

Notes from Mid-Coast Community Council Meeting 8 July 1998 at Seton Coastside Hospital

[See disclaimer at end of notes; these are not official minutes.]

Regular Agenda for Meeting and Summary of Actions Taken

1. Discussion of the current Half Moon Bay Fire Protection District process, which insures our community has adequate fire protection on the Mid-Coast. Sponsor: Chuck Kozak
[Discussion item only, for information; no action taken.]
2. Deliberation and vote on recommendation to County Planning and Building regarding the proposed Coverdell Plant Stand in Miramar. Sponsor: Laura Stein
Proposed letter approved unanimously.
3. Discussion and vote on recommendation to San Mateo County Public Works Department regarding impact of using Ox Mountain Landfill as the sole County dump site. Sponsor: Kathryn Slater-Carter.
Moved that the Council write a letter saying that the Council examined this issue and asked that a traffic impact analysis be included in the Integrated Waste Management Plan. Approved by unanimous consent.
4. Request to Harbor District Commissioners and recommendation to County regarding RFP for development of El Granada Post Office land / median strip. Sponsor: Laura Stein.
Moved that the Council extend the letter drafted by Planning and Zoning to also ask the Harbor District to hold their meetings on the coastside when they are discussing issues that directly affect the coastside, that they attend our meeting on August 12, take no action until they have had a chance to hear from the community, and provide a schedule for a series of community input forums similar to the Brady/LSA meetings that were held for the Fitzgerald Marine Reserve.
Approved unanimously.

Introductions, Pledge of Allegiance; meeting started about 7:10 pm

Council Members present: Mary Hobbs, Ric Lohman, Paul Perkovic, David Spiselman (Chair), Laura Stein
Council Members absent: Joe Gore
Vacancy due to resignation: Seat expiring December 1999, formerly held by Chris McComb

Announcements and Public Comment

Ann Lasko-Harvill – Has purchased the lot at Ninth Street and Farallone in Montara, will be asking to vacate a small portion of Ninth Street. They recently drilled a well that produces about 4 times the legal water flow requirement.

Kathryn Slater-Carter – Noticed a letter in the San Mateo County Times mentioning an opportunity to serve on the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District board, which happened to encourage those opposed to annexing the Coastside to apply. Kathryn suggests that those of us on the Coastside encourage our friends to consider running for these seats.

David Spiselman – Announced vacancy on Council, method of applying to be appointed. Interviews will be held at the July 22 meeting.

Laura Stein – Follow-up to Pilarcitos Quarry issue. The Quarry has asked to withdraw their request to revise their operating hours, saying that the various comments and proposals had opened up a minefield.

Paul Perkovic – Described current CalTrans proposal for Highway 1 intersection work in Montara; mentioned that George Bergman has revised the proposed Concept Plan replacement process, we will discuss this briefly at the next Planning and Zoning Committee meeting, and there will be an informal meeting with Lennie Roberts, PMAC, and MCC representatives on Thursday, July 16. Announced Montara Sanitary District board meeting on Tuesday, July 14, and future composting workshop on July 24.

Committee Reports

Mary Hobbs – Bank balance is now \$261.86.

Laura Stein – Planning and Zoning Committee will next meet July 15 at 7:30 pm at the Three Zero Café. Protocol Committee met Monday, July 6, discussed a mission statement, recommended limiting public comment period, wanted to improve communication with special districts in the area, and assigned districts to Council members as follows:

Paul Perkovic - Sewer Authority Midcoastside, Montara Sanitary District, Granada Sanitary District

Ric Lohman – Half Moon Bay and Pt. Montara Fire Protection Districts, Cabrillo Unified School District, Agricultural Advisory Council

David Spiselman – Local Agency Formation Commission, Half Moon Bay City Council, Pescadero Municipal Advisory Council

Mary Hobbs – Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, Conservation Resource Management Program, Resource Conservation District

Joe Gore – San Mateo County Harbor District, SAM Trans, Mosquito Abatement District, Princeton Advisory Committee

Laura Stein – City/County Association of Governments, Coastside County Water District, Citizens Utilities Company

Each member is supposed to monitor the agenda and actions of their assigned boards and report to the Council any issue of interest.

Joe Caruso (Coastal Liaison for Supervisor Richard Gordon) – Just turned 50 (Rich, not Joe). Nothing to report.

Regular Agenda

1. Discussion of the current Half Moon Bay Fire Protection District process, which insures our community has adequate fire protection on the Mid-Coast.

Laura Stein – Invited Chief Ron Delgado to attend meeting, interested in learning if there are problems with water supply in the community for fire suppression, how they could be fixed, etc.

