

Midcoast Community Council

An elected Municipal Advisory Council to the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors

P.O. Box 248, Moss Beach, CA 94038 www.MidcoastCommunityCouncil.org

Lisa Ketcham . Dave Olson . Claire Toutant . Dan Haggerty . Chris Johnson . Brandon Kwan

Approved Minutes: Meeting on October 11, 2017, at GCSD

Call to Order. 7:01 PM

Attendance: all 6 Councilmembers present,
3 government representatives, and 22 members of the public

1. Board of Supervisors' Report and Reports from other Government Officials

Supervisor Don Horsley attended but had no formal report.

Harvey Rarback, member Half Moon Bay City Council, reported that the Council had approved a 3-month-long tent homeless shelter, site to be determined.

Regarding SFO aircraft noise, he supports proposed MCC letter to the FAA, and notes that Supervisor Pine has said that legal action would not be viable, having already been denied by the Ninth Circuit.

2. Public Comment and Announcements - none

3. Consent Agenda – approved 5-0-1 (Chris abstain)

a. Approve Minutes for September 13, 2017.

b. Approve Minutes for September 27, 2017.

4. Regular Agenda

- a. (7:05) Bulk Propane Storage Facility on Airport Street** – Update on incompatible hazardous land use adjacent to medium-high-density residential Pillar Ridge community, including two recent gas leaks. (Ketcham)
Desired Outcome: Informational and determine next steps.

Lisa Ketcham, as Pillar Ridge resident, gave slide presentation and Pillar Ridge residents Jose Tamez, Alejandro Lugo, Emerita Arellano, and Paul Bowman (Resident Manager) testified to what they saw and experienced during the two recent propane leak events,

- 9/22: ruptured tank with “loud bang and huge white cloud of propane” driving nearby residents from their homes
- 10/3: discovery of on-going leak of 15,000-gal tank due to “operator error”

Lisa asked that the County move this carelessly operated hazardous facility safely away from their community. AmeriGas always maintained that the smaller tanks were empty. After the explosive leak on 9/22, AmeriGas personnel just pretended to Fire personnel that nothing had happened. During the 10/3 leak, when the AmeriGas rep arrived at the site he said the tank was empty and perfectly safe, even though it was visibly leaking. It is not known when the operator error occurred or how long the tank had been leaking. Any information from AmeriGas in that regard cannot be relied on, given their record, and they cannot be relied on to safely operate the grandfathered 15,000-gal tank.

Twelve Pillar Ridge residents attended the meeting.

<http://www.midcoastcommunitycouncil.org/storage/mtgs-com2017/2017-10-11-propane-yard-slides.pdf>

Chris reported on toxic or fatal effects of breathing the methyl mercaptan odorant that is routinely allowed to drain from the “empty” tanks. Effects of long-term exposure are unknown. It is heavier than air and can settle into the water table and wetlands.

Summer Burlison, County Planner working with AmeriGas since 2015: Regarding the smaller tanks, there are 9 left on site to be removed within next 3 weeks. Code Compliance has opened a violation case [VIO2017-00349, issued 10/11/17] about the delay in removal of the “empty” tanks which are an expanded use requiring a CDP. Fire Dept is looking into a requirement for fire staff to be on site during tank removal. Pillar Ridge manager will be notified of removal date. Regarding the 15,000-gal stationary tank, Fire Dept would address gas leak issues. The bulk propane use in this location was established pre-LCP as an allowed use in the M-1 zoning district. After-the-fact CDP will be required for the perimeter fence, graveled areas, and restoration of remainder of the lot. Fire Dept will include safety requirements as well, such as a fire hydrant. No blast protection is proposed.

Supervisor Horsley: We can take a look at fire safety, especially in terms of how they’ve operated. We were not aware of the number of leaks. As for the 15,000-gal tank we have to look how we can make that safer, or perhaps we’ll have to take legal action.

Bill Kehoe, Moss Beach: What is timeline to resolve this issue? What about monitoring and safety measures? What kinds of regulations are needed to prevent harm to neighboring populations?

