



PRESERVE ROSS VALLEY

Anne Petersen
Kentfield Planning Advisory Board
P.O. Box 304
Kentfield, CA 94914

January 27, 2016

Dear Ms. Petersen:

This is in response to Marin Catholic High School's (MC) 1/14/16 application for stadium lights. As one of the large group of residents in the Greenbrae "bowl" area immediately adjacent to the stadium, I am very concerned about this proposal, and its potential to damage our neighborhood.

Marin Catholic has in general been a good neighbor for more than 60 years. Daytime use of its athletic fields is accepted by our community, including Saturday use. And the school has flourished under the current conditions, both academically and in their athletic endeavors. But now Marin Catholic is seeking to undo these long time friendly relations—solely for its own purposes and benefit. The installation of the lights will significantly change the use of its campus, and night-time use will be fundamentally detrimental to the quality of life in our community.

There are several objections to the proposal that relate to increased traffic, light, noise, and possible environmental damage. We have consulted with various experts to review the studies that have been put forward so far, and our initial analysis suggests that the application is incomplete and requires an initial study, and full CEQA review process.

There is another important basis for objection to this proposal, however, which is the cumulative effect of each of these separate problems. And that very simply is that these issues will combine to transform our neighborhood into something it isn't, against the will of those of us who live here.

Marin Catholic wants to add lights to its field for its own purposes—for which they will be the sole beneficiary—and it is attempting to position this move as an overall benefit to the community. The community will not benefit from these lights, but it will have to suffer the inevitable consequences of an extremely loud and crowded nighttime stadium in our own backyards.

There are hundreds of homes directly within the sound corridors emanating from the MC field, and we have made it very clear as a group that we do not recognize MC's right to transform our neighborhood in this way. If Marin Catholic were truly interested in the concerns of their neighbors, they would realize that the vast majority of homes surrounding the field strongly object to this proposal.

It is relevant to note that this is not the federal government or state of California considering a public project, nor is it the county of Marin or even the local school district. It's Marin Catholic, a private, parochial school located right in the middle of a highly residential area in Marin County. At its most basic level, this presents a very unjust balance which leads to an obvious question: should we seriously consider whether a private school—where nearly 90% of the students do not live in the neighborhood—



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has the right to disrupt the lives of hundreds of its neighbors because it has decided it needs a lighted stadium?

Sound waves tend to propagate more efficiently in cool evening temperatures than during the day, virtually guaranteeing that the roars of the crowd would be inescapable for most of us. The noise would be a permanent and unstoppable intruder in our living rooms and bedrooms, and would become one of the defining characteristics of the neighborhood.

With the exception of Tamales High School in the rural area of western Marin, the only high school in Marin County with a lighted field is San Rafael High School, and their lights (gas lights) were approved in 1959.

The reality is that Marin Catholic's aspirations have outgrown its current location. That in no way should be construed as a reason to allow them to construct four, 80-foot light towers over their football field.

This is our neighborhood. Marin Catholic works here and plays here. We live here. What we want is simple: a quiet and safe environment, consistent with virtually every other community in Marin county (i.e., nothing more than MC officials would seek in their own home neighborhoods).

By proffering the vague and inaccurate notion of the lighted stadium as a community benefit, the application fails to address the above concerns. Please consider this as you develop your advice to the CDA on the application. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim McClellan
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Greenbrae, CA 94904