

Q & A - Learn the Truth

Citizens Against the Land Swap

Q: Why is this called a “swap” instead of a “sale”?

A: It is not legal for the city to sell recreational land without a vote of the people. A “swap” can be approved by the five member City Council without a public vote. Cowan (HBIA) want to “swap” their 12 acres in the business park for the 12 acre Mif Albright 9 hole golf course, which would be **rezoned residential**.

Q: What is the market value of the 12 acre Mif Albright golf course?

A: Nobody knows! Only one appraisal was made, based on inaccurate data. We are awaiting new appraisals of the value of MIF as rezoned residential. Of course it is valued extremely highly by the many young and old golfers who regularly play there, and by the many people who helped plant hundreds of memorial trees.

Q: Is there an estimate of its value?

A: Yes, we can look at the city land at Boat Works in Alameda. This property is only 9.4 acres vs. 12 acres at the golf course. It is a far less desirable location and has major land clearance and preparation requirements. Despite that, it is generally valued at around \$30 Million.

Q: How does that compare with the Cowan-HBIA offer?

A: Cowan-HBIA is offering \$7.2 million, not remotely close to \$30 million. (plus pay city and school building permit fees and infrastructure needed for 130 houses.) In addition, they would trade the city 12 acres in the business park.

Q: What is the value of the 12 acres in the business park?

A: This is in dispute. We await new appraisals. Cowan(CHBIA) has not been able to sell, lease, or find a use for their land so its value is questionable.

Q: Does the City of Alameda want that land? How would it use it?

A: It is badly located, narrow, and near major flight patterns with loud noise. The city could use it for 2 soccer and 2 little league baseball fields, but the city does not need it. The city owns over 900 acres at the Point and there have been some plans to put new fields there.

Q: If the Council votes for this, what will happen to the Mif-Albright golf course?

A: Housing: 130 houses would be built, some three stories high, built on narrow lots. This population increase would affect TRAFFIC, SCHOOLS, FIRE & POLICE, etc.

Q: Does the city of Alameda owe Cowan/HBIA this recreation land?

A: Absolutely not. This has already been decided by the courts. He is free to apply to build his houses anywhere within the limits of Alameda, including the Point.

Q: Are there any conflicts of interest?

A: Some council members have benefited from contributions from Cowan-related sources. To date, no council member has recused himself from discussing or voting on the swap.