

[Draft] Minutes of the 27 February 2002 Midcoast Community Council meeting

The meeting was called to order by Chair Chuck Kozak at 7:40 p.m.

Members present: Sandy Emerson, Chuck Kozak, Ric Lohman, Paul Perkovic, Kathryn Slater-Carter, and April Vargas.

Member absent: Karen Wilson.

Public Comment

Chuck Kozak (Montara) described the notices from the County regarding the mapping project for properties with septic systems or wells. Contact Erdmann Rogge at 363-4355 for further information. Also, the Coastside Design Review Committee will be holding an extra meeting on Thursday, February 28, 2002, at 3 p.m. at the Moss Beach Sheriff's Substation.

Board of Supervisors Report

Joe Caruso (Chief Legislative Aide to Supervisor Rich Gordon) now takes care of Bayside issues, as well as Pacifica and La Honda. The Drug and Alcohol Board needs volunteers; call Joe at 599-1013. There are a number of other openings currently, including the new San Mateo County Arts Commission; application deadline will be March 9.

Chuck Kozak gave a brief summary of the Planning Commission's consideration today of a proposed project in El Granada in the Community Open Space Conservation zoning district. The Commission determined that the environmental document was insufficient. An appeal by the applicant to the Board of Supervisors is expected. Chuck was curious what the status of the other two issues – the well application and the lot legalization – which were not acted upon by the Commission. Joe said that Lily Toy had said that the next step for the applicants would be to appear before the Board of Supervisors.

Ric Lohman recalled that when the Board referred the project (previously appealed) back to the Planning Commission, it was to allow all components of the project to be considered together. He felt that allowing the project to be appealed in part violated that intent.

April Vargas asked a question about a piece of political literature. Joe – carefully pointing out that he was now speaking as an individual, not as Supervisor Gordon's aide – said that Supervisor Gordon had complained about one of his quotes being used in a mailer in favor of one of the candidates for 19th Assembly District, but in a "hit piece" context. It turns out that the piece was not authorized by any of the candidates, but was put together

by an independent campaign committee (a political action committee). Independent expenditures cannot be coordinated with the candidate or candidates that they are supporting.

Joe (returning to his Legislative Aide persona) then presented a commendation for Joe Gore for his service on the Council. He then read the Certificate of Election for Kathryn Slater-Carter from Warren Slocum and presented it to Kathryn.

Committee Reports

Treasurer's Report: Kathryn Slater-Carter reported that our checking account balance is \$291.37.

Parks and Recreation Committee: Sandy Emerson reported that the March 4 meeting will include a presentation on eucalyptus management by Cindy Roessler and Stan Hooper from the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District. Also, the County's recent Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Study results will be presented at March 13 Midcoast Community Council meeting and will also be discussed at an April 8 forum.

Planning and Zoning Committee: Paul Perkovic, Vice-Chair, reported that the February 20 committee meeting considered a number of projects, including a proposed 5-unit apartment building in El Granada, a remodel on Harte Street in Montara, and an after-the-fact tree removal permit for a parcel in Montara. Two residential projects on El Granada Boulevard were continued because one committee member lives within 500 feet of the projects (and only 4 voting members were present). The next regular Planning and Zoning Committee meeting will be Wednesday, March 6 at 7:30 p.m. at the Three Zero Cafe.

Chuck Kozak reported on the Coastal Development Permit applications for test borings for the Devil's Slide Tunnel portals. That item was continued at today's Planning Commission hearing.

Public Works Committee: April Vargas received some material on a distribution main replacement project in El Granada for Coastside County Water District. So far none of the Council members has designated a committee member. Community members who are interested in serving on this committee should contact the Chair at 728-5215.

Consent Agenda

Approval of Minutes for 13 February 2002 – Because the draft minutes were not yet available, this item was continued to the next meeting.

Regular Agenda

1. Review and Discussion of Terms and Conditions of San Mateo County's Purchase of the Mirada Surf Property in El Granada

Ric Lohman introduced the item, describing how the Mirada Surf project has been discussed over the years. The Planning and Zoning Committee several years ago realized that we needed a strategic plan, rather than coping with every project on an individual basis. The El Granada waterfront was selected as the first area to work on a strategic plan, partly because of the many jurisdictions involved, variety of zoning districts, and multiple property owners. An El Granada Waterfront Task Force was formed to bring together representatives from the County, City of Half Moon Bay, Midcoast Community Council, San Mateo County Harbor District, and various property owners.

This group eventually focused on a single area, known as Mirada Surf, which had been the subject of several development proposals in the early 1990s. Eventually, a proposal came out of the group for a 35-home subdivision. However, because this area was designated in the County's Land Use Plan as a Community Park, was zoned for minimum development (the two parcels were thought to be entitled to just two density credits, thus only two homes), and has been shown in the Montara / Moss Beach / El Granada Community Plan since 1976 as a green belt or open space separating the community of El Granada from the area to the south, there had been considerable community opposition to the proposed projects. Ric then introduced Lee Thompson, Deputy County Counsel.