Lennie Roberts, Committee for Green Foothills: Getting rid of this hazardous facility is on her list of things to get done before she retires. Many safety measures are required on new installations, which this tank does not comply with. County needs to change direction and move forward to abate this fundamental hazard next to a sensitive population. The only solution is to get rid of it as a land use next door to Pillar Ridge.

Mike Ferreira: Sierra Club has a policy regarding environmental justice. This facility makes no sense next to the mobilehome park. There is space available down coast. The County has a larger responsibility for health and safety. The Board or County attorney should move to abate this very clear danger to folks that are kind of helpless.

Marcia Yeates, Moss Beach: Pillar Ridge has only one exit, which is near the propane facility. How are residents to escape in an emergency?

Dave suggested Pillar Ridge consider web cams and mercaptan sensors to gather evidence.

Claire requested clarification on history of the facility and suggested that Big Wave management might be able to exert some influence on resolving the problems.

Lisa said she brought up the issue in Jan 2015 when Big Wave site plan included a propane deflection wall which would have deflected any leaks away from BW but toward Pillar Ridge homes. BW engineer Scott Holmes was copied on this presentation. He couldn’t attend tonight, but thanked Lisa for this effort.

Chris finds this situation outrageous, noting it happened in plain view over a decade.

Brandon described the situation as gross negligence by the property owner and urged action.

Dan: In this day and age of safety regulations, there has to be something that can be done. It’s just a matter of will of the County.

Supervisor Horsley is appalled that this got out of hand. AmeriGas does not willingly cooperate. It took 2 years to get the smaller tanks removed. He will talk to County Counsel about possible legal remedies. Planning Dept has to look at county code, but he can go beyond that -- what can we do that’s not in our current code book?

b. (8:13) San Mateo County Resource Conservation District -- Presentation on recent and current Coastside projects by Executive Director Kellyx Nelson.

http://www.midcoastcommunitycouncil.org/storage/mtgs-com2017/2017-10-11-RCD_presentation.pdf

Supervisor Horsley is excited about the projects and has learned from them.

Dan spurred a discussion about compost enrichment and biochar. Both are shown to improve water and soil quality and stability. An experiment using some of these techniques at Cabrillo Farms was inconclusive due to short duration, but a project to recharge ground water continues.

Gael Erikson said that the schools might be a source of volunteers, which are needed. Kellyx said that response from the schools has been disappointing and Gael volunteered to help with that.

Kellyx encouraged everyone to volunteer on RCD projects, including upcoming First Flush pollution study.

c. (8:54) Public Coastal Viewing Area Plan at La Costanera Restaurant per Consent Agreement with Coastal Commission (Ketcham)

Desired Outcome: After-the-fact approval of 9/26/17 MCC comments regarding view-blocking boulders and shrubs.

Presentation by Lisa

<http://www.midcoastcommunitycouncil.org/storage/mtgs-com2017/2017-10-11-Costanera-MCC-presentation.pdf>

Motion: Approve 9/26/17 MCC comments as sent – approved 6-0.

d. (9:03) SFO Aircraft Noise over the Coastside -- Follow up to 9/13/17 MCC informational forum. (Johnson)

Desired Outcome: Approve MCC letter to FAA Administrator in support of SFO Roundtable recommendations to mitigate aircraft noise on the Midcoast.

Chris presented the letter.

Motion: Approve letter as amended – approved 6-0.

<http://www.midcoastcommunitycouncil.org/storage/mtgs-com2017/2017-10-11-MCC-FAA-noise.pdf>

5. Council Activity – Correspondence, meetings attended

GCSD PAC meeting 9/28: Chris reported the GCSD meeting room was double booked and the PAC meeting (40+ attendees) moved to Comfort Inn. He feels the PAC needs to have regularly scheduled meetings and make those known. This also underscores the need for meeting space on the Midcoast.

Quarry Park Master Plan 10/3 Community Meeting #4 to refine alternatives, attended by Dave, Chris, Dan, Lisa. Large attendance – was felt to be productive over all.

Reminders:

10/18 Broadway street-end improvement ribbon-cutting ceremony, 11 am.

10/20 close of applications for open MCC seat.

6. Future Agendas

Oct 25: Applicant interviews for MCC vacancy

Adjourn: 9:17 PM