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MIDCOAST COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Serving the Communities of
Princeton, El Granada, Moss Beach, Montara and Miramar

November 12, 1992

Honorable Board of Supervisors
County Government Center
401 Marshall Street
Redwood City, CA 94063

Re: Cowell Torrello Golf Course Site

Honorable Members of the Board:

The MidCoast Community Council appreciates the efforts of Mssrs. Koenig and Reid to familiarize the Council with the status of planning efforts for the potential Cowell Torrello golf course. We recognize the County's long term interest in finding a site for a public golf course and look forward to future involvement as the coastside is looked upon to satisfy this goal.

Mr. Koenig summarized the long history of the site selection process and some of the reasons the Edgewood site is no longer considered viable. While the constraints analysis prepared by Mr. Reid for the Cowell Torrello site appear far better than the environmental and legal constraints of other sites, the Board should be cognizant that some significant policy questions will be raised by the coastside site:

1. The issue of water priority will certainly be questioned. While 225 acre feet of water (over 73 million gallons!) may be necessary for a golf course, in adjacent Moss Beach and Montara, residents have a grossly inadequate water supply for domestic use and for fire flow.
2. The priority of agricultural uses versus urban needs, including recreation, will also be at issue.
3. The issue of coastside recreational needs will need to be addressed. The coastside is again being looked at to satisfy a regional recreational need while coastside residents have no community or neighborhood recreational facilities or programs.

While it is premature for the Council to take a position on the desirability of a golf course on this site, some specific concerns of the Council should be expressed at this early juncture, before detailed planning, feasibility analysis and a public vote occur.

Water Availability

A bottom line approach must be that the Airport aquifer, upon which Montara and Moss Beach residents depend for their water, must not be impacted in terms of yield by a proposed golf course. Towards this end, if an EIR is prepared in the future, it must take into account several years of drought. The Reid report makes repeated references to assumptions based on normal rainfall.

Of equal importance is that no net loss of water for agricultural uses on the subject or adjacent parcels should result from golf course development.

Water Quality

The Edgewood site was considered problematic due to concerns of pesticide runoff into the Crystal Springs reservoirs. The Cowell Torrello site drains into Fitzgerald Marine Preserve, and is therefore an equally critical watershed. It will also affect the Airport aquifer and the residential water supply. These water supplies cannot be jeopardized by golf course development.

A related issue that should be addressed is the continued existence of the illegal agricultural wells on the subject property.

Agricultural Uses

The LCP places agricultural uses in highest regard, certainly giving food production priority over ancillary uses such as human recreation. While these need not be mutually exclusive, the Council feels strongly that a golf course must not result in a net reduction in active or potential agricultural land.

Design Sensitivity

We would expect that the Board would demand an exemplary site design in terms of sensitivity to the site and surrounding communities. A links style course would have to be given serious consideration since it offers the opportunity to substantially reduce irrigation needs and pesticide/fertilizer use. We would hope that the potential use of the SAM plant's treated effluent would also be given serious consideration. Maintenance of view corridors from the highway and retention of the natural appearance of the area to the greatest degree feasible should also be priorities.

A Complete Coastside Recreation Package

The policy of the Board has historically been that the County is only in the business of regional recreation, not community recreation. This may work adequately for small pockets of unincorporated areas which can utilize recreation facilities and programs of adjacent cities, but it is thoroughly inadequate for the coastside with our population of between 10,000-12,000 persons. Half Moon Bay can't and shouldn't be expected to accommodate unincorporated area

residents.

If the golf course study moves forward, consideration must be given to creating a complete recreation package for the coastsides. This should include area for a community park, public trails, and joint use facilities such as a clubhouse/community center.

Process

One of the lessons of the Measure D defeat should be that voters are reluctant to endorse a proposal without adequate information. If the Council is to endorse such a ballot measure, additional data will be necessary, particularly with regards to assuring the safety of the Moss Beach/Montara water supply and runoff into Fitzgerald Preserve/Pillar Point Marsh.

The MidCoast Community Council should have a greater role in future negotiations, developing ballot wording, etc. Negotiations with the property owner should be as open as possible, with frequent updates provided to the public.

If the Board determines that negotiations should begin with the property owner and a ballot measure should be prepared, we request the Board include the following recommendations:

- 1. A detailed hydrologic study should be completed prior to the election to document potential impacts on water quantity and quality for the residential aquifers, Pillar Point Marsh, Fitzgerald Marine Preserve, Pillar Point Marsh and nearby agricultural uses. The scope of work for this study should be reviewed with Citizens Utilities and the Montara/Moss Beach Water Improvement Association.**
- 2. A ballot measure should include exemption for not only a golf course, but also a community park site.**
- 3. Financial planning, including discussions with the landowner, should incorporate costs (such as site acquisition, access and maintenance) for public recreational facilities including a community park, community center and nature trails.**
- 4. Negotiations with the land owner should be made as public as possible, with the process divided into logical segments, and public updates provided as each segment is concluded.**
- 5. The MidCoast Community Council should be involved extensively in all phases of the process, including preparation of the ballot wording.**

We thank you for your consideration, and hope that inclusion of our concerns at this early stage in your planning will facilitate an expedited and public process.

Sincerely,

Kit Dove

Kit Dove
Chairman

cc: MidCoast Council
Half Moon Bay Review
Citizens Utilities
Montara/Moss Beach Water Improvement Association