

Midcoast Community Council

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July 1, 1998

San Mateo County Harbor District Commissioners
C/o Peter Grennell, General Manager
Post Office Box 39
El Granada, CA 94018

Dear Commissioners,

This letter is being sent to the San Mateo County Harbor Commission by the Planning And Zoning committee of the MidCoast Community Council for the purpose of expressing our concern over the expedited development of two district owned land parcels in El Granada.

We believe that instead of "fast tracking" development at this time, the district should first be providing well publicized Forums or Town Hall Meetings where input and visioning from the community could be gathered and fully assessed before any action is taken, such as Requests For Proposals.

The fact that the Harbor Commission is currently comprised of primarily non-elected officials and that these appointed Commissioners do not reside here on the Coastside is a concern, and we believe that such critical land-use decisions regarding the Post Office lot and the Median Strip should be continued until after the election when a full majority will have been duly elected by the voters of San Mateo County. The Harbor District has owned both pieces of real estate for a considerable period of time and there does not appear to be a downside (economic or otherwise) for waiting until the voters have spoken in November

As you are aware, two appointed Commissioners must run in the upcoming general election in order to retain their seats and it would place the district in a very awkward and embarrassing position should members, who had just approved plans for a major development on the Coast, be turned away at the polls.

Due to the fact that the district has unfortunately been in the newspaper headlines of late, we believe it would now be more appropriate to wait until after the election before visiting (or re-visiting) these potentially volatile land-use issues. If acted upon prematurely, this issue could subject the District to unwanted criticism and unnecessary controversy.

Sincerely,

Laura Stein
Midcoast Community Council Planning and Zoning Committee Chair



San Mateo County Harbor District

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Harbor Commissioners

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Peter Grenell

July 13, 1998

Laura Stein
Chair, Midcoast Community Council Planning and
Zoning Committee
P. O. Box 64
Moss Beach, CA 94038

REF: Your letter of July 1, 1998 to the Board of Harbor Commissioners regarding development of the Harbor District's properties in El Granada

Dear Ms. Stein:

On behalf of the Harbor District, I wish to respond to and clarify matters in connection with your concerns as expressed in your July 1 letter.

First and foremost, the San Mateo County Harbor District Board has a fiduciary responsibility of stewardship toward all the public assets over which it has control, including its El Granada properties. This responsibility includes the generation of revenue to enable it to operate and maintain all of its facilities at both Pillar Point Harbor and Oyster Point Marina/Park, to service its debts, especially to the State whose funds were used to improve these facilities, and to serve the boating public. This responsibility also includes managing and improving its properties wisely and in an environmentally sound manner, including those in El Granada, to enhance its revenue and thereby provide improved facilities and services to the boating public and the communities in which they are located. The District is a County-wide agency, whose Commissioners are elected County-wide. The District must, is now, and will continue to carry out its County-wide responsibilities, with all their long term implications.

Second, you refer to "expedited" and "fast tracking" development and "premature" action. This is certainly not the case. For the past year, the District has been considering its alternatives with respect to the disposition of its properties, known as the "post office lot" and the "median strip". Approximately one year ago, Commissioner Campbell and I met on two occasions with the then-active El Granada Waterfront Task Force. At that time, we indicated that the District was indeed considering its options, was not inclined to sell off these assets because it would be fiscally unsound to do so, and that whatever direction was taken, we were — and remain — committed to seeking community and broader public input to the Harbor Commission's eventual decisions regarding the properties. In the interim, several inquiries were made to the District regarding its intentions regarding these properties. The response in all cases was that the question was being studied but that disposition through sale was not seen as optimal. Rather, the District's interest has been, and continues to be, in the potential for long term, stable revenue generation.

In June 1998, the Commission authorized publication of a Request For Proposals to seek interest in developing these parcels. At the time this decision was taken, and in the text of the RFP itself, the District's concern for, and commitment to, public input was made very clear. The RFP was made available to the public as requested, in addition to the required public notice and Board deliberation. It has also been made clear throughout the process to date that opportunities for public input will continue. Thus, the District has been moving slowly and deliberately for over a year to reach a decision on how to make best use of its assets in El Granada for the greater good of, not only the citizens of El Granada and Moss Beach, but of the whole of San Mateo County, to which the District is ultimately and directly responsible.

Third, you suggest that there does not appear to be a negative economic or other consequence by delaying action in this regard until after the election. Quite the contrary: the sooner these properties are put to use, the sooner the District's fiscal ability to address its many operations and maintenance needs will be strengthened. To the extent that we are presently constrained in this regard, the berth-holders, lessees, other harbor users, and the public generally suffer now and directly. Moreover, should the Commission change its composition pursuant to the will of the County electorate in November, new Commissioners would be seated in January 1999; and, regardless of any prior knowledge of the District's activities, they would need at least some time to become current in detail in order to take responsible decisions along with their fellow Commissioners. The implication of your contention is that no action would in fact be taken regarding the properties for almost a year. That is irresponsible and unacceptable.

Fourth, you refer to the District's "unfortunate" appearance in the press recently. In fact, the District's most recent press coverage has been quite positive in its reference to the District's actions to improve its RV lot and erect new restroom facilities at Pillar Point, and to install a bait shop, construct a Bay Trail segment, and develop ferry and water taxi service at Oyster Point. The District clearly does not seek "unwanted criticism and unnecessary controversy", as you put it. Nor can it shirk its fiduciary responsibilities to all the citizens, voters, and taxpayers of San Mateo County. We welcome constructive comment from you and your colleagues on the Committee, and look forward to a positive and responsible response.

Sincerely,

SAN MATEO COUNTY HARBOR DISTRICT



Peter Grenell
General Manager

cc: Board of Harbor Commissioners

The Honorable Richard Gordon
Supervisor, San Mateo County

Paul M. Koenig
Director of Environmental Services
Planning and Building Division,
San Mateo County