

Midcoast Community Council

An elected Municipal Advisory Council to the
San Mateo County Board of Supervisors
Serving 12,000 coastal residents

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2 December 1999

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Mary Hobbs, Chair

Planning and Zoning

Ric Lohman, Chair

Public Works

Joe Gore, Chair

Mary Griffin, President, and Members of the
San Mateo County Board of Supervisors
400 County Center
Redwood City, CA 94063

re: Proposed Urgency Interim Zoning Ordinance for the Midcoast

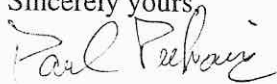
Dear President Griffin and Members of the Board:

In response to the Council's letter of October 29 and after public testimony during an appeal before your Board on November 2, your Board authorized Supervisor Gordon to form a committee for consideration of the design review and zoning issues raised.

Yesterday, I met with Supervisor Gordon, along with Councilmember-Elect April Vargas, a member of the local community, and members of the building and real estate industries. Paul Koenig, Terry Burnes, and George Bergman gave a brief presentation on a draft proposal for your meeting next Tuesday. The proposed Urgency Interim Zoning Ordinance would put in place easily applied numeric guidelines involving height, daylight planes, and floor area ratios that would greatly reduce the controversy over the mass and scale of recent projects. Staff has advised us that the *Community Design Manual* offers only guidelines – not enforceable rules – for siting, grading, view preservation, and other issues. We have all seen the difficulty of interpreting existing ordinance language or General Plan requirements (through the inclusion of the Montara – Moss Beach – El Granada Community Plan) that new development remain in character with the scale of the community. The resulting controversy has caused numerous appeals, taking up Planning Commission and Board time, and delaying construction. We need a better approach.

The proposed interim zoning standards for the Midcoast would be consistent with those already in place in other unincorporated communities – Devonshire, Emerald Lake Hills, Menlo Oaks, Palomar Park, West Menlo Park, etc. – and therefore they would not create an unreasonable burden on existing property owners. The County already has underway a project to review and update elements of our Local Coastal Program. It is critical for the success of that LCP project to put in place temporary regulations while permanent zoning regulation changes are evaluated and approved through the normal public hearing process. Note that this is not an outright ban or moratorium on all development, just the application of standards used elsewhere in the County for development proposals occurring while permanent regulations are under discussion.

The Council has not yet had an opportunity to vote on a position regarding the Staff proposal. However, in my opinion as Chair, the proposed Urgency Interim Zoning Ordinance would receive nearly unanimous support from the Council and extremely widespread support from the community. I strongly urge each Supervisor to vote in favor of this proposal.

Sincerely yours,

Paul Perkovic, Chair