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September 16, 2013

Mayor William J. Bogaard
Members of the Pasadena City Council
Pasadena City Hall
100 N. Garfield Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91109

Re: Our client - Stewards of Public Land
Lower Arroyo Archery Range Proposal
City Council Agenda Item No. 13

Dear Mayor Bogaard and Council Members:

We write on behalf of Stewards of Public Land (“SOPL”), an organization of Pasadena residents concerned about use of public land resources within the City.

Your September 16, 2013 Council meeting agenda includes item 13, headed “Proposal for Lower Arroyo Archery Range and Deal Points for New Agreement with Pasadena Roving Archers”. I regret that a prior commitment has me out of town, otherwise I would deliver these remarks in person.

The Lower Arroyo Seco is among the most cherished public lands in the City. The governing planning document, the Lower Arroyo Master Plan (“LAMP”), provides that “the Lower Arroyo be restored and preserved as a natural area park.” SOPL urges you to embrace restoration and preservation of the Lower Arroyo as a natural area park as the first and foremost priority as you consider archery use in that area.

The staff report for this agenda item tells only part of the story. The mid-1990s saw a wonderful re-birth of the Lower Arroyo. Re-introduction of the stream beds brought back wildlife and increasing numbers of people who eagerly embraced the Lower Arroyo for jogging, exercising, birding, dog-walking, and horseback riding.

For many years, different users of the Lower Arroyo – walkers, birders, runners, horseback riders, and archers, among others - shared this precious natural resource comfortably, without difficulty or conflict. Regrettably, things have changed recently in disquieting ways. This agenda item comes before you not because things are going well, but because the profile of one of the Lower Arroyo’s traditional user constituencies – the

archers – is changing, both in size and profile, and in that in turn brings about increasing conflict and tension with other categories of users and neighboring property owners.

Dramatic growth in the number of archer users of the Lower Arroyo fuels this conflict and tension. They come from all over Southern California. The profile of archer users traditionally seen in Pasadena is changing. The new face of archery in the Lower Arroyo includes the following:

- Bows and arrows are far more powerful than ever before. Stories of arrows falling on hillsides private property and even taking flight over homes on South San Rafael Avenue are not unusual. One area property known to SOPL has been on the receiving end of more than seventy arrows that have fallen on the property or landed in the swimming pool. Some nearby hillside residents are fearful of using their backyards, rear patios, and other parts of their property for fear of getting hit by arrows.
- The powerful bows and arrows now used are not just amusing recreational playthings. They can be lethal weapons. Is it just a matter of time before a wayward arrow hits someone in the Lower Arroyo vicinity? What then?
- Cultural phenomena such as the Hunger Games movie have fed the increasing appetite for archery.
- Reports by Lower Arroyo trail users tell of another unwelcome trend: a growing number of archers who are demanding, threatening, and otherwise disrespectful, with incidents of yelling on a disturbing upswing. First-hand experience with and even just rumors about that now discourage some long-time walkers from going to the Lower Arroyo.
- The attitude of some archers who now use the Lower Arroyo is further evidenced by such disrespectful behavior there as drinking, smoking, and shooting of arrows even after nightfall, when the range supposedly is closed.

Adequate policing of the area to protect the reasonable expectations of all Lower Arroyo users and neighboring property owners has eluded the City's grasp.

There is no denying the obvious. The City has a problem on its hands. That is why this agenda item is before you.

SOPL welcomes the staff recommendation as a positive step in the right direction. The recommendation does not go nearly far enough, however. More should be done.

1. Limit usage hours in Southern Range to weekends, combined with opening of new range for weekday use in Eaton Canyon near Pasadena Police Firing Range. The source of the problem with the Lower Arroyo archery range: too much demand. Eaton Canyon solves that problem. The Lower Arroyo is too fragile a natural resource to put up with the growing burdens placed upon it by escalating archer use. The Eaton Canyon site would be an ideal alternative. It can be covered for the time being, pending completion of environmental clean-up. Afterward, establishment there of an appropriately-sized range to serve the needs of the archer community on a long-term basis can be explored.

2. Situate targets to eliminate entirely, not just “minimize”, encroachment onto private property. The staff report states (on page 4, fifth paragraph) that “[a]ll targets will be located on public property and situated to enhance safety and *minimize encroachment onto private property*” [emphasis added]. “Minimizing” encroachment onto private property is not good enough; there should be no encroachment onto private property, period. Encroachment happens now because the City has turned a blind eye to the problem. A zero tolerance policy toward encroachment in any amount is essential. If that requires reduction or relocation of targets, then so be it.

3. Tighter monitoring of effectiveness of new license and operating agreement with PRA by limiting the agreement term to two years maximum. The staff proposes (page 6, second full paragraph) the “agreement term . . . as a one-year agreement with four one-year renewable options at the discretion of the City Manager.” That essentially means a five-year agreement if the City Manager so chooses. A shorter term is desirable given the seriousness of the current situation. The Lower Arroyo is too important a natural resource to everyone in Pasadena for the strain posed by archer use to be put on the back burner for the next five years. The matter should be brought back to the Council within two years.

4. Removal and/or locking of targets when range closed. Target access after hours contributes to the current untenable situation of unruly users (see previous page, fifth highlighted point).

5. Increased presence of range officers to assure safety. The staff report gives this scant attention. It does little good to have more rules in place without sufficient enforcement oversight. If cost is a consideration, that should be factored in to the fees charged to PRA under the new agreement.

6. All archer users of Lower Arroyo range to be PRA members. PRA has a vested interest in the success of the proposed arrangement and curbing renegade use of the Lower Arroyo. PRA is in the best position through use of its persuasive power and influence to motivate its membership to be good stewards of the Lower Arroyo. Requiring users of the Lower Arroyo range to be PRA members will go a long way to

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improve the current relationship between the archer community and other user constituencies.

Thank you for your consideration and attention to this difficult, but hopefully solvable, situation.

Sincerely yours,

NEIL J. BARKER,
A Professional Corporation

/s/ Neil J. Barker

By: Neil J. Barker

cc: Michael Beck, City Manager
Stewards of Public Land

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