

Dear Editor,

Thanks for giving the public a look at the planning debacle that has left us with such visually intrusive homes overlooking Upper Park from Parcel 7.

There are similar and ongoing issues that may affect Bidwell Park that both the City and the Public must come to terms with or eventually pay the price for assuming everything is hunky-dory.

You mention John Schooling's very provocative letter that raises points relating to the South boundary of the Park, calling it 'detailed and remarkably sophisticated'.

The City has had this letter in hand since January, but has not taken steps to confirm/deny the veracity of Schooling's concerns about the true location of the Southern boundary of the Park. Nor has the City clarified the meaning of the text found on the 1987 parcel map for Parcel 9 that states, "... building height shall be restricted to preclude visibility from Bidwell Park."

As a citizen who is deeply concerned that the City understand the importance of Bidwell Park to this and future generations, the City's very slow response to the well researched questions raised by Schooling is not encouraging.

Your article claims that we have unwanted impacts to the Park in part due to assumptions that were not questioned.

Having followed the "Update" of the Park's Master Management Plan for close to two years now (currently awaiting the release of the EIR), I suggest Chicoans question the following assumptions:

Assumption #1: The climate of awareness and attention to the Bidwell Park experience has changed down at City Hall. The City values Bidwell Park the same way you or I do, and prioritizes its preservation.

Assumption #2: Policies have been put in place that will protect the Viewshed and Habitat of the Park from the effects of future development.

(Although recommended since 1990, policies such as setbacks, architectural and landscaping restrictions, etc. have not yet been defined.)

Assumption #3: The Policies and recommendations that do exist to protect the Park are adequately enforced and implemented.

Assumption #4: The native habitats of Bidwell Park – remnants of pre-European history unique to our area – are resilient and do not require careful management in the face of impacts from invasive non-native weeds, fire suppression and in cases of rare species or sensitive conditions, even the way we love (use) the Park.

Bidwell Park is a legacy and each generation is responsible to the next. Public pressure on leadership is sometimes a necessary step in setting things aright.

Please write your City Councilors and Park Commissioners to encourage them to – among other things good for Bidwell Park - move ahead with meaningful and appropriate restrictions to Park adjacent development that may one day soon make a difference.

Non-controversially yours,

Randy Abbott
Chico