

Lisa Ketcham 2/22/12 comments on MCC GGNRA RCdT Neighbors Committee
(aka NCCA – Northern Coastal Communities Association)

First I'd like to recognize the Northern Coastal Communities Association (NCCA) for their organizing and hard work on behalf of their neighborhoods, and thank Bill Kehoe for sponsoring the Rancho neighbors' issues at Midcoast Council meetings and helping them connect directly with the National Park Service.

Midcoast Council Bylaws, Purpose #5 is "To assist the many associations, organizations, ad hoc groups and individuals of the Community, who seek to communicate with the County and other governmental agencies about matters of public interest..."

The Midcoast Council provides a televised public forum to draw attention to local concerns, inviting government and agency officials to speak, answer questions, and hear from the community. The Council has held a number of public meetings involving the National Park Service and fire agencies where NCCA members made presentations, comments, and direct connections with the officials who could help address their issues.

Other examples of the Council assisting local neighborhood organizations are the El Granada group EGNAG which organized over a cell tower issue, and the Homeowners Association at Pillar Ridge seeking help from the County from 2001 to 2004. These successes did not require an MCC committee. All it took to get the ball rolling was a councilmember to sponsor the item on the MCC agenda and invite all the parties involved.

Although Bill has called this group a Midcoast Council committee, they self identify as the NCCA. They make their decisions without consulting or getting approval of the Midcoast Council and they meet directly with the National Park Service. As NCCA they are free to pursue and lobby their own interests. As a Midcoast Council committee, they would be subject to Council direction, as stated in our Bylaws (Section 4.05). The Council would need to consider the interests and concerns of the Midcoast community as a whole before taking a position. I question how the Midcoast Council can have a committee consisting of only one councilmember and the NCCA google group membership which is undisclosed but open to anyone.

It's exciting to see an energized and involved neighborhood group like the NCCA. I'm glad the Midcoast Council public forums have helped focus attention on their issues and make the connections they need. I would hope that they would send representatives to become involved in a Midcoast Council Parks or GGNRA committee with a broader scope of issues and Midcoast representation.