Ron Delgado – Introduced Clayton Jolley, the new Fire Marshall; thanked the Council for supporting the traffic light proposal at Coronado. The water transmission pipeline that supplies water to the El Granada area from sources to the south was installed about 46 years ago, it provides water for domestic service and to maintain reserves in several holding tanks above El Granada. Fire flow requirements vary based on the structure, but typically a residential requirement is 1,000 gallons per minute (gpm), commercial requirements begin at 1,500 gpm and vary based on the size of the structure; there is also a flow duration requirement. The existing pipeline has had numerous leaks and breaks, interrupting the supply; it also has a pumping station, which is a point of failure. The safest water source has storage tanks that provide gravity flow to the area needing fire protection. Fire Chiefs don't like to see pumps in water supply systems. By replacing the 10 inch line with a larger, 16 inch transmission line, Coastside County Water District (CCWD) will be able to eliminate the need for the pump station and will thus provide safer fire coverage. With infill development, buildings are closer and closer together, which increase the risk of fires spreading from one structure to an adjoining building.

Laura Stein – Is there currently a problem in the area?

Chief Delgado – Yes. He doesn't feel that the current system is reliable. There is enough flow on a home by home basis (test measurements need to show a flow rate of 1,000 gallons per minute at the hydrants that would serve the new residence), but there is an overall problem.

David Spiselman – What about the situation in Moss Beach?

Chief Delgado – Citizens Utilities needs to increase their storage capacity; they have installed all of the larger mains that the Point Montara Fire Protection District requested, but the overall water supplies are not enough to permit additional connections. New homes must be sprinklered, and those outside the CCWD or Citizens Utilities service areas also must put in storage tanks based on the structure size.

Laura Stein – Could you explain the approval process involved with the fire department?

Chief Delgado – The owner submits plans to the San Mateo County Building Department; the County sends the plans (for sprinklers, roofs, exits, access, etc.) to the Fire District for approval or recommended changes. These requirements are satisfied by adding Conditions of Approval on the development permit or building permit.

Mary Hobbs – Is there a new storage tank in conjunction with the El Granada Water Transmission Pipeline project? Are storage tanks being put in elevated locations?

Chief Delgado – Yes; for instance, there is a storage tank at the top of El Granada Boulevard, or opposite the Half Moon Bay Airport. There about 15 homes above the tank at the top of El Granada, and a pump to serve them; however, there was no emergency generator when he came to the District, and when the Fire District observed the problem, CCWD installed a generator. Water levels must be maintained in the storage tanks, which is one of the reasons the larger pipeline is needed to replenish supplies.

Laura Stein – What I understand you saying is that currently we have sufficient water to protect our neighborhoods; is that right? What kind of measures can we take in the short run to protect the residents? At what point do we decide that the next house is the one that is going to make us unsafe?

Chief Delgado – Yes, but he's concerned because the system is unreliable due to age and capacity. We can improve fire safety through community training on fire prevention. There is no sufficient fire flow to keep all of us safe for certain; look at the fires in Florida right now, or the Oakland Hills fire. For conflagrations, there comes a point where there isn't enough water to put the fire out. The system isn't designed to take care of a conflagration, because the cost to the community would be impossible to bear. You can't design a system that will handle every fire that could break out.

Paul Perkovic – How can you put constraints on the water system to insure that the storage tanks will always have enough reserve to fight a normal sized fire, even after several maximum use days?

Chief Delgado – The Fire Districts are not hydraulic engineers or water experts; they expect the water utilities to make the appropriate determinations, and provide sufficient storage capacity.

David Spiselman – Has the Fire Department ever told people they cannot build because of insufficient fire flow?

Chief Delgado – Yes; for instance, there is insufficient static and residual pressure in the mains serving the back part of Princeton, and the Fire District has prevented construction of new structures back there.

Ric Lohman – When are there too many homes in the system to be truly safe?

Laura Stein – The issue of leaks in the system is incredibly confusing to me; she saw a report that said there were no leaks in the system; then one that said the leaks are minimal; then one that said they are so bad that they must be fixed; it seems like these documents are contradictory.

Leonard Woren – If you have a larger pipe (like the 16 inch replacement pipe) and no more water to put in it, how do you keep it full? Won't you end up with no pressure at all? If we don't have a problem now, why do we need a larger pipe? And if we do have a problem now, why are we allowing people to build more houses? Earlier you said the brush clearance around a house should be at least 30 feet, but the house next to his is only 15 feet away. It seems like we need more storage capacity, rather than a larger pipeline.

Chief Delgado – People who are required to install local supply tanks must put them uphill from the structure. Do we have a problem with fire safety? Yes, we do. Is there enough water in the system to allow building another house? Yes, there is. The Fire Department doesn't take a position on growth versus no growth; we just state what is required for fire safety.

