

**“Renaming Minors A to Hope Field” - Public Hearing Committee Minutes
September 15, 2020 – Virtual Online**

Los Alamos County Public Information Office Julie Habiger opened the meeting at 5:31 p.m.
The following were present:

Members:

Julie Habiger, Public Information Officer
Kyle Wheeler, Citizen
Dave Jolly, Business Owner
Beth Cortright, Citizen
Terry Priestley, Planning and Zoning Commission
Dina Pesenson, Parks & Recreation Board

Others:

Jackie Salazar, Executive Assistant
Linda Matteson, Assistant to the County Manager

Members of the Public

1. Opening

Julie Habiger welcomed everyone to the public hearing for the citizen petition to rename the Minors A field at Overlook Sports Complex at White Rock to Hope Field after Hope Jaramillo who passed away on January 29th. She went on to explain that she would ask each of the naming committee members to briefly introduce themselves and explain what role, purpose, or responsibility they have as a member of the committee. Ms. Habiger then went on to introduce herself as the Public Information Officer to the County, indicating that, for the purposes of the naming committee, she is the liaison to the Council and to the County Manager's Office. Ms. Habiger then explained that she would be overseeing the proceedings of the Public Hearing but would not have a vote at the end - only the citizens, business owners, Planning and Zoning, and Parks and Recreation Board member would be casting a yes or no vote.

Ms. Habiger then went on to explain the proceeding of the meeting. In opening remarks, she would give some background information for the benefit of the audience that might be watching the Zoom meeting. Ms. Habiger would then ask Robbie Harris, the petitioner, to present his petition. She then asked, that if there were members of Hope Jaramillo's family in the audience and if they would like to raise their hand to speak, they would be recognized along with the petitioner, as that would be acceptable given that the meeting was about Hope. She would then ask anyone in the audience to raise their hand if they wanted to speak during public comment after the petitioner presents. She indicated there were over 100 written comments that were received, and in the interest of time, Ms. Habiger explained that she would summarize but not read all of the comments; however, she said they would all get printed and would be attached to the final record of the meeting. After public comment, Ms. Habiger said the Committee would then have a chance to ask Mr. Harris any clarifying questions or to make any comments as a committee member. The meeting would then be closed for discussion/questions, a vote would be taken, and the meeting would adjourn.

2. Introductions

Committee Members were introduced:

Ms. Habiger then called upon each member to introduce themselves, which included remarks from:

Kyle Wheeler, Los Alamos citizen, representing the citizens

David Jolly, General Manager of Metzger's and a citizen of White Rock, representing the business side of the committee

Beth Cortright, Citizen of White Rock, representing the citizens

Terry Priestley, representing the Planning and Zoning Commission

Dina Penson, representing the Parks and Recreation Board

2. Remarks from Petitioner Robbie Harris

Ms. Habiger opened this section of the meeting and remarked that on March 12th, 2020 at the Parks & Recreation Board meeting, a request by Mr. Harris was brought to the Board for renaming of the field, however, because County Code requires that for any facility that would be named after a person, the person must be deceased for 6 months, it could not proceed formally. Therefore, although the Parks & Recreation Board did endorse the request in March, the County had to wait for the required number of months to pass. Subsequently, Councilor Katrina Martin brought the request forward a few weeks ago. She asked the Council to consider it and they did so in a recent meeting (August 25, 2020). Council directed staff to move forward with the public information outreach process, which opened on August 26th, 2020 and closed on September 15, 2020. Ms. Habiger explained that this process is very straightforward: in a public hearing, the naming committee is asked to consider all comments for and against the request and take a vote. After that, it will go to Council for further action. If it results in Council approval, a plaque will be purchased and placed at the field and it would be officially be re-named "Hope Field." This has been done several times in the past for various and different facilities, trails and so forth, that this is part of formal processes under the County Code that are simply being followed. She then asked Mr. Harris to present his case.

