



Agenda Item: 9.B
Date of Meeting: February 12, 2024
Department: Planning

STAFF REPORT

To: City Council
From: Ana Budnyk
Subject: **Notice of Exemption for Bishop City Park Athletic Fields Lighting Project**
Prepared On: February 7, 2024
Attachments: Bishop City Park Athletic Fields Lighting Project
Notice of Exemption for Bishop City Park Athletic Fields Lighting Project

Background/History:

The City Planning Department received the application from Little League for installing field lights for baseball fields 2,3, and 4. This infrastructure will be a crucial addition to the regional sporting facilities, extending their operational hours into the evenings to meet the growing demand for the sports facilities and enhance accessibility for the community.

Notice of Exemption was filed with County Clerk on 12/18/2023, and was posted at Inyo County Courthouse from December 26, 2023 until January 29, 2024. The Notice was also posted on City's website on 12/18/2023.

The City staff received a public comment regarding the proposed project:

" Thank you for returning my call today based on the voicemail I left last week.

Last week I saw that Bishop filed a CEQA Notice of Exemption for an undertaking at the City Park which is to install field lights for baseball fields 2, 3, and 4. One reason I called was because I am not sure which fields these are. Is there a map showing their location in the park? I assume the soccer field along E. Yaney and Hanby is not one of the fields. The City told me at the time when the soccer field was created that it would not be lit at night.

The other reason was to try to figure out why the City thinks this project is exempt from CEQA.

Night lights have impacts and human consequences.

I live in a house "behind" the park on E. Yaney Street. I am pretty sure that field #1 is the one field that currently has lights. In the summer, those lights are extremely bright, and often they stay lit for hours after games are finished. I have seen them stay on well past midnight. Even though the field is a fair distance from my house, the lights are enough for me to read by at home if I wanted to. This is to say, they are too bright, not focused onto the field (but all over the area), and allowed (or programmed) to stay lit far too long. The lights attract many, many bugs and thus also bats. I do not have anything against bugs or bats, but I know that such night lighting can't be good for them. There are also people like me who value dark skies and energy conservation. These are environmental considerations which I think need evaluation prior to the City proceeding with the lighting project.

My hope is that the City might consider changing the existing night lighting to shine down onto the field being lit and design them to turn off at, say, 10 p.m. I am not convinced that 4 fields require night lights. If demand is so great, see about changing game schedules to start earlier and start with thoughtfully lighting maybe just one more field. To have 3 more fields lit up for hours in addition to the existing field will make Bishop visible practically on the moon ... OK at least from Sherwin Grade and possibly Big Pine, and anywhere in the mountains surrounding town where people are camping and trying to view the night sky. This would be a sad way for Bishop to stand out.

I would be happy to see any more information you have about this proposed project."

Analysis/Discussion:

The project qualifies under CEQA exemption Class 1 15301. EXISTING FACILITIES.

The lighting is designed to comply with the backlight, uplight, and glare (BUG) rating. The attached photometric study indicates that light pollution/spillage would be minimized and would effectively be non-existent outside of the park boundaries which qualifies for the exception. The lights will be on the timer and will turn off before 10 pm every day.

Economic Impacts:

n/a

Budget Impacts:

none

Legal Review:

n/a

Recommended Action:

No action, for Council information only.

Approved By: Ana Budnyk/ 02-02-2024

Approved By:

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