

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

The meeting was called to order by Chair Chuck Kozak at 7:45 p.m.

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

Member absent: (none).

Public Comment

Ric Lohman (Miramar), speaking as an individual, criticized the decision by the Board of Supervisors to appoint a new member to the Coastside County Water District Board, ignoring the recommendations by the City Council of the City of Half Moon Bay and the Midcoast Community Council. Ric suggested that the Board of Supervisors paid more attention to the Half Moon Bay Coastside Chamber of Commerce than to representatives of the citizens of the City of Half Moon Bay or the unincorporated Coastside. The Board of Supervisors will be interviewing candidates on Monday and will be making an appointment on Tuesday. Ric urged citizens to make their views known to the Board.

Kathryn Slater-Carter (Montara) also expressed her concern, and her view that the treatment by the Board constituted a slap in the face to the local elected officials on the Coastside. She also announced that the Montara Sanitary District will be holding a retreat / workshop on Friday, March 29, from 10 a.m. to approximately 5 p.m., on water issues.

Jim Marsh (Half Moon Bay) invited everyone to Children's Day in Quarry Park from 11:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. April 14.

Chuck Kozak (Montara) announced that the first workshop on the Local Coastal Program Update will be held Monday, April 15, from 7:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. at El Granada School Multi-Purpose Room.

Board of Supervisors Report

PK Diffenbaugh (Legislative Aide to Supervisor Rich Gordon) said that the Board of Supervisors, by a unanimous vote, decided to appoint someone to fill the Coastside County Water District vacancy. Anyone who is interested in the position should contact Kim Langel by 5:00 p.m. Friday, March 29. A subcommittee of Supervisors Mike Nevin and Rich Gordon will interview the applicants and make a recommendation to the full Board for their meeting on Tuesday, April 2. Supervisor Gordon has asked the County Manager to investigate the possibility of adopting a developer fee for parks and recreation needs.

Committee Reports

In the interest of time, committee reports were deferred to the April 10 meeting.

Consent Agenda

April Vargas moved, and Sandy Emerson seconded, to accept the Consent Agenda items regarding approval of minutes from February 13 and 27, 2002, and designation of affordable housing committee (of Chuck Kozak, Paul Perkovic, and Karen Wilson). Approved by unanimous consent.

Regular Agenda

1. Review of Phase I report and recommendations from the Devil's Slide Tunnels Aesthetic Review Committee

Chuck Kozak and April Vargas introduced this item.

At the August 22, 2001 meeting of the MidCoast Community Council, Caltrans and HNTB Consultants gave a presentation of initial design concepts for the Devil's Slide Tunnel projects. At that meeting the MidCoast Community Council advocated for the formation of an Aesthetics Review Committee to work with Caltrans and the consultant to develop the aesthetic aspects of the tunnel design. Chuck Kozak and I were appointed by the Council to serve on this committee, along with Maxine Gonsalves and Jim Vreeland of the Pacifica City Council and Deborah Ruddock and Dennis Coleman of the Half Moon Bay City Council. Supervisor Rich Gordon was chosen by his colleagues to represent the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors.

Video tapes of the August 22 meeting of the MCC were made available to all Committee members and MCC were been given to Caltrans before the end of August. This MidCoast meeting was the most well-attended of any of the three August meetings held in the three jurisdictions represented by the elected Committee members. This meeting also generated, by far, the most public input and questions.

Specific areas of concern included:

Ensuring that the visual resources component of the LCP would be followed

Ensuring that the design chosen would have the least impact possible, minimizing cuts and fills and creating the least amount of disposal material

Minimal rock cut or no cut at all

Lowering the speed limit from 55 mph

Ensuring successful revegetation of the areas altered or disturbed during construction

Adopting a minimalist "gopher hole" approach to the design

The first Committee meeting was held on November 19, 2001. The objectives of the Committee were identified as being very much involved with the process of decision-making and public involvement. Providing the vehicle for public involvement, keeping accurate documentation of all meetings complete with a list of all exhibits presented and establishing links to the project supervisors to ensure timely and knowledgeable answers to questions and concerns from the public were all agreed upon as key components of the Committee's work. In addition, specific design components of the project were presented for review, discussion and final recommendation.

