

October 31, 2024

Dear San José Community,

Emma Prusch Farm Park remains open and welcoming to the community.

Emma Prusch cherished her dairy farm, and in her generosity, she donated the property to the City of San José in 1962 to be enjoyed as an agricultural park in the center of a busy city. The Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services (PRNS) Department has operated the park since it opened generations ago offering educational experiences, family events, and recreational spaces that connect visitors to nature and San José's agricultural roots.

I want to address misconceptions about the relationship between PRNS and the Prusch Farm Park Foundation.

The City continues to invest in the park through dedicated funds, including revenue generated by a gas station lease at Story and King. This lease generates approximately \$130,000 annually, directly supporting park maintenance and improvements. The lease funds are strictly allocated to the Emma Prusch Fund, where all related expenses are managed separately to ensure accountability.

The City has not had an agreement with the Foundation for more than a decade. During that time, PRNS has worked to address ongoing community and park stakeholder concerns with the Foundation's fundraising, communication, and operational practices to maintain a productive partnership. After years of extensive efforts, including the use of a nationally recognized third-party facilitator, PRNS decided to end negotiations due to these unresolved issues.

The Foundation does not operate Emma Prusch Farm Park. They have maintained Emma's Kitchen Garden, which occupies 1/3 of an acre within the 40+ acre park. Foundations are an important part of enhancing City parks and recreation programs. All foundations must have agreements with the City and commit to specific fundraising and programmatic goals for the collective benefit of the community.

Moving forward, our plan is to form a Community Advisory Committee that will include more East San José voices to provide feedback and strengthen engagement at the park. This effort will continue our tradition of transparency and collaboration with all park stakeholders.

We will continue to work with our staff and community partners to offer programs, including a Halloween Trick-or-Treat event tonight from 5-7 p.m.

Emma Prusch Farm Park is a welcoming space for all to enjoy. We look forward to your next visit.

Sincerely,

Jon Cicirelli

Director of the Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services Department