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Subject: [MCC] [Draft] Minutes from 8 May 2002 Midcoast Community Council meeting
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[Draft] Minutes of the 8 May 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

Oscar Braun (Higgins Canyon) is taping for a documentary. The Coastside Fire-Safe Council last month launched a new informational site, called ThePebble.info.

Kathryn Slater-Carter (Montara) announced that last Thursday the Montara Sanitary District voted unanimously to take an eminent domain action against California American Water Company, a subsidiary of American Water Works, to acquire the Montara / Moss Beach water system.

Sandy Emerson (El Granada) Surfrider Foundation will be presenting at the Pedro Point Firehouse in Pacifica at 7:30 p.m. Monday, May 20. San Mateo County Art Share is interested in nominations for awards to artists and persons who have contributed to the arts in San Mateo County. More information at www.art-share.org.

Board of Supervisors Report

PK Diffenbaugh (Legislative Aide to Supervisor Rich Gordon) delivered copies of the Board packet for the May 14 Board of Supervisors meeting on the Status Report of the Board Subcommittee on Wells and Acquifers [sic] and Review of Phase I of the Midcoast Aquifer Study. Budget hearings will be in mid-June.

Committee Reports

Treasurer,s Report: Kathryn Slater-Carter reported that our checking account balance is \$291.37. The balance available with the County is approximately \$700.

Parks and Recreation Committee: Sandy Emerson reported that the Committee will change their regular meeting date to the second Monday of the month while the LCP Update meetings are being held. They omitted the May meeting. The next meeting will be June 10 to discuss a tot lot, GGNRA.

Planning and Zoning Committee: Karen Wilson reported that there will be a number of Coastside projects on the next Coastside Design Review committee meeting. It will begin at 3:00 p.m. at the Sheriff,s Substation in Moss Beach, with a study session at 1:30 p.m. The next Planning and Zoning Committee meeting will be May 15 at 7:30 p.m. at Three Zero Cafe. April Vargas reported on the Planning Commission meeting held today, May 8. Several residents took time off from work to speak about the El Granada Manufactured Home Community, particularly supporting a rent control ordinance or possible County assistance in acquiring the facility. The Planning Commission asked the Board to authorize an independent appraisal to determine the fair value of the property. They also asked staff to determine how many of the residents would be eligible for various County or State programs for low-income households. The matter will be heard again at an evening meeting on the Midcoast. There was also a preliminary discussion of the proposed residential house size limits for the rural areas, including Resource Management and

Planned Agricultural District zones. Four alternatives considered doing an FAR approach; having a maximum size; having a fluctuating maximum with bonuses given for design, location, screening, etc.; or based on community character.

Public Works Committee: April Vargas reported that the committee will meet on the first Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m., at Three Zero Cafe, immediately before the Planning and Zoning Committee meeting. CalTrans is getting ready to pave portions of the Montara Highway 1 project. Karen Wilson reported that Granada Sanitary District's project in El Granada is not completed, and the paving is still to come.

Consent Agenda

Approval of meeting minutes from March 13, March 27, April 10, and April 24, 2002. The March 27 minutes were included in the consent agenda; the remaining minutes have not been circulated for review and were deferred to the next meeting.

Approval of letter to California State Coastal Commission requesting copies of documents relating to past Commission actions on residential well permits.

April Vargas moved to accept the consent agenda, as revised; Ric Lohman seconded. Approved unanimously.

Regular Agenda

1. Review of budgets for Council Committees.

Kathryn Slater-Carter is investigating the billing for copy machine costs. The major continuing cost for the Council is copying. Bills seem to be going astray within the County bureaucracy and often arrive in batches, resulting in large charges to the account periodically. PK offered his expectation that the Council would be likely to receive the same allocation as in previous years, but he could not offer assurance of that amount.

April Vargas moved that Committee chairs work with the Treasurer on expected costs and policies, using a special meeting for that purpose; seconded by Kathryn Slater-Carter. Approved by unanimous consent.