Lee Thompson described the agreement – noting that the document circulated at the meeting was not the final document. It provides that the eastern parcel would be purchased by the County for \$3,000,000. That purchase has already closed. The County also has an option to purchase the western parcel for an additional \$3,000,000. The County also has the right to extend that option for another 6 months for a consideration of \$75,000 additional. The County's intent is for fundraising to occur during the option period, not for purchase by County funds. The price was determined by appraisals conducted by both the County and the property owners. This agreement also resolved potential lawsuits by the owners.

Ric Lohman asked about the funding – it had been turned over to the Park Foundation to raise the additional \$3,000,000. Sandy Emerson explained that the San Mateo Park and Recreation Foundation is an independent, 501(c)3 organization that raises funds on behalf of County parks. The Foundation has a goal of \$3,500,000 to complete the purchase and allow some appropriate improvements. Julia Bott, julia@supportparks.org or San Mateo County Parks and Recreation Foundation, 215 Bay Road, Menlo Park, CA 94024, is the contact. Further information is available at www.supportparks.org.

Ric Lohman asked about the situation if the western parcel is not acquired. It appears that through the lot line adjustment process, the western parcel would be left with 5 density credits or individual parcels, where previously there had been only 2. Thus, the

community is facing a potentially larger development on the blufftop than had been previously expected. Lee Thompson said that another person in County Counsel's office handles lot line adjustments. Kathryn Slater-Carter explained that we have seen tiny pieces of land that cannot be developed suddenly turn into larger parcels through lot line adjustments.

April Vargas asked who would be handling the lot line adjustment issue. Lee Thompson did not know which specific attorney in the office would be handling that matter.

Paul Perkovic asked about the settlement of potential lawsuits. Each parcel will be treated separately, according to Lee Thompson. Paul also asked about the history of the assessed valuations on this property, most recently – through the property owner's own appraiser – at less than \$700,000 – resulting in much lower property tax revenue for schools, etc. Why are the current appraisals so high compared to the previous appraisals? Lee Thompson said he had only been involved in drafting the agreement, not in the negotiations, and that he did not know the entire history of the parcel's assessed valuations.

Bern Smith (El Granada), who serves on the San Mateo County Parks and Recreation Commission, asked if there is a County definition for the phrase "open space," which appears several times in the agreement. Lee Thompson explained that the land use designation is for a community park, but he did not have an explicit definition. Bern also described that a large number of tires and other debris was removed from the parcel, as well as several vehicles. The Park Foundation has raised, in its entirety over three years, less than \$3,000,000, he thinks. The El Granada community, in particular, needs to step up to the plate to work on fundraising, or the opportunity to acquire the western parcel may be lost.

2. Public Forum on Measure A, Special Tax, Cabrillo Unified School District, on the March 5, 2002 General Election ballot

April Vargas served as moderator.

Dwight Wilson, a member of the Cabrillo Unified School District Governing Board, presented the argument in favor of Measure A. The District is facing a loss of up to \$750,000 as a result of cuts in state funding. The effects include possible elimination of busing, increases in class sizes, loss of teachers, etc. A parcel tax is the only way a school district can raise funds for operations. It will only tax improved parcels.

Steve Okonek, a Half Moon Bay resident, presented the argument against Measure A. There are many claims concerning the potential catastrophic consequences if this measure is not adopted. He held up a front page from the San Jose Mercury News in which the Governor announced his most recent plans to continue funding education in the state. The potential cutback of \$875,000 represents only a 5% cut. He supported the bond measure

several years ago and the previous parcel tax, but thinks that construction of the new middle school should be underway before the District asks for more money.

Mimi Curry (parent of a student at Farallon View Elementary School) asked what the current budget is. Dwight Wilson said the budget this year was \$xxx,xxx,xxx [missed this amount]. The CUSD receives less than many districts nearby in San Mateo County – as much as \$4,000 per student in some cases. Steve Okonek said there is still an outstanding liability, the new middle school, which we have waited six years for. Why aren't other nearby districts, such as Pescadero or Pacifica, also looking for parcel taxes.

Amy Worden (Half Moon Bay) asked why the parcel tax and Wavecrest and the middle school are being mixed up; they are completely separate issues. The proposed parcel tax would support existing programs – current operations, not capital projects. The bond issue was for capital projects, not operations. Steve Okonek stated that he was well aware that these were separate issues. However, they are both the responsibility of the same Board. If the Board has not delivered on the bond measure projects, why should we expect them to deliver on this measure. Dwight Wilson said that CUSD had anticipated the funding shortfalls, so that programs would not have to be cut. Neighboring districts are now announcing that they will be making cuts because of the state budget crisis.