A total of seven meetings were held, the final one for Phase I considerations occurring on March 6. Due to the broad scope of the topics under review and the detailed discussions which accompanied each, it was decided that the Committee's work would be divided into two Phases. Tonight's presentation will cover Phase I, including the South Rock Cut, the South Portal, the North Portal and the bridge at the North Portal.

Phase II will cover the OMC building and disposal site, trail connections at the northern and southern ends of the project sites, the City of Pacifica's trail proposal and north/south ingress and egress vehicle issues relative to GGNRA lands, portal structures themselves and tunnel interior aesthetic elements, clarification and delimitation of scope and extent of revegetation programs, bridge aesthetic elements, coordination with GGNRA and the City of Pacifica on future of acquisition of lands and easements.

In addition, all correspondence from constituents on varying topics has been forwarded to the project manager and many of the issues of concerns to local residents have been discussed at the Committee meetings. This exchange of information will continue in subsequent meetings.

A number of site visits were organized for the entire Committee as well as members who made individual requests for additional on the ground investigations. The material contained in Appendix G, covering revegetation efforts, was included as a direct result of these site visits.

We fully expect that the Committee will continue to meet as the project moves forward. It is imperative that the public is kept informed and engaged in this process.

I want to thank all the members of the Committee, Caltrans and HNTB for the

collaborative attitude that they continue to bring to this project.

Skip Sowko from CalTrans said that April had already covered the background very thoroughly. The report is available on the District 4 web site at www.dot.ca.gov/dist4/

Terry Bolton from HNTB gave a slide presentation on the project. It can be considered as three separate projects: The north approach and portals, the tunnels themselves, and the south approach and portals. There is also an Operations and Maintenance Center (OMC).

On the north side, twin bridges west of the pond will transition from the existing roadway south towards the north portal. A box-girder, cast-in-place segmental structure is proposed for these bridges. The bridges would be visible from the Sanchez Arts Center, on Linda Mar, and similar locations; from most other areas, they will be screened by trees. Shamrock Ranch and adjacent areas would see the bridges. There would be openings at the piers, giving an arched appearance. Both cable-stayed and open arch types were rejected. A concrete arch bridge was not considered feasible. The recommended alternative does not need any falsework during construction.

Turning to the north portals, one layout would involve a rock cut extending 210 feet above the roadway. A second layout would involve only about 59 feet of cut. Layout two also would allow revegetation over the cut area, whereas layout one would leave a cut rock face. Layout two is the preferred alternative.

On the south portals, the committee considered a minimal cut for layout one, and a cut of 246 feet for layout two. Layout one involves a 59-foot cut in the rock face. The design speed for the exit from the south portal was reduced from 50 mph to 45 mph. Six options were presented for the south rock cut; the committee narrowed those down to two for further study.

Scott Boyd (Montara) expressed concerns that the project would not meet all of the Local Coastal Program requirements.

Marty Kingshill (El Granada) suggested that the areas directly surrounding the portals seemed to have an excess of asphalted surface. He suggested minimizing these paved areas wherever possible, adding plantings around the portals. He also suggested that the Operations and Maintenance Center Building be located off the site, perhaps in an existing building next to the Ace Hardware store on San Pedro Ave. near Linda Mar Blvd. in Pacifica.

Don Johnson (Montara) voiced his appreciation for the Committee's efforts to minimize the south rock cut. Commenting on Phase II of the design process, he asked if the revegetation efforts at the disposal site will introduce pampas grass, Scotch broom and other invasives. As far as the

portals themselves are concerned, he prefers a simple design. Decorative treatments age and soon look out of date. He asked that specific regulations be circulated publically which legally preclude the roadway in each bore from being increased to two lanes.

Ric Lohman (Miramar) said that this project has gradually grown incrementally moving from a minimal project into what we all know will become a four-lane road, despite Coastal Act prohibitions to the contrary.

Karen Wilson (Montara) read some of the tunnel width data (from page 28?) and asked whether the tunnels are going to be too big. What will the long-term effects be of runoff from the site?