2. Discussion and vote on Council endorsement of either of two alternate designs for the Devil's Slide Tunnel Project

Ric Lohman gave a brief review of the history of public opinion: When the County voted for a Devil's Slide tunnel, the residents believed they were voting for a single tunnel. When the two bores were proposed, the residents wanted minimal one-lane tunnels. The tunnels have suffered from gradual creep in size.

Ric presented some of the design variations that were presented by Woodward-Clyde Consultants in October 1996. These varied from twin 29, 1% tunnels through twin 38, 2% dual-lane tunnels to various single bore or splitter wall tunnels. The two least expensive tunnels (based on early estimates) would be the smallest twin bore one-lane tunnels or the smallest single-bore two-lane (one each direction) tunnel.

Ric noted the „Clearance Envelope% shown on an early Caltrans possible tunnel detail, and observed that the current tunnel profiles do not show this clearance envelope. However, in all cases, he believes that the clearance envelope is at least 22 feet wide, sufficient to allow two minimum-width travel lanes. He then suggested that the current preliminary designs are for a „Super-Sized Tunnel,% and contrasted that drawing with a „Voter-Size Tunnel,% which omits one sidewalk. In particular, the objective is to avoid the potential of any future conversion of the one-lane tunnels to two lanes.

Ric suggested that the proposal for a „Voter-Size Tunnel% will reduce cost, reduce fill, speed construction, and be more in line with Measure T. Furthermore, it will prevent conversion to a four-lane underground freeway. The downscaled project would more easily pass an Environmental Impact Review. There would also be the possibility of eliminating one of the bridges on the north approach by incorporating a „wishbone% entry. Ric also proposed backing an „Arroyo Fill% project.

Ric is concerned with a process whereby the public is asked to comment on aesthetic issues like the portal design, while the fundamental concept of the tunnel grows in scope.

Skip Sowko (CalTrans, Project Manager for the Devil,s Slide Tunnel Project) distributed Responses to Questions on Devil,s Slide Tunnel and Proposed Martini Creek Bypass (from July 25, 1996). He attached the a tunnel cross section and Highway Design Manual excerpts. The Federal Highway Administration has approved the environmental document as of March 30, 2002.

Chuck Kozak tried to pin down the highway design requirements that specify minimum lane width, required shoulder widths, sidewalk widths, etc.

April Vargas pointed to Design Variation A from a 1996 or 1997 study, which had a 30-foot tunnel bore, and Design Variation B, which had a 36 foot bore including a bicycle lane. April also asked whether a narrower tunnel configuration (omitting the sidewalk on one side) would have an impact on operations, e.g., for maintenance to change light bulbs.

Karen Wilson asked about the ventilation system. Skip indicated that the fans are reversible, so that either bore could be used in either direction. She also asked whether two-way traffic could be accommodated in one bore in an emergency.

Sandy Emerson asked whether there was flexibility in the process to allow alternative disposal sites. Skip said that the project was designed in a way to be self-contained, to minimize impacts on other roads, waterways, etc. CalTrans would be quite happy to have tunnel spoils that could have economic use be sold for roadbase, etc.

Chuck Kozak asked whether, even after the final environmental report and Record of Decision, environmentally advantageous alternatives are identified, could they be used. Skip suggested that as long as the impacts are less than those in the approved studies, it would be possible to make revisions later.

Ric Lohman referred to an email from Keith Mangold that suggested more than 50% of the fill from the project is generated from grading on the approaches.

Paul Perkovic noted that the design obviously must meet current design standards, but once a structure is an existing facility, isn,t it possible to make compromises and squeeze in a second lane? Many older tunnels in the Bay Area have travel lanes that are narrower than the current design standards. Skip doesn,t think that any tunnels have had a travel lane added.

Kathryn Slater-Carter is very concerned about the escalating costs. She asked whether there are different standards for a tunnel versus an open road, comparing her experience with Highway 92. Lennie Roberts indicated that Highway 92 is 54 feet wide, with a 10-foot bicycle lane on the downhill side; people tend to park in the bicycle lane or use it as a passing lane.

