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To: [Plan Commission Comments](#); [Field, Derek](#); [Figueroa Cole, Yannette](#); [Guequierre, John](#)
Cc: [DMNA President](#); ["VNA President"](#); [Rea, Kevin](#); [Parks, Timothy](#); [Tucker, Matthew](#); [Tuttle, Meagan](#); [Munger, Sam R.](#); [Firchow, Kevin](#)
Subject: Legistar 93508 - Edgewood High School Athletic Facility - 2219 Monroe Street
Date: Saturday, July 11, 2026 5:14:54 PM
Attachments: [Outlook-cid_image0.png](#)

Dear Plan Commissioners,

It has been several years since I've written to you about an Edgewood High School (EHS) request for conditional use approval to make changes to their athletic facility. Most of you will recall the controversy over lights that transpired from 2019 until the conclusion of the federal lawsuit in March of 2024. While there's no need to go into great detail, two points are worth rehearsing.

First, Plan Commission was vindicated in its decision to deny approval for lights -- Standard 3 could not be met if lights enabling night games were granted. Second, the high school's legal right to hold day games on its field was clearly established.

A lot has changed since then. EHS President Kevin Rea first raised the issue of improving their athletic facilities last August. The request seemed reasonable to me. Who could argue porta-potties were desirable or that parents should have to stand or bring their own folding chairs to watch their kids play? Despite the many negatives associated with the past conflict, it was apparent this was an opportunity to rebuild trust and chart a new path of cooperation and partnership between the neighbors and Edgewood. I'm very pleased and proud of how Edgewood and the neighbors seized that opportunity and rose to the occasion.

However, it was not an easy process.

First, the neighbors were understandably suspicious, that this was yet another attempt to get lights, but more of a long game -- first improve the stadium, then come back for lights. Edgewood, however, made it clear lights were not on the table, having yielded on that issue.

Second, the neighbors were concerned that these improvements would lead to increased frequency of use and that these uses would inherently be more intense. In response, Edgewood committed to not increasing frequency of use. Neighbors accepted day games in some instances would be more disruptive but secured a commitment from Edgewood that amplified sound would not be used during practices or by outside users.

A guiding principle for me during the negotiations was a commitment to fairness. While I supported the neighbors as their alder in their fight against lights, I made it clear that I'm Edgewood's alder as well and that I would support reasonable projects on their behalf.

I remain committed to the principle that what happened in the past need not determine our future, but that the core values of community and partnership shared by Edgewood and the neighbors could lead to a positive outcome.

Still, it must be made clear, there was an enormous amount of mistrust that had to be overcome for [DMNA and VNA to sign on to a MOU with Edgewood High School](#). It took a lot to get us here and, while monumental in many respects, this coming together of the two sides is new and needs the support of this body to ensure its success.

The conditions of approval articulated in the staff report provide the necessary ballast to keep this shared understanding secure and intact.

The first condition makes it clear that this application is not about lights. Moreover, there is nothing in this approval, should you grant it, that suggests a future proposal to light the field would likely succeed or that the disposition of this body and that of the city on this issue has changed in any way.

The second and third conditions speak to compromises that the two parties agreed to in the process of

signing the MOU. The neighbors, as mentioned above, were willing to accept a higher level of crowd noise due to the increased capacity in exchange for EHS's agreement not to allow amplified sound to be used during practices or by outside users. The fourth condition stipulates a time restriction limiting the use of the seating to daytime hours and the fifth condition addresses landscaping that EHS has stated will be employed as a further barrier to sound trespass.

The sixth condition requires a sound management plan that sets the volume of the new PA system not to exceed 80 decibels when measured at the front of the bleachers. Testing the new sound system prior to its use by Building Inspection is an important means of assuring the system works as intended and does not overburden nearby neighbors. During the past debate about night games I stated the obvious fact: that which we tolerate during the day may not be reasonably tolerated at night. However, that does not mean anything goes as long as it takes place during the day. We can all imagine a scenario where day games, if not managed well, could become intolerable, which is precisely what this condition is intended to avoid.

I'm supportive of all the conditions listed in the staff report. Nonetheless, I urge you not to stipulate Conditions 2-4 as amendable by approval of a minor alteration by the alder and the Director of the Planning Division as was suggested in the staff report. These conditions, as stated above, address concerns that were key points in the negotiations between EHS and the neighbors and must not be relegated to a lesser status whereby they might be altered without due participation from nearby residents.

Though this is not a condition, please approve and thereby stipulate my request that the Building Inspection Division provide this body with a report "summarizing any issues that may have arisen with Edgewood's proposed additions to the Goodman Athletic Complex approximately one year following the opening of the proposed stadium facility."

This body and the city have a vested interest in ensuring the success of this endeavor. We have come a long way from the long nights of feverish debate, acrimony and lawsuits that characterized this issue in years past. A review one year after the improved facility is in use is vitally important in that it would provide accountability and thereby allow for the burgeoning trust between the two parties to be verified and substantiated.

In conclusion, please approve Edgewood High School's application with the conditions included in the staff report, modified to disallow minor alterations for Conditions 2-4, and, lastly, to require a review in the form of report to this body after one year of experience with the improved facility.

Overcoming distrust is difficult and challenging, but it is not impossible.

Thank you,

Tag Evers



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