Eva Coleman – We currently meet fire safety codes in this area, right? And as fire safety officer and our Chief, you would like us to be even safer? Does water to fight a fire come out of the main, or from the storage tanks? After a house is built, how does the Fire Department check to see that a house continues to meet safety requirements? Earlier you said that the system isn't reliable. Is there something specific breaking down that you're concerned about? The most recent annual report that CCWD issued stated, with no uncertainty at all, that CCWD has minor leakage which reaches maybe 5% a year.

Chief Delgado – Yes, we currently meet safety codes. Yes, I would like us to be even safer. Water for a fire comes from the storage tanks through the mains, and is replaced by new water from the water source to refill the storage tanks. Annually, we run flow tests on the hydrants, and that tells the hydraulic engineers when they need to make improvements in their infrastructure. CCWD is proposing to fix an old system, and I'm in favor of that.

Kathryn Slater-Carter – The Coastal Development Permit for CCWD states that fire capacity is to be provided by tanks and pumps, and not by increasing the pipeline size. Also expressed concerns about reductions in side yard setbacks; the Board of Supervisors said that these proposals had been passed by the Fire Protection Districts and there had not been any objections. She is concerned about situations with just six feet between houses, with a fence running down the middle of that area. Would you consider recommending that the new 222 water connections just discovered by CCWD should be restricted to conforming lots? Is a sixteen-unit apartment building more difficult to protect than sixteen separate homes?

Chief Delgado – No; the issue of a five foot setback or a three foot setback hasn't been a problem, and there are a number of homes built with common walls. There is no answer to the other question – there are too many variables, there is no simple answer that one situation is safer than the other.

Laura Stein – She has heard that manufactured homes are not sprinklered.

Chief Delgado – Every home built – every building larger than 1,000 square feet – has to be sprinklered. That was adopted in 1992. There also are State laws that say that mobile homes, or manufactured homes, do not need to be sprinklered. To get this situation changed, you would need to get State law changed. The California Fire Chiefs Association (and the San Mateo County Fire Chiefs Association, of which he is currently president) opposed the provision allowing unsprinklered manufactured homes, but the building lobby was able to persuade the Legislature to give them special treatment.

2. Deliberation and vote on recommendation to County Planning and Building regarding the proposed Coverdell Plant Stand in Miramar

Laura Stein – The Planning and Zoning Committee considered this issue, and proposes a letter to the County.

Chuck Kozak – We have been discussing with Ken Coverdell the idea of putting in a retail outlet for Blue Sky Designs on a residentially-zoned parcel along Highway 1 just north of Nurserymen's Exchange. The letter that he drafted emphasizes that we support this specific project, without intending to set any precedents for future proposals, recommending a landscaping plan, access only from Purisima Way, etc.

Ken Coverdell – It has been a pleasure working with the Planning and Zoning Committee, they have been extremely thoughtful and helpful. The project is being proposed as a one-year use permit, to be renewed on an annual basis, so that if there are any kinds of problems created by the project, one year would bring those to light and give the neighbors a second chance if things are not working out appropriately. Plans to put in 30 Monterey cypress trees along the Highway 1 easement to screen the property and adjacent owners. There is a left turn lane both at Miramar and Alto, and these, connecting with Purisima Way,

provide a convenient means of ingress and egress. He owns two (substandard) parcels and has an encroachment permit from the County to put plantings in the right of way. There would be one handicap and nine off-street parking spaces (with possibly more if some Caltrans property can be acquired). Blue Sky has a three-acre nursery further up the canyon, but it is only accessible via a one-lane historic road. They plan for the flower stand to be a local, family operated business selling locally grown items.

Mary Hobbs – In design regulations, how is “flower stand” defined?

Ken Coverdell – Not to exceed 400 square feet in area, for the sale of agricultural products grown in the area.

David Spiselman – These are two substandard lots that you could put small houses on?

Ken Coverdell – There are enough houses, this would provide an opportunity to beautify the area.

Ric Lohman – With a permanent building, won't there be pressure to keep the operation going even if there are problems, when the time comes up to renew the use permit?

Ken Coverdell – No; a nursery is a permitted use in a residential zoning district, if the retail operation is a problem we would just use the property as a nursery.

Leonard Woren – Thinks it is great that Ken is bringing this to the Council first; this is what we've been trying to get for a long time. We've been saying we want fewer houses, more commercial services. This is probably the kind of thing that we do want. How tall do you plan on letting the trees get? Those along Highway 1, and those along the neighbors?

Ken Coverdell – The hedge plantings adjacent to the neighbors would be up to them; the trees along the Highway would be trimmed at about 20 feet, below the utility lines.

David Spiselman – **Moves that the Council approve the letter written by Chuck Kozak.** [see attached] Seconded by Laura Stein. Approved unanimously.

