

Office of the City Council

March 12, 2010



TO: Editor/Tustin News

There has been tremendous misinformation regarding the issue of permits the City of Tustin is requiring from Tustin Unified School District. First of all, these permits for storm water management are an important part of a regional plan to reduce pollutants that run into our ocean and beaches. They verify that the new storm drain system will a) prevent health and safety hazards resulting from rainwater; and b) connect properly with the City's existing storm runoff system. The reason the district must process the permits through the City is because the City, not the state, manages the local storm water system. Can you imagine the chaos that would result if bureaucrats in Sacramento dictated the way a school managed water runoff, with no deference to the city-wide system already in place around the school?

The City is required by law to enforce these grading and storm water management programs, and we have done so with every other school, business and residential development in the City, including the Rancho Santiago and South Orange County Community College Districts, which are also regulated by DSA. The penalty for failure to comply could result in stiff fines to the City and the District.

It is our fiduciary responsibility to the citizens of Tustin to follow the rules. In fact, the City also required itself to submit grading and storm water management plans for the recent library and Pasadena Avenue Well projects. I assume the school board recognizes the importance of environmental stewardship because this important concept is taught in TUSD schools.

The District is aware of this requirement as they have already been cited for failure to comply by the Water Quality Control Board, a state agency. The City is in receipt of the District's incomplete grading permit applications and draft storm water management plans. As soon as we are in receipt of the District's clear, complete and verifiable changes to these plans, the City will issue the necessary permits. This could happen in a matter of days if the District cooperated.

Instead of completing the plans and resubmitting them, the District has chosen the much more costly and time consuming route of litigation. We question why the District would squander so many taxpayer dollars on lawyers and consultants when the simple solution is to finish the permit applications and be done with it.

Sincerely,

Jerry Amante
Mayor