Lennie Roberts (Committee for Green Foothills) described the configuration of Highway 92 using a 54-foot width: a 6 foot shoulder, 2 - 12 foot travel lanes, a 2 foot K-rail center divider, another 12 foot travel lane, and a 10 foot shoulder/bicycle lane.

Kathryn continued to ask why the minimum tunnel width couldn,t be accommodated. Skip said that safety and operational considerations are driving the engineering of the tunnel.

Paul Perkovic noted that some European tunnels have periodic refuge areas, where the tunnel cross section is wider, to allow a disabled car (for example, needing to change a tire) to pull well away from the travel lanes. Since a tunnel boring machine approach is not proposed, why can,t we have periodic refuges?

Oscar Braun (Half Moon Bay Coastside Foundation) is concerned about doing due diligence about projects that are proposed in the Coastal Zone. He quoted from the 1986 findings in a Coastal Commission report. The tunnel alternative was suggested by the Sierra Club in 1973. This was eliminated from consideration because the tunnel would have to be two lanes in each direction in order to provide emergency access in case of a stalled vehicle. The 1995 finding by the U.S. District Court in the litigation brought by the Sierra Club says that the tunnel alternative was rejected in 1986. It has been determined that a tunnel has been reviewed and has been rejected because it is not consistent with the planning policies and too expensive. Oscar outlined the procedural steps that remain. The Coastal Commission,s consistency concurrence (from October 2000), approving Measure T as part of the San Mateo

County's Local Coastal Program, was a conceptual approval of a tunnel, not the approval of a specific project. Oscar asserts that the proposed project cannot be built because it is inconsistent with the Coastal Act and the County's Local Coastal Program. He believes that a Coastal Development Permit cannot be granted due to inconsistencies.

Chris Thollaug (Montara; Sierra Club) said that the Sierra Club has been a strong supporter of the tunnel. This has been an incredible environmental success. He is looking forward to Eric Rice's book coming out. The most critical issue now is how this project is funded. He thinks that CalTrans is providing a safe and reliable road to cross the Devil's Slide area. Ralph Trepani has worked closely on this project. Chris and the Sierra Club support the twin bores for safety. The tunnel is a one-mile solution; there would still remain four miles that would need to be reconfigured and widened to accommodate additional travel lanes in the tunnel bores. Widening the other portions of the road would conflict with Coastal Act directives as well as the Local Coastal Program. To widen the road would require a taking of State park lands. The Sierra Club would fight that issue. There is a real danger of losing sight of what is really important here. The potential for a four-lane roadway is far in the future and unlikely; it should not result in compromising public safety now. Stay focused: The primary issue is how do we get this project funded? The bypass is defeated; we want this tunnel. It represents a solution that is sensitive to coastal resources.

Carl May (Moss Beach) said there was a provision in Measure T that said the project would be a minimum two-lane tunnel. During the campaign, the voters never saw anything other than a single-bore, two lane tunnel. He thinks a lot of this is disingenuous. At 29.5 feet wide, these tunnels will be as wide as the Eisenhower Tunnels in Colorado, which carry two lanes during ski seasons (on Interstate 70). The longest highway tunnel in North America is about 11 miles long in Alaska, and it does have turnouts within the tunnel.

Lou Bertolucci (El Granada) has listened to the same story over and over, as a native here. The very people who proposed it are the very people who will kill it. We have CalTrans here who has made a proposal, and now you are trying to change it again. People are getting tired; they aren't even going to meetings any more.

Leonard Woren (El Granada) suggested that all CalTrans would have to do to make all of these concerns go away, would be to shave about two feet off of each bore.

April Vargas thanked everyone who came tonight, and Skip Sowko from CalTrans; and also thanked Ric for bringing this matter before us again. She suggests continuing this discussion about both tunnel width and disposition of fill. She does not think we have done sufficient research to take a vote tonight on one specific alternative proposal. She wants the discussion to go back to the Aesthetics Review Committee (which is talking about many issues besides just the portal design).