3. Discussion and vote on recommendation to San Mateo County Public Works Department regarding impact of using Ox Mountain Landfill as the sole County dump site

Kathryn Slater-Carter – The Hillside landfill in Colma will be closed soon (probably by the end of 1999), and all of the trash will be diverted to Ox Mountain. This may mean an increase of about 10% in the number of trucks using Highway 92. She thinks the draft San Mateo County Integrated Waste Management Plan should address impacts of increased traffic on Highway 1 and Highway 92; this issue is ignored entirely in the report.

Paul Perkovic – Moved that the Council write a letter saying that the Council examined this issue and asked that a traffic impact analysis be included in the Integrated Waste Management Plan. Seconded by Laura Stein. Approved by unanimous consent.

4. Request to Harbor District Commissioners and recommendation to County regarding RFP for development of El Granada Post Office land / median strip

Ken Lundie – The Harbor District owns several parcels in El Granada, including one of about 2.5 acres next to the Post Office and another in the median strip fronting on Highway 1. The Harbor District is in debt to the tune of about \$17 million. Since June of this year, Requests for Proposals (RFPs) have been solicited from builders interested in developing either or both sites. The Harbor Commission will be holding a meeting on August 19, but it will be at the Municipal Services Building in South San Francisco, not here on the coast. Three of the five members on the Harbor Commission are now appointed, rather than elected, due to a series of unexpected events. Decisions affecting long-range impacts on the coast should

not be made by an appointed board, but rather after new members are elected. The District has made no attempt to solicit community input.

Mary Hobbs – What are they supposed to be voting on at the August 19 meeting?

Ken Lundie – By then, the staff should have narrowed the prospective proposals and the Commission could vote then to accept one or more proposals. Accepting a proposal would mean that the proponent had a 90-day exclusive negotiating time period with the Commission to work out details of an actual project.

Ric Lohman – We have been told by the General Manager that the District would look for community input.

Leonard Woren – Four packages have been submitted by the deadline (which was yesterday), one from a Daly City developer, one from Dave Worden and a partner, one from Keet Nerhan, and one from xxxx. He suggests that the Harbor District should call a special election to fill the vacancies. He also suggested that there may have been Brown Act issues with the most recent appointment. The Harbor District is supposed to charge actual costs for services they provide.

Leni Schulz – The Harbor District has owned this property for 40 years, and now they give people one month to come up with a proposal. What's the rush?

Barbara Mauz – Asks that the Council write a letter and ask that the decision be delayed until after the election in November. The composition of the current Commission is highly questionable.

David Spiselman – At the last Planning and Zoning Committee meeting, a letter was approved to the Harbor District expressing concerns about the “fast track” for these proposals.

Laura Stein – Moved that the Council extend the letter drafted by Planning and Zoning to also ask the Harbor District to hold their meetings on the coastside when they are discussing issues that directly affect the coastside, that they attend our meeting on August 12, take no action until they have had a chance to hear from the community, and provide a schedule for a series of community input forums similar to the Brady/LSA meetings that were held for the Fitzgerald Marine Reserve. Seconded by Ric Lohman. Approved by unanimous consent.

Additional Public Comment

Duncan MacLean – Gave an update on the abalone aquaculture project at Pillar Point Harbor.

Future Agenda Items

For the July 22 meeting:

ABAG Subregional Planning Study

Public interview of candidates for current opening on the Council

Possible items for future agendas (carried over from previous meeting notes):

Harbor District development proposals public process

Abalone aquaculture project update

County Parks General Plan for Fitzgerald Marine Reserve and Pillar Point Marsh

Variances policy

CCWD report on water availability

Concept Plan replacement

Sewage spillage

Airport Master Plan

Design review process

Adjourned at 11:25 pm.

[Disclaimer: These are preliminary, unreviewed notes taken in real-time by a Council member and participant. They have NOT been augmented by viewing the broadcast of the meeting on Thursday, July 9, 1998. Although they attempt to be a neutral summary of points made by each speaker, they are neither a verbatim transcript nor official minutes. Additions, clarifications, and corrections from the community are welcomed. As with the previous notes, these notes will be made generally available via hard copy and electronically on the Montara Web Site and via the MIDCOAST-L@LISTS.MONTARA.COM community distribution list server, to enable the Council and the community to keep a relatively clear and complete written summary of the discussions. Complete videotapes of meetings are broadcast by MCTV, cable Channel 6, following each meeting, and archived copies of these tapes may also be available for review, if appropriate. My apologies to the grammarians for mixing voice; the first person sentences were more-or-less direct quotations of statements made by the speaker, the third person sentences were my summary of what was said. Where you find bracketed ellipses, such as [...], it indicates that the speaker said something that was lost in the notes.]