

June 6, 2004



Sara Bortolussi

San Mateo County Planning and Building Division
Mail Drop PLN122, 455 County Center
Redwood City, CA 94063
650.363.1839 - FAX: 650.363.4849

RE: PLN2004-00122 Consideration of staff level CDP for brush & tree removal in accordance with HMB Fire District vegetation management requirements on an undeveloped 8,500 s/f lot on the northeast corner of Paloma and Balboa in El Granada. APN 047 105-090

Dear Sara:

The Planning and Zoning Committee of the MidCoast Community Council reviewed the above-referenced project on May 19, 2004, with the applicant in attendance. Our apologies for the lateness of this letter.

We believe the vegetation on this lot is a remnant of Montecitos riparian corridor, which is only a block to the north. The heavy growth of arroyo willow is evidence of underground water flow. This is essentially a sensitive habitat and is acknowledged as such by the fire department letter. Canopy is arroyo willow with under-story of native California blackberry and non-native wild radish.

The arroyo willow has much higher moisture content than dryland tree species, and does not create the heavy understory of duff and dead debris that other trees do. Because of this and the sensitive nature of these habitats and their explicit protection under both the LCP and the Coastal Act, we do not believe that the guidelines for trimming and thinning that have been adopted for Eucalyptus/Pine/Cedar stands should apply to this sort of vegetation.

The recommendation of the committee is to remove brush under-story and trim willow up 3-4 feet off the ground level, but not to remove any willow from within the stand. There are existing large cleared areas on the east and north sides already, and any further clearing should be limited to 30' from nearest neighboring flammable structure on Balboa side of lot.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please keep us informed of any future changes, re-designs, hearings, approvals or appeals of this project.

Sincerely,



Sara Bassler
Chair, MCC Planning and Zoning Committee

Cc: Chief Gareth S. Harris, HMB Fire Department
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