

MIDCOAST COMMUNITY COUNCIL

P.O. Box 64
Moss Beach, CA 94038
Serving 12,000 Residents

February 7, 1999

Supervisor Rose Gibson
Board of Supervisors
400 County Government Center
Redwood City, CA 94063

Dear Supervisor Gibson:

I enjoyed meeting you at your installation ceremony in East Palo Alto. We are excited about the changes that have occurred recently in the Board of Supervisors, and I am looking forward to working with you in the years ahead. Last week the MidCoast Community Council formally asked the Board of Supervisors to review and re-establish the community's ultimate buildout numbers. I am looking forward to this joint project which will proactively re-establish our development plan. We hope you'll accept our invitation to meet with us on these issues and visit us often on the Coastside.

Unfortunately, several controversial projects have already been launched under the former administration and have passed various steps in the approval process. I ask you today to intervene on one such project that will be coming before you this Thursday. This proposal at 910 Venture Street in El Granada (CDP 98-0010) truly exemplifies the lack of planning that has occurred in recent years and the complete disregard for the concerns and needs of the community. Since you have already been lobbied extensively on this project, I will only discuss the overall implications to our community.

Eight years ago I moved to the San Mateo County coast because of its incredible beauty. We bought a home here, believing that our major investment in life would be protected by county development laws and standards. I have sadly found this not to be true. I have worked with and now serve on the MidCoast Community Council (MCCC) for over six years, and I've seen one consistent message coming from a large majority of this community: The community wants organized, planned development that follows the principles and rules of the Local Coastal Plan (LCP). Years ago community design standards were incorporated into a community plan. This plan later became our LCP. For years this plan was followed and construction occurred in a non-controversial manner.

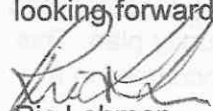
In recent years the Board of Supervisors has been persuaded by an influential minority to relax or simply ignore these community development standards. In addition to its incredible natural beauty, the Coastside has limitations on its ultimate buildout number due to highway, water, and other infrastructure limitations. Seeing this future "handwriting on the wall", many developers have taken advantage of their influence with the Board of Supervisors to maximize their immediate profits at the expense of the community and its LCP.

It is our current understanding that developing all our conforming, buildable lots will take us to or over our designed buildout number. What we have opposed for years are **changes** in the interpretation of the LCP that allow increased densities of development beyond those envisioned in the LCP. We have been continually assailed by those who seek to develop beyond their lot's or area's capacity. This has manifested itself in variances for creek, cliff, and property setbacks. It has manifested itself in additional sub-divisions and lot line adjustments that allow for extra development beyond that intended by the LCP.

The most recent **change** in interpretation was to allow development on all substandard lots, accompanied by variances for setbacks and lot coverage. This move to allow development on sub-standard lots is the greatest danger yet to the planned development of our community. In 1906, our area was planned for small beach cottages and second homes away from the city. Our LCP changed the lot size minimum to more fit modern home sizes. Developers have recently gained approval from the Board of Supervisors to develop 1990 size homes on these 1906 sized lots. Since these numbers were not planned into our LCP, construction on these unplanned sites will eventually prevent legitimate construction on conforming lots. Speculators have attempted to push these projects through, concerned only with profit maximization, not the planned development of our community.

We simply can not understand the incredible short-sightedness of these actions. All those who have obeyed zoning laws in the past, all those who invested their savings into property here based on the principles of the LCP, and all those who plan legal development in the future will be hurt if unplanned development of this type is allowed to occur. It is our hope that the Board of Supervisors will now return to the principles of the LCP and deny approval for this project. We want to proactively work with the Board of Supervisors and the Planning Commission to reiterate the basic development standards of our LCP. Projects can then easily be measured against these standards. We hope that the Planning Commission will uphold these standards for our community so the only controversies in the future will be on those projects where the developers feel they should be exempt from community standards. While these plans are being finalized, we ask you to deny this application, which has nothing good in it for the community and only makes future planning harder.

If you have any questions on this project, I would be happy to discuss them any time with you. I can be reached during the day at (510) 475-3598 or in the evening at (650) 726-9607. I am looking forward to working with you in the future.



Ric Lohman

Member

cc: Supervisor Richard Gordon
MCCC
Community Members in El Granada