

Fresno County District Attorney Lisa Smittcamp's Response to CVCSF Press Release of June 24, 2021

CURRENT INVESTIGATION

Despite the misinformation and blatant lies stated by the CENTRAL VALLEY COMMUNITY SPORTS FOUNDATION in their press release of June 24, 2021, the fact remains that the Fresno County District Attorney's Office has received official request(s) to investigate alleged Brown Act Violation(s) that may have been committed by member(s) of the Fresno City Council.

This request(s) for investigation came to our office within the last 2 weeks.

What the CVCSF does not seem to understand is that when allegations such as these are made, it is the duty of the District Attorney to investigate, and the facts of that investigation are not yet available. The investigation into the most recent allegations of misconduct is just beginning. The District Attorney's Office does not solicit investigations or seek out allegations. They are brought to us, and it is our duty to investigate them.

Over the last few years, our office has received several inquiries from concerned members of the community asking questions about the conduct of several local elected officials. They ask generic questions about the law, and we answer them in the best way we can, advising them they can file a written request for investigations to our Public Integrity Unit email box. Many inquiries are not followed up on, as the inquiring parties state that they are afraid of retribution from the elected officials. At that time, they are advised that unless they make a formal complaint, nothing can be done on our end.

The suggestion that there are any political motives to this, or any investigation conducted by the District Attorney's Office, is preposterous and offensive and is a clear attempt at distracting from the nature of the allegation(s) themselves.

The request to postpone the vote of the Fresno City Council regarding Granite Park was simply that – a request.

The District Attorney has no power to stop the vote, but a duty to inform the City, the City Attorney, the Mayor, the City Manager and the City Council of the existence of the allegation(s) and the fact that the investigation is underway. We honored that duty.

In a conversation with City Attorney Doug Sloan on June 23, 2021, I specifically told him I was merely advising the City of the investigation and respectfully requesting the vote be postponed until the matter could be fully investigated. Any recommendation made to the Council regarding whether to proceed or not was his and his alone.

CVCSF AUDIT OF 2019/ PRIOR INVESTIGATION: THIS IS STILL AN ACTIVE AND ON-GOING INVESTIGATION

As far as the claim that the investigation of the City of Fresno's Audit of CVCSF from 2019 was never revealed is again, another false statement. That matter involving Mr. Frazier and former US Congressman TJ Cox is still under investigation, and the "results" will be disclosed when the investigation is complete.

USING ELECTED POSITION TO PURSUE BASELESS ALLEGATIONS

As the District Attorney of the County of Fresno, I do not have the time, nor energy, nor desire to use my elected position to pursue baseless allegations for any reason. Violent crime and gun crimes are at an all-time high, we are working everyday to combat human trafficking, sex crimes, child abuse, domestic violence, gang crimes, gun crimes, skyrocketing homicide rates, and deal with the fentanyl crisis. However, these challenges will not stop the District Attorney's Bureau of Investigations from actively pursuing the investigation of financial crimes, public integrity violations, and other "non-violent" crimes that occur in this County.

I find it interesting the CVCSF indicates that it is time for "Mrs. Smittcamp to stop using her elected position to pursue baseless "allegations" that defame the officials and community members who are actively working to improve our city" when the press release yesterday did not mention any names, only the issue with the Granite Park contract. No names are mentioned because the investigation into the allegations have not been completed. It is ironic that they ask for facts to be released and then attempt to suggest that someone has been "defamed" when no names were given.

CVCSF CLAIMS GRANITE PARK AS A "WORLD-CLASS FACILITY"

In my capacity as District Attorney, I have had no reason to visit Granite Park. However, as a resident of Fresno, I have attended more than one baseball tournament there.

The facility I have seen is a disaster.

I was so shocked by what I saw on a visit to the park in May 2021 that I actually took photographs of it: exposed wires near restroom areas, hazards of building materials, trash strewn about the property, numerous canisters of propane left out in areas where children were playing, along with dead trees and plants. As it was in May 2021, the Park is an embarrassment to our City.

The only productive things I observed were the admissions booth where adults paid a \$5.00 admission charge, an active bar selling alcoholic beverages (even in the early morning hours), a snack bar, and three operational baseball fields. I am in favor of taking pro-active legal steps to clean it up and make it the gem it was intended to be, however, the mechanisms in which it is funded have to follow the law. If there have been no violations, then that will also be discovered in the investigation and I will be hopeful that Granite Park, CVCSF and the City of Fresno can move forward to improve the facility so it is a safe and fun environment for adults and children alike.

CONCLUSION

We will continue to investigate this matter, and will hope that the individuals who will be interviewed will be honest and forthcoming in their statements so that the City of Fresno can get on with the business they need to conduct to ensure that Granite Park reaches its full potential.