Kathryn Slater-Carter (Montara) went to EdSource Online, and found articles that suggest that the K-12 funding in the state budget was fairly well protected. There are 5 cuts that account for 75% of the total funding cuts. Why don't we have a charter school or homeschooling programs? The Pacifica program grew from 5 students to 29, which brings in \$xxx,xxx [missed this figure] (based on CUSD's average daily attendance funding). CUSD loses more than \$300,000 in inter-district transfers. There are many residents in San Mateo County who are out of work, they can't afford this tax. Dwight Wilson said that CUSD generates, from parents, PTAs, foundations, other donations, more than any other district in the County. Charter schools must originate from the community, not from the school district. Home schooling is an individual issue; perhaps CUSD should look into that more. However, there was an article in the Half Moon Bay Review two weeks ago that reported on existing home schooling within the District. We will be hurting our young families by cutting reading programs, etc. Steve Okonek commented on the exemption item in the proposed tax. There are about 10,000 (out of 16,000) parcels in the District that would be taxed. Senior citizens would be exempt. He finds promoting the tax to seniors, who won't have to pay it, just wrong. In his own experience, his own children (who are now in their 30s) are paying higher property taxes than many of the senior citizens, because of when they purchased their homes. Why are we exempting the seniors?

Bob Ptacek (Montara) suggested that the Board uses teachers and children as a shield to hide behind for decisions that are bad. This parcel tax is going to raise approximately \$1,000,000. The District has spent a large amount on preliminary designs for a Fine Arts Center. You have not used the money we have given you wisely. Why should we trust you with any more? Dwight Wilson suggested that the "trust" word that is being thrown

back and forth is really used to mean "disagreement". The District is probably one of the most efficient districts in the County. The Fine Arts Building has had some discussion, but there has not been a decision. Steve Okonek doesn't want to get too deeply into the Wavecrest issue. However, after six years, it is time to do something. We've already punished one more class of kids each year that we've waited to have the school that we promised we'd have. Come through for me on one issue, and then I'll trust you on other issues. Bob went back to the spending on the Fine Arts Center. Dwight acknowledged that there has been some investigation of a Fine Arts Center. Steve feels awkward speaking against this measure, but he can't see going with a parcel tax until there is something concrete. The community has leverage by holding back on the parcel tax.

Amy Worden asked Steve Okonek about his daughter's experiences at Half Moon Bay High School. Has his daughter noticed an increase in test scores, or been in to see a counselor this year? Amy said her daughter's test scores have risen 20% through programs at the High School, and also because of the access to counselors. Steve Okonek supported the concept of counselors, and said as soon as we get a middle school, he'll support a parcel tax. Dwight Wilson went back to separating the two issues. A reduction in programs for the kids next year will be a reality. It is a separate issue from the middle school. What happens if we reduce the educational opportunities for our children, which will affect them for the rest of their lives?

Mimi Curry (Montara) has a third and a fifth grader. She has the impression that Steve Okonek doesn't trust the current board. But what will happen to those kids in the lower grades who face a class size increase? What is the benefit to withholding the parcel tax now? What penalty will we pay to our children for increased class size? Steve Okonek said he does not want a new School Board. He knows that the Board is doing the best they can. His point is that he's trying to give a nudge, that after six years something's got to happen for the middle school. Regarding long-term harm, he thinks that a 5% cut is not that severe. It is outweighed by having the leverage to force people to the table to resolve this middle school issue. Dwight Wilson said there are many required programs that are state mandated, but are not fully funded. Special education cost the District \$500,000 some years ago; now it is up to \$x,xxx,xxx [missed this figure]. This district competes with other districts for resources, such as teachers. Basic aid districts are paying their teachers as much as \$5,000 more than CUSD, which makes it difficult to recruit and retain teachers.

April Vargas asked how much money the District has already spent studying the potential Fine Arts Building. Dwight Wilson said he doesn't know the exact cost so far. April also asked how the school district secures additional funding. Is there someone whose responsibility is to look for grants? Dwight said that CUSD is part of a collaborative that write grants together. The administrative overhead of this district is the third lowest in the County. There is no single person responsible for grant writing.

In conclusion, Steve Okonek said the problem is basic aid versus revenue districts. There are only 41 basic aid districts in the State, according to comments made by Superintendent John Bayless at the forum earlier this evening.

Dwight Wilson reiterated the many programs that will face cutbacks if the parcel tax is not approved.

3. Midcoast Local Coastal Program Review Update

Chuck Kozak reported that the administrative draft is working its way through the County. George Bergman has suggested reserving the third Monday of each month for workshops.

Update on Continuing Council Projects

Chuck Kozak has been exploring whether it might be possible to do affordable housing on infill lots. A meeting with Marcia Raines, Terry Burnes, and several Council members has been rescheduled several times, now probably for March 6. Chuck and April will probably attend for the Council and will report at the next meeting.

April Vargas reported that the Secretary of the El Granada Manufactured Home Park Homeowners Association will be meeting with Supervisor Gordon.

Future Agenda

March 13, 2002 meeting

Consent - Signature cards and resolution transferring signatures

Consent - Minutes from 13 February 2002 and 27 February 2002 meetings

Consent - Designate ad hoc committee on By-Laws revisions (Chuck and Perk)

Consent - Letter on well issues (from Planning and Zoning Committee)

1. Presentation on the County Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment study

2. El Granada distribution main replacement

3. Great Coastal Places update

4. LCP Review

March 27, 2002 meeting - special location at Farallon School (CalTrans will pay!)

1. CalTrans on Devils Slide Portal and Rock Cut Aesthetics

April 1, 2002 Parks and Recreation Committee - special location?

1. Workshop on issues raised by the Needs Assessment study

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Paul Perkovic, Secretary.