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My Turn: Sharp Park Golf Course

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I really had to laugh at Brent Plater's characterization of SF Mayor Ed Lee's veto of legislation to turn Sharp Park over to the feds as a "back-room deal." (<https://wildequity.org>) Mr. Plater, late of the Arizona-based Center for Biological Diversity, and presently executive director of the Wild Equity Institute, has waged a long, costly and unsuccessful campaign to close the Sharp Park Golf Course.

He strongly supported Supervisor John Avalos' ordinance that would do just that. The golf course, however, has its own supporters, including five of the 11 San Francisco Supervisors, the SF Recreation and Parks Department, their Open Space Committee, the San Mateo Board of Supervisors, Congresswoman Jackie Speier, the Pacifica City Council, Chamber of Commerce and Historical Society, some 800 Sharp Park golfers, local and regional golf organizations, the San Francisco Chronicle editorial board and columnists, thousands of individual citizens across the Bay Area and, ultimately, the Mayor of San Francisco. They would fill a pretty big back room.

But the real irony is that it was the doomed legislation, right from the start, which looked like a genuine, unadulterated, smoke-filled back room political concoction. In what is generally viewed as payback for environmental assistance in his recent mayoral campaign, Avalos rushed the hastily written and heavily amended ordinance through the legislative process, deftly

sidestepping the usual precautionary procedures. It was a desperate and futile attempt to snatch a quick victory for his patrons who have suffered one setback after another.

The bill would have locked San Francisco into

turning Sharp Park over to the GGNRA and blocked San Mateo County, or anyone else for that matter, from any further input. It was a bad bill and everyone, except for the small group of eco-activists, knew it.

Mr. Plater, however, blames the defeat of the measure on forces associated with "elite golf development on California's Coast." If Mr. Plater had any actual information to back up that statement, I know quite a few people in Pacifica who would be happy, even overjoyed, to hear about it.

But I think that might just be another one of the little, uh, exaggerations, that has marked Mr. Plater's long, obsessive quest to close the popular old course. I can easily understand his desire to rationalize or, at least, minimize, his most recent defeat. Coming on the heels of Judge Illston's slap down of his injunction request in his federal lawsuit, the eco-warriors must be desperate for some good news.

Casting themselves in the heroic position of bravely battling coastal developers has always worked in the past. Let's give it another try.

But this patently ludicrous assertion (condos overlooking Laguna Salada?) is surely only meant to placate Mr. Plater's weary supporters. From what I've seen at the various court hearings and public meetings, these supporters are either career environmentalists with their livelihood at stake or college kids out for a free T-shirt, having a few laughs while saving the world.



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