

Hello. My name is Michelle Del Ponte. I want to thank you for your time. Unfortunately, I was unable to get off of work to come today. God has blessed me with two amazing boys, Asher 16 months old and Sebastian who is 3.5 years old. Sebastian was challenged with autism. He is non-verbal, extremely smart, and a true escape artist. Sebastian never stops. 60% of all autistic children have running tendencies. He enjoys the park and all sorts of different activities. Sadly he has a very limited attention span for most things. The park is one of the best places for my kids. The parks have many different activities for them to occupy their time. However, it is imperative that I can park my car in a spot visible from all parts of the park. While at different parks, Sebastian has run off to the car numerous times to get a drink or toys. Unfortunately, he does not understand danger, strangers, or safety, which is why I need to see the car everywhere I am. Dewey street park has very limited parking to begin with. There are four good parking spots visible while at the park. In the center of 3 of them is a basketball hoop.

The last time we were there, I parked in a spot next to the hoop. I was there less than two minutes, just picking up my husband and kids after grocery shopping. There were five guys playing with fishing poles on the grass in front of my car. By the time we were able to make it back to the car, those young men decided to play basketball above my car. My husband told them to "watch the car" as they were shooting free-throws. The men began cursing at us and calling us filthy names. I called the police, with little results. I was told by police, the men in question were drinking and it was my fault for parking where I did. I should have parked "across the street. It is a first come first serve basis." If I did not like it, I should call my alderman. In attempting to explain why I parked where I did, they agreed that the placement of the basketball hoop is not ideal. I called Mr. Kummer the next day. Regrettably, we have not been back to the park.

It is my understanding this park is meant to be geared for special needs kids. Yet with limited parking it is not a viable option for most. My husband and I both have looked at the park numerous times. Goodwill is putting in another baseball diamond, sooner vs later. The parking is already limited there. Is it necessary to have a basketball hoop in this park? There is no marked court in the parking lot, just a hoop. Is it possible to move it to a newly cemented area? The shelter area was used every day, that last weekend we were there, for large family picnics. Such picnics cut out the majority of the parking already, without the hoop issue. I want to thank you for your time and attention in this matter. My son is very excited to get to go back to the park.