

# El Dorado Hills Telegraph

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## Lights on at Promontory Village Park

*By: Matthew Self, The Telegraph*

A petition for a writ of mandate impeding construction of an El Dorado Hills park was struck down last week in a decision that promises to define future park development.

Judge Jerald Laslow declined the petition against Promontory Village Park, a proposed 18.7-acre sports complex along Sophia Parkway on the western end of El Dorado Hills, on May 11.

The El Dorado Hills Community Services District, which had been abiding by a temporary restraining order awarded to park opponents last January, will be allowed to resume construction of the park without bias.

In arriving at his decision, Laslow concluded the district's Promontory Specific Plan allowed for the type of active land use for which the park was designed. El Dorado County, as lead agency, declared the district exempt from any further environmental studies, firming the district's legal position, Laslow wrote in his assessment.

Park opponents had argued the original Specific Plan only allowed for a 10-acre community park, and the additional exchange of acreage between the developer and district in 2001 made additional environmental impact studies a requirement.

The 70-foot light towers were the primary - and perhaps the only - real concern for park opponents, some of whose properties are adjacent to the field. Laslow fully accepted the district's stated mitigation measures, which includes angled shielding.

The Promontory Village is a dark skies community whose Specific Plan does not allow for street lights, porch lights or other common public luminary devices.

Spokesmen for CORD did not immediately respond to inquiries and were not available for comment before press time.

District board of directors president Joe Chinn noted the quick judgement allows the project to remain on its original schedule.

"The design process for Promontory Community Park has continued on time, but this decision assures that we may continue to move forward with the construction on a timely basis. The Promontory residents and community as a whole are in dire need of these recreation facilities," Chinn said.

District staff anticipates the park will open in September of 2006.

The decision brings at least temporary closure to a charged battle between park opponents - organized under the action committee Citizens Organization for Responsible Development - and the district that began last July.

While the district began planning the community park in 2001, the size and scope of the project was not understood by many of the new homeowners until the design was revealed at a public workshop last July.

Members of the group that would become CORD argued they were not made aware of the park before purchasing their property, although they signed declarations at closure stating they were aware of the possibility of a "lighted park" in their vicinity.

The district board of directors voted 3-0 for final approval of the park on Dec. 1 after hearing hours of anguished comments from the public both in favor and against the project. CORD members, anticipating the vote, immediately responded with a lawsuit.

With such a distinct judgement, the district is likely to use its experience as a template to move forward with its plans to bring two other large-scale parks online in the next three years.

The next community park project is anticipated to be within the Valley View Specific Plan, which is located in the southern portion of El Dorado Hills.

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