

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 27, 2007

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Park Advocates to Rally For Recreation Equity At City Hall

Neighborhood Parks Council calls on recreation supporters to demand the conversion of underutilized public golf courses to new recreational uses

DATE: THURSDAY, JUNE 28TH
WHERE: STEPS OF CITY HALL
WHEN: 9:15 AM
WHY: RALLY FOR HIGH PRIORITY PUBLIC RECREATION
WHO: PROPONENTS OF EQUITABLE ACCESS TO PUBLIC LAND FOR RECREATION

San Francisco, CA—Neighborhood Parks Council, the Coalition for Equitable Use of Open Space, Supervisor Mirkarimi, the Sierra Club and other park and recreation advocates will rally on the Van Ness steps of City Hall, on Thursday, June 28th, at 9:15 AM, prior to the Board of Supervisor's Budget and Finance Committee Meeting at 10 AM. The purpose of the rally is to challenge the Recreation and Park Department's (RPD) proposal to release an RFP (Request for Proposals) to privatize the management of 5 of its 6 golf courses (the 6th is already under private contract). The golf program has been losing money for two years. At Thursday's 10 AM special meeting, the Board of Supervisors' Budget and Finance Committee will vote on whether to pass a Proposition J (providing authorization for privatizing public service) to lease the golf courses.

San Francisco has more golf per capita than any of 25 major metropolitan areas in America according to the Center for Park Excellence – 9 courses in only 49 square miles, encompassing more than 700 acres of public land. Of those 9 courses, 7 are public. In contrast, soccer players for example have only 25 acres of fields in San Francisco, leaving 198 teams without weekly practice space.

A public survey conducted three years ago indicated that golf is a low priority for the people of San Francisco, while more hiking trails, soccer fields, and community gardens are highly desired by the public. The rally seeks to send a message to City Hall that our public land must provide a diverse offering of recreation choices that serve the needs of 21st century San Franciscans.

The Coalition supports affordable municipal golf, but believes that the needs of diverse recreation users must also be taken into account. The Coalition calls for a professional study that analyzes other recreational uses of the golf land, as well as calculates environmental costs of golf, such as the high water use and the effect on endangered species at Sharp Park.

About the Coalition For the Equitable Use of Open Space

NPC organized a coalition of groups and individuals as the "Coalition for The Equitable Use of Open Space" in 2007 to provide voice to the needs of other recreational users. The Coalition includes representatives from Golden Gate Women's Soccer League, Sierra Club, dog advocates, SF Disc Golf, SF Ultimate League, union supporters, and other park and recreation supporters.

About Neighborhood Parks Council

Neighborhood Parks Council (NPC) advocates for a superior, equitable and sustainable park and recreation system in San Francisco. NPC provides leadership and support to park users through community-driven stewardship, education, planning and research. NPC is a coalition of community-based park groups actively involved in improving neighborhood parks throughout San Francisco. Since 1996, NPC has grown to include 120+ park groups and 4,000 park volunteers, establishing itself as San Francisco's premier park advocacy group.