Skip Sowko referred to Appendix G regarding revegetation. They have expectations that in the future you wouldn't know the difference of where the native vegetation ended and the revegetated areas began. He also said that there has been no change to the project since 1996; there has not been iscope creep as suggested. The disposal site will be well engineered; he is not concerned about slides or slumps resulting from the fill.

Chuck Kozak (Montara) mentioned how difficult it is to stabilize and revegetate a large area.

April Vargas (Montara) said that she remembers sitting at a table at one of the Montara Street Fairs asking the community for feedback on the design variations and bore widths for the project. Design Variation A, the 30-ft. wide bore, was the popular choice.

Sandy Emerson (El Granada) wanted to be sure that cyclists will be accommodated safely.

Kathryn Slater-Carter (Montara) said that Keith Mangold's email claimed the fill would create a wall of approximately 200 feet to the right as you approach the south portal. Is the fill going to get a separate coastal development permit? (Answer: It is all under one project.) She expressed concern about the visual aspects, wetland aspects, and habitat. She suggests looking at other sites and other disposal methods. She also asked about a single bridge (perhaps three lanes, to allow for emergency vehicles). She wondered whether it would be feasible to put a water line in the tunnel alignment (to connect the Montara / Moss Beach area to North Coast County Water District).

Skip Sowko described how the curves and alignments do not work for one bridge.

Minot Parker (Montara) spoke very strongly in support of the project and the design he has seen so far. He thinks the double bore provides an extra margin of safety in case of a major disaster.

Paul Perkovic (Montara) asked about the participation of the

representatives from the two adjacent cities. April and Chuck gave a brief synopsis of the concerns advanced by Pacifica and the contributions from the Half Moon Bay representatives. He also asked why there was a comparison for both the north and south portals of a large rock cut, when it was clear from previous community responses that extensive cuts were undesirable. Skip Sowko replied that grading is less expensive than construction. Meeting the objectives of our community is part of the reason for the increase in costs.

Scott Boyd (Montara) asked about the necessity of each of the elements in each bore. Why are there two sidewalks, for instance?

Ric Lohman (Miramar) said that he, and probably others, would be reassured if there were some document Federal Highway standards that would unequivocally prohibit two lanes in the tunnel cross-section that is proposed.

Richard Sadlier (Montara) described some of the operational problems with low clearances.

Paul Perkovic observed that the tunnel on Park Presidio has four lanes, clearly less than 12 feet, with no bicycle lane, no pedestrian lane, etc. It also has much higher traffic volumes than the Devil's Slide tunnels will carry.

Leonard Woren (El Granada) said that the scariest place he has ever driven is the Golden Gate Bridge, and wondered what the lane width is there.

Kathryn Slater-Carter (Montara) observed that at some point this is going to be an existing facility and so the design parameters for new construction might not be applied.

Grant Weiss (Montara) likes the minimal design and impact of the bridge. If one bore were to go out for a significant period of time, would CalTrans operate one bore with two lanes in opposite directions, or would it use signalized control for one direction at a time?

Skip Sowko replied that in such an emergency they would operate one direction at a time.

Jim Marsh (Half Moon Bay) raised the issue of dewatering again.

Chuck Kozak said that the Board of Supervisors will hear this next Tuesday, April 2.

Ric Lohman would like to see specific concerns brought to the committee: Alternative sites for fill, evidence that each tunnel could never be made into two lanes.

Kathryn Slater-Carter wants to see the LCP language clarified to say specifically that the tunnel may have no more than one lane in each direction.

Chuck Kozak moved that the Council support the committee's recommendations, with further recommendations that they minimize paved surfaces, reduce or relocate the fill site, consider relocating the Operations and Maintenance Center, clarify Federal Highway minimum standards, and seek stronger language on the lane configuration. Seconded by Kathryn Slater-Carter. Approved 6 to 1 (Lohman).

2. Midcoast Local Coastal Program Review Update

Chuck Kozak distributed the agenda for the community meeting on April 15.

Update on Continuing Council Projects

(No updates.)

Future Agenda

April 10, 2002

1. LCP Review Update - specific projects

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Paul Perkovic, Secretary.