

USGA appeals to S.F. mayor to save Sharp Park



The U.S. Golf Association has weighed in on the public debate about San Francisco's Sharp Park Golf Course and come to the support of the beleaguered municipal layout.

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In a letter to San Francisco Mayor Edwin Lee, a copy of which was obtained by *Golfweek*, USGA executive director Mike Davis expresses concern over the effects of a Board of Supervisors resolution passed Dec. 13 that likely would lead to "the demise of one of America's most precious public golf courses."

The letter goes on to urge the mayor "to consider appropriate actions that would allow continuation of the honored tradition of affordable, accessible and environmental-friendly public golf at Sharp Park."

While the letter does not actually call for Lee to veto the Board of Supervisors' recent vote, the possibility of an executive veto now looms as a distinct possibility to override the measure that passed by a 6-5 vote.

Davis' letter does address the historic nature of the golf course – a design by Alister Mackenzie to whom Davis refers as "the Frank Lloyd Wright of golf." The five-paragraph letter goes on to laud the golf course as "a living breathing, functioning San Francisco landmark."

Sharp Park is caught up in a political controversy concerning its funding and environmentalists' claims of its adverse ecological impact. Davis wrote Lee that: "It is our firm belief that Sharp Park can be managed in an ecologically responsible manner."

It is rare for the USGA to take stances on political issues. The letter might be evidence that Davis, who is in his first year as executive director, is assuming a more engaged leadership than his predecessors.

USGA spokesman Joe Goode confirmed the authenticity of the letter and affirmed "as a global leader in golf, it is our obligation to point out the impact of this proposed legislation in San Francisco."

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