and racquetball may includes singles (2 players) or doubles (4 players), 5 racquetball courts can accommodate twice as many players than a basketball court will. Of note, racquetball courts can also be set-up for volleyball and wallyball (a variation of volleyball).

Because of the current lack of racquetball facilities, I believe that any comprehensive recreational facility in Carson City must include at least four racquetball courts. I fear, however, that the Parks and Recreation department is stuck on building a “gym” for more basketball, instead of providing other important amenities that are absent from our community.

As a result, I respectfully request that instead of accepting this survey and recommendation by the Parks Department, that the Board of Supervisors request additional information to include the number of existing indoor and outdoor recreational facilities that are currently available in Carson City, including those facilities in the schools that were constructed using tax dollars.

An alternate request would be that the Board direct the Parks and Recreation Department to include at least four racquetball courts in any facility design it intends to have drafted.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and please feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding this request.

Sincerely,

David M. Smith