

Winston School seeks city approval for more fencing

By Luke Harold

Concerned about trespassers and vandalism on campus after schools closed two months ago due to the novel coronavirus pandemic, Winston School officials want to add additional fencing.

The Del Mar City Council will consider the request at its June 1 meeting. The city of Del Mar owns the property and leases it to the school.

In a May 26 news release, school officials said there has been “a dramatic increase in incidents on campus” since all schools closed in mid-March. The Winston School posted a YouTube video showing skaters on the property ignoring signs that say the campus is closed, and one individual spraying graffiti.

Over the past two months, the sheriff’s department has fielded three calls for service to the Winston School, according to Lt. Ricardo Lopez, the sheriff’s media relations director. Two were because of skateboarders on the property and one was about graffiti.

But in the news release, Winston School Head of School Dena Harris said the city has not been acting quickly enough after the school asked for an emergency administrative review for the proposed fence. She objected to the proposed fence going before the council, as opposed to going only through a more streamlined design review process.

“The school **STRONGLY** disagrees with this stance,” Harris said in a statement.

“We are not asking the Council to approve anything,” the statement continued. “We are merely asking them to adhere to the lease and established precedent by allowing the permitting process to proceed.”

Del Mar City Manager C.J. Johnson said there has been a citywide uptick in issues involving skateboarders since the shelter-in-place order went into effect. Johnson said she asked sheriff’s deputies to increase their patrol around the school campus, and also has the city’s Community Services Department staff members patrolling the area.

Johnson also said she is bringing the request for the fence to City Council members to get their approval for her to sign the school’s Administrative Design Review application, which is required by the city for relatively minor projects, including fences.

“The leadership of Winston School is well aware of this process,” Johnson said via email. “Once the school has submitted a completed application then I will work with City staff to review the application per the usual ADR process.”