

Planning & Zoning Committee of the MidCoast Community Council

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May 17, 2001

Fax: 3 Pages

To: George Bergman, Zoning Hearing Officer
San Mateo County Planning and Building Division
Mail Drop PLN122, 455 County Center
Redwood City, CA 94063
650.363.1851 - FAX: 650.363.4849

re: PLN2000-00472 - Use Permit amendment to construct a new 2-story building with public restrooms on the 1st floor and Marine Commercial uses on the 2nd floor, at Pillar Point Harbor. APN 047-083-060.

Dear Mr. Bergman:

I would like to clarify our position and motivation regarding the above referenced project in light of the May 14 letter from Peter Grenell, General Manager of the San Mateo County Harbor District.

It is true that the Harbor District had sent over plans to the MCC for review in May of 2000 – at that time, the current P&Z structure and operational procedure was still developing and no one knew quite what to do with them, so they ended up being stored at our office. This was an oversight on our part which, considering our lack any actual paid staff to track such submittals, and that there was no follow-up from the District, was regrettable but not a reason for denying us any input on the design and implementation of the project.

We first reviewed this project at our regular P&Z meeting of September 9, 2000, when County planning referred it to us for comment. Our original comments raised a number of questions and many of the issues we have tried to address since. These comments were returned to the County on October 8, 2000. At that time, we felt the design and functionality of this building were very important, as it would provide critically needed facilities for users of the harbor, be in a visually prominent location at the entrance to the harbor complex, and be a needed source of revenue for the District. We also stated in that letter: “... *No one from the District was able to attend due to a scheduling conflict with their regular Board meeting. We would be happy to reschedule review of this project, even on a special day to avoid schedule conflicts, should the applicant wish to respond to any of our comments or submit a redesign of the project.*”

It is unfortunate that both the Harbor Commission and the MCC hold their regular meetings on Wednesdays, as this makes it difficult for representatives of either to be at the other’s meeting. Like the District, we hold duly posted and properly noticed meetings. And we have, in every case, including our original P&Z review of this project on September 9 2000 and our subsequent revisiting on May 7 2001, notified the Harbor

District that an issue of concern to them was on our agenda. Because of the meeting conflict, they have not been able to attend. Mr. Grinnel states that the Harbor Commission had considered this project 13 times since May of 1998, but not for any one of those had we been contacted or asked to participate. This is not a complaint or an attempt at disrespect for how the District conducts its business, but an explanation of why it is not that difficult to understand why we had no input into this project until now.

At the two meetings that we held with District staff concerning this project, we were presented with limited options concerning the building – it was made clear that any redesign to address our issues was out of the question, so in the spirit of cooperation we attempted to reach a compromise within the limitations presented us. I believe we made it clear during those meetings that we were not satisfied with the base design we had to work with, but would do what we could within that framework.

At our regular MCC meeting of April 27, 2001, we presented the results of those meetings to the full Council. The Council decided, based on what we had to show and response from the community that the compromise design would not have MCC approval, and that the Council would like to see a redesign of the building that addressed several issues. It was this message that we took to the Harbor Commission meeting of May 2, 2001.

After the vote by the Commission at that meeting to go with the originally submitted design, we felt that it was necessary to present the full extent of our concerns and ideas about the project, since the compromise position was obviously going nowhere. That has resulted in the latest comment letter you have now. We have tried to address all the aspects of the project that we found of concern, keeping in mind as we worked the cost limitations of the District, the need for the health and safety of the users of the facility, the appeal of the building to commercial renters, and the overall compatibility and effect on the character of the harbor. I believe our letter and the accompanying attachments explain these in full detail.

Pillar Point Harbor is an integral element of the MidCoast Community. And the community wants to see it remain a viable working harbor – not a cold industrial complex, not a tourist Disneyland. To do this we know that the Harbor District needs to provide the facilities necessary and maintain a level of commercial income from its property. We've submitted these proposals to show that there are easily implemented, cost effective options that can increase the aesthetic appeal of the building, retain the character of the harbor architecture, provide safer and better facilities for the fishing industry and the berthers, and enhance the commercial viability of the project. This can all be accomplished within essentially the same footprint and area of the original proposal.

As before, we would be glad to continue working with the District on this project, but feel that the process needs to be opened up to allow a higher degree of flexibility in the design, materials, and function of the building.

Thank you for your time and attention to these matters concerning this application.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chuck Kozak". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and "K".

Chuck Kozak, MCC Planning and Zoning Committee Chair
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