



June 5, 2017

President Don Horsley and Members
San Mateo County Board of Supervisors
400 County Center
Redwood City, CA 94063

Re: Item #7 on the June 6, 2017 Agenda: Amendment of Development Agreement with Big Wave, LLC, PLN2013-00451

Dear President Horsley and Members of the Board

On behalf of Committee for Green Foothills (CGF), I write with disappointment that your Board is considering proposed Amendments to the Development Agreement with Big Wave, LLC. CGF and the other Appellants of this project (Sierra Club, Surfrider, and Pillar Ridge Mobile Home Community) worked collaboratively with County Planning and the Applicants to craft several modifications to the project that were of concern to Appellants and the greater community, which your Board approved in May 19, 2015.

One of the components of the project that CGF felt strongly about was the phasing of construction to ensure priority for the first phase of Wellness Center housing per Development Agreement Section 5.3.2.3 and CDP Condition #73:

“In no event will any construction for business uses take place prior to construction of the Wellness Center, Building 3.”

Development Agreement Section 5.3.8.3.1 reinforced this requirement:

“The County will not issue any building permits for any stand-alone business buildings until a building permit for a Wellness Center building has been issued and construction has commenced.”

Now, your Board is being asked to allow a proposed brewery to jump ahead of even the first Wellness Center building. Moreover, the brewery would be located in the area closest to the stream/riparian area and associated wetlands, rather than being clustered closest to the Wellness Center buildings as currently required. This new location would defeat the goal of clustering and phasing of office park buildings and parking areas to minimize impacts on sensitive habitats, and maximize preservation of prime agricultural lands, open space and scenic views during the 15-year Development Agreement.

The proposed retreat from prioritizing the Wellness Center’s housing appears to many as classic cognitive dissonance, considering your Board’s approval last month of \$44 million of Measure K funds for affordable housing, which is widely acknowledged as the among the most pressing problems the County faces.

It is also irksome and concerning that Big Wave still has not paid outstanding planning permit fees of \$56,804.22. As far as CGF is aware, no other applicants enjoy this kind of consideration. At a minimum, your Board should not approve any modifications to the Development Agreement until these fees are paid.

From its inception in 2006, the Big Wave project has been touted as a housing project that will help meet a critical need for people with developmental disabilities. County Planning and your Board found creative ways to allow this housing project on a site that is fundamentally inappropriate for housing from a planning perspective. The M-1 Industrial zoning does not allow housing. However, the County creatively determined that Big Wave housing was not really housing, but instead could be called a “modern sanitarium” which is allowed in any zoning district. Big Wave housing is adjacent to an airport, which places a vulnerable population at risk from potential crashes and other risks. The FAA, by letter, has twice warned that the County could lose all federal funding for both Half Moon Bay and San Carlos Airports due to non-compliance with federal grant assurances. The County decided the FAA wasn’t likely to carry out this threat. Big Wave housing is located in a tsunami inundation zone, but after relocating the housing to a relatively safer area in the “North Parcel Alternative”, and elevating first floors of the housing, the County decided that the reduced tsunami risk was acceptable. Big Wave housing is located adjacent to an existing unpermitted propane tank farm. The County assured Appellants that it would work diligently to find another site or mitigate the current facility. No alternative site has been found, and no significant mitigations have been implemented. This is an ongoing significant safety concern for residents of Pillar Ridge, and will become one for the future residents of Big Wave.

CGF did not go to the mat challenging various creative interpretations of zoning and planning requirements, as we, too, have felt that the benefits of creating housing for 50 people and their 20 caregivers are significant. We were, however, concerned from the beginning about the feasibility and impacts of the Business Park component of this project. Our concerns have not diminished.

CGF strongly supports the Midcoast Community Council comments per their 5/25/17 letter.

Last but no least, CGF objects to the Planning Director’s determination that a “Minor Modification” process is appropriate for making such significant changes to the Coastal Development Permit.

CGF urges the Board of Supervisors to maintain the current priority of construction for the Wellness Center as well as the phasing of Business Park buildings, and to redouble your efforts to address the real and present danger from the adjacent propane tank farm.

Sincerely,



Lennie Roberts, Legislative Advocate