Robbie Harris, currently the Los Alamos High School Softball Coach, presented the petition, telling the audience that he was born and raised in Los Alamos and has been in Los Alamos all his life. He said he has been involved in softball for quite awhile in Los Alamos. He has known Hope and her family for quite awhile, and got to know Hope at a personal level in the past ten years. If it weren't Hope, he said he probably would not be here (with this petition) today. He explained that his eldest daughter played Little League T-ball years ago, but then said she didn't want to play anymore. Hope was responsible for reaching out and asking his daughter to play. With her encouragement, his daughter returned to softball and with that Mr. Harris got back into coaching. In 2014, he was the Junior Varsity (JV) coach and became the Varsity coach two years ago, and that is how he became involved with softball. He was the Vice-President of the Los Alamos Little League Softball for several years and became very familiar with Hope and her involvement and passion for softball.

Mr. Harris said that Hope was always coaching, and she was the one always willing and wanting to coach. She was the one constant part of softball; every single year he said that Hope would coach, and in fact, she would even coach two teams at one time. Her

volunteerism was incredible. Mr. Harris said that Hope would always accommodate the girls, taking the girls to play a tournament in Albuquerque, and by doing that she gave the girls the "itch" to play - and the girls just loved it. Hope was instrumental in helping the girls to win several district championships. Mr. Harris explained that as he looks back, Hope was the catalyst behind a lot of those wins. Although her kids went on to play varsity, Hope was always involved in the JV side of things as far as coordinating the JV tournament. He related that, at the high school every single year they have a tournament and host teams, from Carlsbad, Farmington, Los Lunas, Belen, etc., - explaining that how it is structured is that on Friday there are games, and Friday night Hope would arrange a scavenger hunt and other games, and one game in particular was called "Bigger and Better". The object of that game was that the girls would go door to door asking for items bigger and better than the one they currently held up. One year at a game being held in White Rock, the girls came back from that "bigger and better" hunt hauling in a boat! That is just one of the memories that people remember from the events that Hope would coordinate, and she did that to try to build up competition among the girls' softball teams. One thing they found was that it was never hard to find teams to come to the County's tournament, in fact, at the end the coaches would always ask before leaving if they could be invited the following year. That wasn't necessarily about just the tournament, but about the Friday night events that Hope coordinated that brought those girls and their coaches together.

With that background on Hope and coaching, Mr. Harris explained that Hope being selfless - where she would give her time and coach the girls if they didn't have a coach - that carried over into her life. She had amazing courage in her battle with cancer, even though she had cancer for at least ten years. Hope had just shy of nine surgeries and had gone through chemo, and yet, you would have never known that she had cancer. Mr. Harris said Hope was one of the most courageous women he had ever known. She would be out in the field coaching, never mentioning her illness, all in until the end - she was there and she was out coaching. When she passed away, Mr. Harris thought about what could be done in for Hope's memory, and he thought about the field (Minor's A) that was going to be renovated. Girls softball had been playing on that field for the last 10 years, and he thought now was the perfect time to get it renamed after Hope Jaramillo by naming it "Hope Field," stating that he couldn't think of a more appropriate time to do this. Although it was just an idea, he brought it up to the Parks and Rec Board back in March and said in reality, it has been the community that has shown so much support, as evident by the petition signatures and comments. Mr. Harris said in the end he was only a small spark, that it has really been the community that says, "We support this 100%", and with that he closed his remarks, stating that he hoped the Committee considers the request.

3. Comments from Hope Jaramillo's Family

Terry Jaramillo, and sister's Jordan and Taylor, then spoke on behalf of their mother, Hope Jaramillo, and the petition. They said they wanted to voice their appreciation for what they were doing for their Mom. Their Mom loved softball, it was her passion, and they could not even begin to thank everyone for the whole idea. When Coach Harris told them about it, they were ecstatic, saying that if there was one thing their Mom loved more than pretty much anything - it was the ball field. They said that was where they grew up, it was where they have all their memories and that it is where they built their lives. It gave everyone the chance to see her in the same way that they got to see her and to see what an incredible woman she was. They said to be able to share that with people of the community and families was

something you can't take back. Hope shared her passion for softball with every single girl she coached, and you could see that with the girls. You could see their eyes light up as they we're learning new skills. Even on the days they struggled, she still kept that light in them, and she never brought them down. She brought them up and built their confidence; she built up their self-esteem. They are happy to be able to bring Hope, their Mom they had at home and be able to share that – having the field renamed is an honor of their Mom more than they can describe.

