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Midcoast Community Council
P.O. Box 64
Moss Beach, CA 94038

An elected Municipal Advisory Council of the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors
Serving 12,000 Coastal Residents

April 26, 2000

To: John Maltbie
San Mateo County Manager

cc: San Mateo County Board of Supervisors

re: Qualifications for new San Mateo County Planning Director

Dear Mr. Maltbie:

With the resignation of Mr. Paul Koenig, the MidCoast Community Council would like to offer its recommendations on the qualifications and attributes of a new planning director.

The new director should have a thorough understanding of the San Mateo County coastal areas, both urban and rural. The coast constitutes the bulk of the unincorporated areas of San Mateo County, and our concerns and issues are different from the heavily urbanized bayside communities. In particular, we would like the new director to be sensitive to the balance needed between reasonable and necessary development and growth, and the protection of our significant coastal resources.

We would hope that the new director would take an active role in the upcoming review and revision of our Local Coastal Program, and would have a good understanding of the responsibilities and opportunities the California Coastal Act presents. We would like the new director to be supportive of the ongoing work with coastal residents in establishing development, permitting, and design review procedures that are fair and protective of both property owners and our neighborhoods, and to be aware of the need for balance between property rights and property ownership responsibilities to the surrounding communities.

An important issue is the development of Coastside businesses and business resources - not only for the revenue and taxes that they can generate, but also to help relieve over-the-hill commute traffic and its related social stresses by enabling coastal residents to work nearer to their homes. As with further development of visitor-serving facilities, we would like the new director to be open to creative approaches that would allow commercial development while maintaining, protecting and enhancing the coastal resources that make this such a desirable area in which to live and work.

It is essential that the new Planning Director is an individual who has a

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creative and innovative approach to the challenges which will continue to face this County. We need someone with the vision to go beyond standard "checklist" planning procedures and use her/his own judgment while still possessing the knowledge and respect for the laws to which all decisions must ultimately conform. The new Planning Director must foster a positive and supportive atmosphere within the department, inspiring all employees to value the work that they perform and the citizens whom they serve. We encourage a more accessible planning department, possibly including a coastal satellite office so that trips to Redwood City could be minimized. Our Council would be willing to help facilitate any effort that would improve communication and cooperation between the coastal communities and County Government.

In your search to fill this position, we urge you to take advantage of all possible resources, and consider the best and most qualified candidates both from within and from outside existing County staff.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

For the MidCoast Community Council,

April Vargas, Chair.