

Midcoast Community Council

An elected Municipal Advisory Council to the
San Mateo County Board of Supervisors
Serving 12,000 coastal residents
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24 June 1999

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Planning and Zoning
Ric Lohman, Chair

Public Works
Joe Gore, Chair

Mary Griffin, President, and Members of the
San Mateo County Board of Supervisors
455 County Center
Redwood City, CA 94063

re: Multi-Family Dwellings and Substandard Lot Development on the Coastside

Dear President Griffin and Members of the Board:

On May 10, 1999, the Midcoast Community Council (MCC) sent a letter to the Board of Supervisors requesting that a series of meetings be planned to address the community's concerns with interpretations of the Local Coastal Program (LCP) related to development applications (letter attached). Increased development is already straining infrastructure and deteriorating living conditions on the Coast. The increased densities are causing additional traffic problems. A recent increase in applications for large multi-unit dwellings has raised concerns in the community and increased the urgency for our proposed meetings.

Recent trends give a good indication of the problems, which will drastically worsen the jobs/housing imbalance described in C/CAG and ABAG studies. Some of the flexibility features of the LCP are being used to destroy the intended plan of balanced development. Use permits can allow developers to place residential homes in valuable commercial and open space zonings. We request that we begin our proposed series of meetings by discussing two critical issues: substandard lots and multi-family dwellings (MFD's).

The substandard lot discussion should cover issues, such as forced lot mergers, design review to require 1906-sized cottages on these 1906-sized lots (similar to Half Moon Bay's current requirement), or a return to a policy of not granting use permits on these applications. The MFD discussion should cover possible conversion of zoning from R-3 to R-2, changing the height restriction from 38 feet to 28 feet, and consideration of the number of bedrooms in units when determining parking requirements. Design considerations for all proposed structures should attempt to reduce the apparent mass in the elevations. Criteria for conforming to the surrounding community should be enforced. Improving the style of proposals should be required to eliminate box structures with minimal design features, as well as over-designed structures that are neighborhood anachronisms. Parking should be scaled for all sized cars, not just compacts.

We need to discuss the granting of use permits for residential dwellings in C-1 and COSC zonings. The first eliminates potential office and retail space; the second eliminates valuable open space. Both hurt our jobs/housing imbalance. In commercial zoning areas in El Granada, only commercial uses should be permitted, and this issue should be discussed in the rest of the Midcoast. We encourage an early dialog between developers and the community to get issues in the open as early as possible.

At our June 9, 1999 meeting a question arose on how multi-unit dwellings are counted in annual permit applications. We are assuming a 4-unit complex counts as four dwellings on annual growth allowances, since they will absorb units of infrastructure. We would appreciate a formal response to this question. Please also confirm that second units, which also add to infrastructure support requirements, and included in the annual permit limit. The annual number of permits itself should be discussed, especially if Half Moon Bay passes its growth initiative this November.

Time is of the essence on this ongoing problem. We wish to start planning for these public meetings immediately and would like to arrange a meeting with the Planning Division to lay out the agenda and times for these meetings. Please contact Ric Lohman at (650) 726-9607 to arrange these meetings.

Sincerely,

Paul Perkovic, Chair