

RANCHO SIMI RECREATION AND PARK DISTRICT
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 20, 2022
TO: Board of Directors
FROM: District Manager
SUBJECT: Continued Discussion and Direction Regarding Drone Usage on District Property
- **Supplemental Information**

For your review, attached please find correspondence that was received subsequent to the posting of the April 20, 2022 Board Meeting agenda and staff report related to the subject item.



Dan Paranick
District Manager

Sandee Covone

From: info <info@rsrpd.us>
Sent: Monday, April 18, 2022 8:55 AM
To: Sandee Covone
Subject: FW: Drone ordinance

From: Jodi Slotar
Sent: Saturday, April 16, 2022 7:41 PM
To: info@rsrpd.us
Subject: Drone ordinance

To: Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District Officials

Re: Drone usage in county parks ordinance

I have recently heard about the ordinance passed allowing drone usage over our county parks. While I appreciate this is a hobby enjoyed by some; I specifically would ask that the Parks and Rec re-examine the drone usage rules in parks where there are already horse facilities and trails in use. Horses are by nature a flight animal and the characteristics of drones being able to hover and come down close to horses being ridden on our public trails is a dangerous combination for the riders and the other people in the park. If a horse is spooked by a drone, they could easily unseat their rider and run randomly in an attempt to escape what is perceived as a threat. This could endanger children and adults enjoying the park. Specifically, Coyote Park and Challenger Park come to mind as the Bridle Path, Country Lane, Meadowbrook, Sinaloa Estates and other homes with horse property use that park frequently as there is an equestrian arena and trails nearby and in those hills.

Thank you for considering the safety of the horse communities that have already had a long established relationship with the Parks and Rec in these areas.

Jodi Slotar

Sandee Covone

Subject: FW: Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District - 4/20/22 Board Meeting - Agenda Item 8.a - Drones

From: Jeffery Sun
Sent: Saturday, April 16, 2022 7:09 AM
To: Sandee Covone <sandeec@rsrpd.us>
Cc: Dan Paranick <danp@rsrpd.us>
Subject: Re: Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District - 4/20/22 Board Meeting - Agenda Item 8.a - Drones

Thanks Sandee for informing us.

I am strongly against flying drones in Oak Park area. It increases fire danger and disturbs the quiet neighborhood. A few days ago, I saw people flying drones along Churchwood residential area. This is completely unacceptable.

Fengzhu (Jeff) Sun
Oak Park Resident

Sandee Covone

From: Tony Jones
Sent: Wednesday, April 20, 2022 1:26 PM
To: Sandee Covone
Subject: 4-20-2022 RSRPD Board Meeting - Drone Use

April 20, 2022

Good day, Ms. Covone. Please find below a written comment in connection with item 8 (drone usage) on the Agenda for this evening's RSRPD Board Meeting. If I am unavailable to read this comment myself this evening, I would appreciate it being read into the record by someone else at the appropriate time. Thank you.

Dear Board of Directors –

By email submitted on March 24, 2022 in connection with the Special Meeting held on drone use that evening – which email I also read into the record – I previously expressed my strong opposition to the ordinance permitting drone use in the open spaces of Oak Park. With respect to drone use in parks, I recommended an incremental approach, perhaps designating 1 or 2 parks on a temporary basis to see how things go.

I remain of the view that the ordinance permitting drone use in open spaces should, at a minimum, be rescinded as to Oak Park. Having had additional time to consider and research the issue, however, I am now of the view that drone use should be prohibited in/on all open spaces in both Oak Park and Simi Valley (or any other District Property).

Although there are others, the principal reason for my position remains fire risk. *Just this week*, various news outlets (including one just yesterday afternoon) reported on a 25-acre brush fire in Oregon that was caused by an Amazon drone that failed in flight, lost power, and crashed to the ground from 160-feet up. The fire started because when the drone collided with the ground, its lithium battery exploded. Links to three articles reporting this story (from Forbes, NY Post, and Retail Wire) are below.

What is particularly disconcerting to me about this story is that this was an Amazon drone. This was not some low quality, fly-by-night outfit. To the contrary, as reported by the articles, Amazon has been working on its drone program for a decade and has invested over \$2 Billion into its drone program. And yet, for a host of reasons, including safety, Amazon's program is nowhere near ready. If Amazon, with its literally limitless financial, technological, and human capital resources (per the article over 1,000 people worldwide are worker on

Amazon's drone program) cannot figure out drone safety after 10 years and \$2 Billion, how can anyone have confidence in any other manufacturer's drones?

Also disconcerting is the fact that this 25-acre brush fire happened in Oregon, where the statewide average annual rainfall is 41 inches and it rains 134 days per year. As we here in Southern California know all too well, we are desperate for rain. I shudder to think what would have happened had that drone crashed here.

As for my position that the drone ordinance should be rescinded as to Simi Valley in addition to Oak Park, that's an easy one. Fire does not recognize any map boundaries between Simi Valley and Oak Park. The hills and open spaces around here are contiguous and literally connect these two wonderful towns. So, to permit drone use in open spaces in Simi Valley is functionally to permit it in Oak Park as well.

The overwhelming majority of Ventura County residents who have taken the time to attend these public meetings and prepare comments are strongly opposed to drone use. Indeed, it is nearly unanimous opposition. While I appreciate the Board's openness to innovation and change, to permit drone use is to invite potentially catastrophic consequences. That is not hyperbole. That is the reality of the physical environment in which we live. Put simply, we live in a proverbial tinderbox and regrettably we cannot afford even one incident here. And I know that no one on the Board would ever want to be considered responsible for potentially (and knowingly) permitting the next Woolsey Fire.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Michael Honeyman, Esq.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/retailwire/2022/04/19/crash-raises-doubts-for-amazons-2-billion-drone-program/?sh=1be5f52237c6>

<https://nypost.com/2022/04/13/amazon-30-minute-flying-deliveries-delayed-after-drone-crash-sparks-forest-fire/>

<https://retailwire.com/discussion/will-amazon-have-to-ground-its-drone-program/>