

# Midcoast Community Council

*An elected Advisory Council to the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors  
representing Montara, Moss Beach, El Granada, Princeton, and Miramar*  
P.O. Box 248, Moss Beach, CA 94038-0248 - [www.MidcoastCommunityCouncil.org](http://www.MidcoastCommunityCouncil.org)

**Chris Johnson**   **Lisa Ketcham**   **Dan Haggerty**   **Erin Deinzer**   **Dave Olson**   **Laura Stein**   **Claire Toutant**  
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Date: December 9, 2015  
To: Dave Holbrook, San Mateo County Planning Dept  
CC: Owen Lawlor, Lawlor Land Use  
Nancy Cave, District Manager, CA Coastal Commission  
Marlene Finley, San Mateo County Parks Director  
From: Midcoast Community Council/ Chris Johnson, Chair  
Subject: **Valleamar Bluff Pre-Application Workshop - PLN2015-00380 -**  
6 new homes on 2.5-acre property zoned RM/CZ, at Valleamar & Juliana

Thank you for holding the Pre-Application Workshop for this project, conveniently at the MCC's December 9 meeting. The MCC and the community were deeply involved in prior development proposals for the Valleamar Bluff property from 1997-2001 and we have collected past and current records on a page on our website devoted to this issue.<sup>1</sup>

## **Key issues for this project are:**

- Protect sensitive habitats as defined in LCP Policy 7.1 and buffer areas. Coastal Prairie and rare plant habitat is mapped by Botanist Toni Corelli over at least a third of the site.
- Require adequate setback from bluff edge per LCP Policy 9.8, including tsunami events and increased erosion from sea level rise. Prohibit future shoreline armoring to protect the proposed development.
- Ensure existing public access along the bluff is maintained through provision of a "floating easement" that will move inland as bluff retreat occurs.
- Avoid impacting bluff stability and Marine Reserve water quality with increased surface and subsurface water flow draining at the cliff.
- Ensure that new development best preserves the visual and open space qualities of the site, per LCP Policy 8.5.

**The underlying problem in addressing these issues is the number and configuration of lots on the 2.5-acre property.** A County staff decision, with no public notification (1991 Lot Line Adjustment LLA-89-21), created seven lots out of the 40 laid out in the 1908 subdivision. In determining the number and configuration of the lots, there was apparently no consideration of the RM/CZ five-acre minimum lot size requirement in place since 1973, nor the hazard/environmental constraints of the site. County Counsel noted in 1990 "that future buyers should be aware that the recordation of the Record of Survey does not imply that the resultant parcels are buildable."<sup>2</sup> Coastal Commission

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.midcoastcommunitycouncil.org/valleamar-bluff/>

<sup>2</sup> Letter to Richard Charnock re tentative approval of LLA 89-21, 10/22/1990.  
<http://www.midcoastcommunitycouncil.org/storage/issues/plns/valleamarbluff/1990-10-22-VB-LLA-county-letters.pdf>

1998 staff report noted that the seven parcels created by LLA may actually require a merger and resubdivision subject to Coastal Development Permit approval.<sup>3</sup>

**Reconfiguring and reducing the number of parcels**, locating the houses along Vallemar among mature cypress trees, and permanently protecting the sensitive habitats, public trail, and bluff/cliff retreat area through an enforceable restriction such as a Conservation Easement would allow advantageous use of the property without significant adverse impacts. The result would provide lasting value for the property owners through more long-lasting protection from coastal erosion, and permanently unobstructed coastal views from each house.

Thank you for consideration of these comments.

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<sup>3</sup> CCC staff report A-1-SMC-98-049, p. 13, 10/16/1998  
<http://documents.coastal.ca.gov/reports/1998/11/F7a-11-1998.pdf>