4. Public Comment For or Against, and Written Comments Received by the County

Ms. Habiger called for those wishing to speak FOR the petition. There was none.

Ms. Habiger called for those wishing to speak AGAINST the petition. There was none.

Ms. Habiger then acknowledged the written comments that were received. Through the petitioner's submittal, she received 95 written comments. She said all of the written comments were very supportive of the request, and very complementary of Hope, much like Mr. Harris had described and as the family had described. Lots of comments regarding how courageous she was and what a wonderful role model and influence she was. The comments were all very supportive and many stated that this was a very appropriate activity for the County to undertake and re-name the field. Ms. Habiger said the 95 comments would be attached to the Minutes for the record. Ms. Habiger said in addition, after the County opened public comment on the 26th of August, 13 written comments were sent to the County that were all very supportive. Ms. Habiger said she has not received any negative comments from the public since conducting public outreach. She indicated the 13 comments would also be attached to the Minutes for the record.

Ms. Habiger then closed public comment and explained that the meeting would move forward to a discussion and clarifying questions from members of the Committee.

6. Discussion and clarifying questions by the Committee

Ms. Habiger asked the committee for clarifying questions of the petitioner. There were none.

Ms. Habiger then called upon the Committee members to discuss or provide comments:

Kyle Wheeler, representing the citizens, commented that she knew Hope just a little bit, not as well as others. She read the comments received and it sounded like she was a wonderful coach, mentor, and friend.

David Jolly, representing the business owners, commented that he didn't know Hope's involvement with softball, however, when he moved to Los Alamos to take the job with Metzger's, Hope was the advertising rep with the LA Monitor, and he met her that way. He wanted to second what Mr. Harris said, that the first time he found out that she was going to MD Anderson for treatment he was shocked. Because you would have never known that she had cancer, and after she got back it was like she had been gone on a weekend on a vacation or something like that, because then she got right back to her job. He was always impressed by Hope and he knew she struggled with this for a long time and it has been

really inspiring to hear what she did with the softball program. He feels that naming the field is a fitting honor.

Beth Cortright, representing the citizens, commented that it sounded like a very wonderful and worthy tribute to Hope. She never met her; however, it was clear from what was said at the hearing, and from the many written comments, that Hope was an amazing person. She was happy to hear Hope's story and to be a part of the naming of the field.

Terry Priestley, representing the Planning and Zoning Commission, said he knew Hope through Little League and he also knew Mr. Harris through Little League. He knew that Hope was a big influence on the Little League softball program, however he did not know realize how much of an impact she had. He said he thinks it is a great tribute and wanted to thank Mr. Harris for getting this moved through the process as it shows Mr. Harris' dedication as well.

Dina Pesenson, representing the Parks and Recreation Board, also commented that she had not met Hope; however it sounds like the community really lost a treasure. She said someone who is willing to put that much energy into community and to touch so many lives in such a big way – the community is really lucky to have had her. She added Hope is a great inspiration for someone looking to put that much time and energy into their community.

7. Committee Vote on Petition

The committee then voted FOR renaming of "Hope Field"

Kyle Wheeler **Yes**

David Jolly **Yes**

Beth Cortright **Yes**

Terry Priestley **Yes**

Dina Pesenson **Yes**

The renaming of the field to "Hope Field" passed 5 - 0.

8. Adjourn

Ms. Habiger thanked the committee members, the Hope Jaramillo family members and the public who participated and sent comments. Ms. Habiger commented that this item would be on the September 29, 2020 Council meeting agenda as a consent item for their consideration.

The facilitator of the Zoom meeting then commented that there was a raised hand with a person that wished to comment.

Joe Jaramillo, Hope's husband, commented that it was so amazing to see this renaming of the field that was her life, that she loved it and loved the girls. He said most girls called her, "Momma Hope", not "Coach Hope". She loved the young ones and loved to coach them, he said, commenting upon the respect that they would show her. He ended his remarks by saying softball and coaching was her life and that "Hope is smiling over all of us." He wanted

to thank everyone because he said this means a lot to him and his family. He appreciates it and he thanked everyone from the bottom of his heart.

Ms. Habiger thanked Mr. Jaramillo for his comments and thanked the naming committee for volunteering their time.

The public hearing was adjourned at 6:02 p.m.