

May 20, 2024

To: Osborne, Jenelle (Mayor City of Lompoc); Cordova, Gilda; Vega, Victor; Starbuck, Dirk; Ball, Jeremy

Cc: Haddon, Stacey; Jeff Malawy, Dean Albro

From: David Paschke

**Subject: Protest to Ballot Measure to Discontinue the Use of the Ken Adam Park site as a Public Park**

Madam Mayor and City Council.

It is not often that I am compelled to utilize my 1<sup>st</sup> amendment rights, but alas I am doing so in this letter to PROTEST any discontinuance of use of the Ken Adams City of Lompoc Public Park.

Unfortunately, I will not be able to attend the hearing on May 21, 2024. However, through this letter, I am voicing my protest to placing the discontinuance of Ken Adam Park on the ballot this November of 2024 or anytime in the future. I will outline below just some of the reasons you, as our elected officials, are urged to do the right thing for the people who have paid for this public park for generations by way of our property taxes, impact fees, donations, sweat equity, and our City's budget as a whole.

To begin, open space and recreation locations are essential to a healthy community. The citizens of Lompoc and our greater Lompoc Valley as well as visitors enjoy hiking, music festivals, family gatherings, special events, BBQs and camping just to name a few occurring at Ken Adam (Public) Park. This council and councils before you have many times complained that there is not enough to do in our community for the citizens young and old. This park provides access to fill that need for recreation, and ultimately the health and well-being of those that recreate or even pass by to admire the majestic oak trees and rolling open space hills located within the City limits.

The motivation to remove a 42-acre park from the Lompoc Valley's citizens and give it away to a for profit private entity astounds me. Before you argue that the ballot measure includes negotiations to sell the land to the Pale Blue Dot or organization to be determined, let me remind you that you cannot place a price on parkland, open space, access to recreation, and our citizen's desires both current and yet to be born to enjoy what the tax payers have paid for to recreate for many generations. Follow the money! This public park was established for the people of Lompoc, not for a private organization to come to our elected officials with fancy

videos to show their “vision” to take away our freedom to recreate. Shall we also remind ourselves that they (Pale Blue Dot) have failed numerous times to meet established deadlines, show adequate funding, and have already been granted multiple extensions at their requests? Facts matter.

In college, while taking recreation courses, we were always reminded that the intent of parks and recreation is for the wellness of the people of the community. Never once in my coursework was I taught how to negotiate and give away land and land rights that belong to the taxpayers. The reason is now crystal clear to me, it is because it is simply wrong to do so.

I am now old enough to be a witness to the last time the City of Lompoc gave away the taxpayer’s land, to what is not the Allan Hancock College Lompoc Campus adjacent to Ken Adams Park. Please remind the public of all of the terms, or shall I say lack of terms. The land where the current college sits was “gifted” as in no exchange of funds. In that, the City of Lompoc relinquished all land rights just as in a real estate transaction when you sell a home or land. Why is this important? Let me share one fact that you as a council need to be reminded of, and the public needs to hear: our Lompoc Fire Department must budget \$8,000 dollars of taxpayer money annually to train at the fire drill tower and use the facility at AHC. In plain text, TAXPAYERS are paying to use the land annually that was given away to Allan Hancock College from the City of Lompoc! Follow the money.

I urge you to reject ANY ballot measure that would give away our 42-acre Ken Adams Park to be developed in any manner by a private company. We would not place either of our two City of Lompoc single family home deeds on the line that this “Space Center” would come to ANY fruition at all. Would you and your family do so? Why is it that we the people need to give away the park for any price when there is open land adjacent to the park? If this private Pale Blue Dot company really wanted to help our community, they would not ask to take anything from us. If they want to build it, they can find donors to fully fund it, just as we have had to fund our own homes.

Respectfully Submitted,

*/s/ David Paschke*