

BHS Sports Construction News #5

"The Only Unofficial Voice of Sports Parents"

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Derby/Moellering Field Project Faces Delays, Baseball Team Addresses School Board

By *Stephanie Allan,*
Friends of Derby Field

The effort to build a regulation-sized Berkeley High baseball field at Derby & MLK has run into a snag. The City of Berkeley has proposed that the School District pay for new drainage work, mandated by changes in State law that took effect in January, before the project can proceed.

So far, this has cost precious time and delayed the project. Conceived of by the late BHS baseball coach and beloved teacher, Tim Moellering, the Derby St. site was slated for ground breaking this May, to be ready for baseball season in February 2013.

Last Wednesday night, members of the Jackets baseball team in uniform, their parents and supporters showed up and spoke before the School Board. They pointed out that our team has not had a home field for decades. They use the field at San Pablo Park, where dogs run on the field and where games are forfeited because of issues with the park's lights.

The team's use of the park also denies the South Berkeley

neighborhood full access to the only recreational space in the area.

The team urged the Board to make sure this project is not delayed.

The problem has two causes: an added curve in Derby St. to accommodate both the Tuesday farmers' market and the baseball diamond, and new state regulations on run-off water treatment. The new State law requires the City to

treat all run-off before it enters the Bay. According to the City's Dept. of Public Works (DPW), these regulations now require construction of a catch-basin at Grant St. and Derby,

DPW has to sign off on a permit to "curve" Derby St., as the District will require a piece of the street, which is City land.

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Déjà vu all over again?

Our student athletes - in football and other sports - have been not been served well by adults in our system with regard to bond measure construction. We have made a lot of progress with the help of our BHS administrators, School Board members and others. A lot remains to be done. Our sole objective is to get fully functional athletic facilities completed on schedule and as promised.

This means:

- Derby Baseball Field/Practice Field by February 2013
- Completed Stadium (looks good for 2012)
- Weight Room and Strength Coach
- New Field Public Address System (also looking good)
- New classroom/gymnasium on schedule in 2014 (Phase III)

Score Board, PA System, other Updates

There is good news on the score board and the new stadium PA system, reported earlier as being in doubt. We have an update on the BHS Site Construction Committee meeting last week, and a couple of clarifications on the weight room, PG&E, and the Stadium alignment ("facing into the Sun") all on Page 2.

Derby Project Delayed

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Because the School District needs a City permit to start construction, some City officials believe that the District should shoulder the cost because "curving" Derby triggers the new drainage regulation. BUSD is already building a new drainage system along Derby from Milvia to MLK as part of the field construction.

The frustration comes from the fact that the City had the District's Derby plan last October. But no action was taken until January.

Apparently, no one was asking why things weren't moving. Thus, sorting out the drainage dispute has endangered the opening of the field for the 2013 baseball season. Plenty of finger pointing going on.

The potential added cost involved would not break the District, parents and field supporters are hoping that the delays in sorting out this mess won't delay opening day by more than a few weeks.

Correction

In our last issue we implied that PG&E was delaying the Stadium project by not installing the main power supply on time. The delay is the result of successive changes to the construction schedule. This is a process with a lot of moving parts! We are very sorry about the misunderstanding!

Score board and sound system update

The coaches met with the architects in the fall of 2010 and picked a new scoreboard and sound system.

1. **It's a new technology that works, and has a proven record.**

Remember our football game at Lincoln-Stockton last year? In their modern, awesome facility? Well, they have this all-in-one system, and it sounded great!

2. **The manufacturer visited Berkeley High last week and put on a demonstration.** Result? All our concerns: public safety, communications capability during events, noise to neighbors, impact on players on the field, etc., were addressed and put to rest.

3. **The technology actually directs the sound at angles at the stands, and away from the field.** The sound is clear and can be broadcast from handheld mikes on the field as well as from the booth.

Everybody went away from this demo happy, especially Coach Roy Meisner, who spent the last month working on this issue.

Thank you Chief!

Don't Forget: BHS Golf Tournament is May 4 in Tilden Park. For tickets, go to <http://www.berkeleyhighathletics.org/golf-classic>

This event is BHS athletics' main fundraiser, it pays for Freshman sports, which would otherwise not exist. Come out and support our athletes!

"Staring into the Sun" Reconsidered

Last issue we quoted the Stadium architects to the effect that our stands now face west due to esthetic concerns. Maybe so, but if you stand well back of the north end of the field and look south, it becomes evident that there isn't room for a 2200 seat stadium where the old bleachers are located. The field would have to be relocated many yards to the East to make room, requiring demolition of the southwest corner of Donahue Gym!

BHS Site Construction (aka Facilities) Committee Meeting Report

The Committee, met on Wednesday, March 7. The Stadium project is still on schedule for completion by May 19, but could be delayed until June 4, 8 or 12 due to scheduling issues caused by earlier delays.

Your parents reps suggested that a dedication ceremony be held. We will discuss that at our April meeting. We asked whether the weight room will be temporarily housed in the new stadium building, as previously proposed. No, probably not. The current thinking is placement in the "BOC" room, now the training room, formerly the Athletic Director's office. The VP explained that putting the weight room in designed storage space in the stadium could wreck plans to have system storage installed. Stay tuned on this issue.