

Memo

To: Members, Board of Supervisors
From: Rich Gordon *RG*
Date: 06/28/00
Re: Staffing for County Planning Division

Following our adoption last January of Interim Urgency Zoning Regulations for the midcoast, I worked with a Task Force to craft a set of recommendations for permanent zoning changes. Those proposals will be in front of us for consideration later this summer. One of the elements of the final recommendation is the establishment of a Design Review Committee for the midcoast. This recommendation has broad support from all elements of the midcoast. It is supported by the Midcoast Community Council and the builder/development community on the midcoast.

The Midcoast Community Council and others have suggested that we should add a position in the Planning Department in order to support the new Design Review Committee.

Unfortunately, the recommended budget takes us in the opposite direction by eliminating a vacant planner position.

I look forward to discussing this issue with you later this morning during our consideration of the budget of the Environmental Services Agency.

Cc: John Maltbie
Terry Burnes

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

June 6, 2000

Supervisor Rich Gordon, President
San Mateo County Board of Supervisors
400 County Government Center
Redwood City, CA 94063

Dear Supervisor Gordon,

During our consideration of the Urgency Interim Ordinance, the Council discussed the need for an additional position in the Planning Department. At our May 10, 2000, regularly scheduled meeting, there was a unanimous vote directing me to write to you regarding this issue.

Based on citizen input throughout the six month review of Midcoast building standards, there appears to be broad-based community support for a Design Review Committee for the Midcoast. When such a Committee is established, the administration of it, coupled with the marked increase of development in the area, will increase the workload of the Planning Department. Additional attention to Midcoast development issues could greatly help in reducing the number of appeals which are all ready occupying the resources of the existing Planning staff.

On behalf of the community, the Midcoast Community Council requests that a new position be added in the Planning Department to specifically provide staff support for a Design Review Committee, focused attention on Midcoast building issues and current planning needs.

There appears to be support for this proposal from building and real estate interests as well as community members concerned with preserving the character of our local communities.

We would appreciate your help in bringing this request forward and advocating for it during the budget process. We are willing to assist you in whatever ways you might find appropriate.

Thank you for your ongoing efforts on behalf of the Midcoast.

Sincerely,

April Vargas, Chair
Midcoast Community Council

6/14/00

Supervisor Rich Gordon
San Mateo County Board of Supervisors
400 County Government Center
Redwood City, CA 94063

Dear Supervisor Gordon,

If the proposed Midcoast zoning regulation changes are adopted, the Planning Department Staff's workload will probably increase. There is concern that the Planning Department's increased workload will overburden the current number of planners. This concern seems to be common among Midcoast Community Council Members, vacant parcel owners, existing residents, and homebuilders.


The additional workload may leave staff with an inadequate amount of time to incorporate the zoning changes and review applications subject to the changes. The shortage of staff time could lead to frustrated applicants as projects are delayed and frustrated residents who are concerned the zoning changes are not being implemented as envisioned.

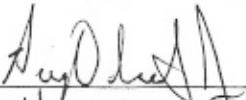
Therefore, we support the Midcoast Community Council's request that you advocate for an additional planner during the upcoming budget process.

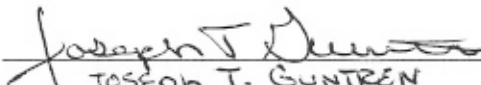
We make this request based on our experience as applicants, not as individuals with any experience as planners, and therefore we understand that there might be some effects of adopting the proposed zoning changes that actually free up some planning staff time. For example, planning staff currently has the responsibility to do the design review in the DR zoned areas of the Midcoast, but the amount of staff time required to do this might be reduced if the proposed design review committee is formed. As part of the discussion to consider an additional planner we will like to hear planning staff's expectation of the amount of additional workload they expect based on their past experience of adopting zoning changes, similar to those proposed for the Midcoast, in other unincorporated areas of the County.

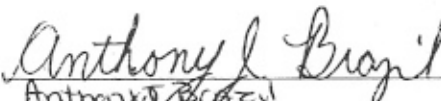
We appreciate the leadership you provided throughout the process of developing the proposed changes to the Midcoast's zoning regulations.

Sincerely,

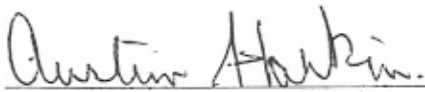

Dennis Deherney



Hugh Doherty Jr.