Kathryn Slater-Carter also expressed her appreciation for all of the work that has been done. She agrees that eternal vigilance is the price of environmentalism, but let's move on to new fights. She would like to direct our committee members to work towards reduced width and reduced fill.

Ric Lohman said he understands all the comments that have been made so far. Not taking action is just tacit approval of the current design of the project. The external cutting which doubles the amount of material for disposal should be reduced. He would like to recommend reduction in tunnel width by 4 feet by eliminating one sidewalk. He would like to reduce the surface cuts, especially at the southern end of the tunnel. He also would like to push for alternative uses of the waste.

Sandy Emerson is most interested in alternative disposal or reuse of the excavated material.

Chuck Kozak reminded us that the agenda describes possible endorsement of a tunnel profile; the ideas of alternatives disposal areas goes beyond that, in his opinion.

Kathryn Slater-Carter moved that the Council adopt the following motion: Whereas the Midcoast Community Council finds that the permanent solution to the failure of Devil's Slide section of Highway 1 is in the community interest; and Whereas, the Council strongly supports the tunnel; therefore, the Council endorses finding engineering alternatives to reduce the fill amount and the width of the tunnel while meeting the requirements of Measure T, the current Local Coastal Program, the Coastal Act, and safety standards, through but not limited to the ongoing process of the Aesthetics Review Committee. Seconded by Ric Lohman. Approved by unanimous consent.

3. Midcoast Local Coastal Program Review Update: Review of April 29 Study Session, May 6, 2002 LCP Update Workshop, and preparation for subsequent workshops and study sessions,

and discussion and vote on the LCP Amendment creation and version select process

Chuck Kozak gave a brief review of the procedural issues raised by the May 6, 2002 Local Coastal Program Update Workshop. In particular, Chuck felt that the facilitator spent a lot of time reaching a point that everyone in the room could have identified at the beginning. Karen Wilson thought that it was too early in the process to discuss the rate of growth; she felt that this question could only be answered after most (or all) of the other tasks had been completed. April Vargas is concerned that there is limited response from the community. Kathryn Slater-Carter wishes there would be more coverage in the Review. She is also unsatisfied with the idea of using a facilitator to attempt to reach some single solution. Paul Perkovic observed that the Half Moon Bay City Council had an agenda item at their meeting last night and is likely to increase their participation.

Ric Lohman described the process by which the LCP Update is supposed to progress. He has grave concerns about that process, because he feels that we are the only community in San Mateo County that cannot decide what we want. Ric proposed the following motion (as modified by the seconder's comments): Whereas, the Midcoast Community Council is an advisory council to the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors; and Whereas, the Midcoast Community Council is comprised of members who are duly elected by the voting public of the unincorporated San Mateo County midcoast; and Whereas, the Ladera community, another community in the unincorporated region of San Mateo County, was recently allowed to place two versions of their proposed residential zoning ordinance before the community for guidance to determine a majority consensus, therefore, The Midcoast Community Council requests that the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors base the content of amendments to the Local Coastal Program on one of the following methods: 1. At the end of the series of public meetings, now in progress, County staff will develop the Local Coastal Program amendments based on input provided by the Midcoast Community Council on each of the 23 items currently being reviewed, or 2. If there are differences between the input provided by the Midcoast Community Council and the text the County staff wishes to use in the LCP amendments, the Board of Supervisors will place both sets of proposed amendments on a ballot for the voters to choose the LCP amendments the public desires. Seconded by Kathryn Slater-Carter. Motion to continue to the next meeting by Paul Perkovic. Continued by unanimous consent.

4. Impacts of Residential Well Drilling on the Midcoast

Deferred to next meeting.

5. Community Representation on Coastside Design Review Committee

Deferred to next meeting.

Update on Continuing Council Projects

(No updates.)

Future Agenda

May 22, 2002

1. Budget
2. LCP Review Update - specific projects

The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Paul Perkovic, Secretary.