JOSEPH T. GUNTREN


Anthony J. Brazil


Anthony T. BRAZIL


AUSTIN HARKIN


ROBERT BLOOMER

TO: Supervisor Richard Gordon
CC: Midcoast Community Council
FR: Don Johnson & Ann Forrister
RE: Planning position for and on the coastside

DATE: June 19, 2000
FAX: (650) 599-1027
FAX: (650) 728-2129
TEL/FAX: (650) 728-3832

Dear Supervisor Gordon --

We understand that, in the budget process, the County is considering a planning position dedicated to coastside issues and located on the coastside. This is a great idea and we urge the County to adopt this proposal.

There will be arguments against an "additional" position and expense when dealing with a deficit budget, and we understand that one of the harder, but very important parts of your job is weighing the risks and benefits of "new" services.

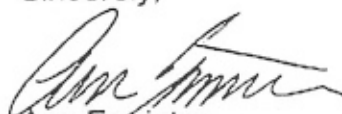
But worries that a dedicated planning position for the coastside is "extra" seem rather disingenuous to us. [Of course, we don't know all the details available to you, so we're going on second-hand information.] Didn't the County know that, with the new sewer plant, building applications would skyrocket on the coastside? Doesn't it make sense to provide increased staff attention to increased (and easily anticipated) needs? Why not dedicate a planner to the coastside and then, if there is free time, make him or her available for other county projects?

The concerns we hear [again, second or third hand] about a planner sharing space with the deputies in the Moss Beach substation don't make much sense to us either. Yes, the sheriff's department would charge back the pro-rated expenses to the planning department. From an internal standpoint, that is a problem, but it would seem to have no impact on the total County budget. At the cost of some purely formal adjustments to a few line items, and with no additional tax dollars spent, coastsiders can have ready access to critical county services where we live. [No doubt we're overlooking some vexing details, but the idea still seems to be very sound.]

We aren't asking for anything "extra" -- only what the County should have planned for all along. And, now that there is a creative solution to provide a County planning office on the coastside at little or no incremental cost to the taxpayer, why not tackle the technical budget issues and make that happen?

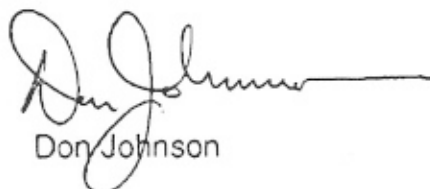
Thank you for considering our views, and for your continuing support for coastside concerns at the County level. In particular, we want to acknowledge and thank you for your support for creative approaches to coastside planning issues, including this present proposal.

Sincerely,



Ann Forrister

Montara



Don Johnson

P.O. Box 1522
El Granada, CA 94018

Princeton Citizens' Advisory Committee

June 27, 2000

VIA FAX 1 Page

Supervisor Richard Gordon
San Mateo County Board of Supervisors
Hall of Justice and Records
400 Government Center
Redwood City, CA 94063

RE: MCC Proposal for Additional Planning Staff

Dear Supervisor Gordon:

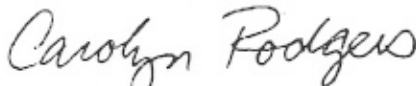
We have been in communication with MCC regarding their request to hire an additional planner dedicated to coastside projects. Building in San Mateo County in general is certainly on the increase, and that applies to the unincorporated mid-coast as well. If the Building and Planning Division deems it necessary to add staff to handle the volume of work, we certainly support their decision to do so. For various reasons, we do have reservations about having any one planner dedicated to coastside projects.

The overriding concern about the proposal expressed at the June 13th meeting of the PCAC was that a single planner dedicated to projects in the unincorporated mid coast could be subject to undue pressure and influence from small but vocal special interest groups or individuals. Further, the argument for additional staff stemming from the additional work load of appeals to projects raises concerns for us given the source of the appeals. We look forward to the completion of the LCP review and update process to give us firm guidelines that the community at large and the various governmental agencies can work within effectively.

We feel that if the work load resulting from new projects in the County overall is sufficient reason for Planning and Building to add staff, it is certainly their decision to make. Again, we would wholeheartedly support that.

Sincerely,

The Board and Membership of the PCAC



Carolyn Rodgers, Secretary

cc: Rose J. Gibson, Mary Griffin, Jerry Hill, Michael D. Nevin
Terry Burnes, Planning Administrator
April Vargas, Chair, MCC