

Action Minutes, Sustainable Land Use committee meeting, July 13, 2004

Marina Shores Village presentation

Motion: *The Sustainable Land Use committee of the Loma Prieta chapter of the Sierra Club does not support the referendum petition requesting rezoning of the bay front area in Redwood City; nonetheless the committee retains serious questions about the Marina Shores Village project as it is currently planned.*

Therefore the Sustainable Land Use committee recommends to the Conservation Committee that they NOT support the resolution prepared by People for Housing not Highrises to 'repeal the rezoning'.

Motion seconded, carried unanimously. (Voting were SLU members only who have met the voting criteria: Irvin Dawid, Lowell Grattan, Rod Brown, Karen Brunton)

Additional comments from Sierra Club land use expert, Tim Frank:

Supports the motion, but adds "we should consider opposing the referendum and also improve the project. Most importantly, more information should be gathered, especially by examining the already-released EIR, prior to any decision being made".

Attendance: (member, city of residence)

1. Irvin Dawid/PA
2. Shiloh Ballard/SJ (left early)
3. Rod Brown/Cup
4. Lowell Grattan/LG
5. Brandon Sulser/Sv (left early)
6. Karen Brunton/RWC

Sierra Club representatives

1. Melissa Hippard, Sierra Club LP staff
2. Tim Frank, Sierra Club's "Senior Policy Advisor for the National Challenge to Sprawl Campaign".

Guests: (organization, residence)

1. Diane Dulmage/Acterra, SJ,
2. Ernie Goitein/LP member, Atherton
3. Joe LaClair/LP member, RWC
4. Ian Bain, City Council, RWC
5. Barbara Pierce, Vice-Mayor, RWC
6. Tim Ridner, Glenborough-Pauls, RWC
7. Lynne Trulio, People for Housing not Highrises, RWC

Complete Minutes from July 13 2004 meeting held at PCC library

Lynne Trulio, People for Housing not Highrises:

The project is “anything but smart growth”.
It’s over 1 mile from public transit, and adjacent to Baer Island Wildlife Refuge.

There are traffic impacts, and most important, impacts on wildlife, particularly birds due to proximity to the flyway. Project presents a significant ‘bird strike hazard’.

10 acres of wildlife will be filled.
Infrastructure is not there to support this massive development.
It is in the flight line of San Carlos Airport.
The project is ‘out of scale’ for this area.

Affordable housing should be built downtown.
Our group supports housing but ‘appropriately located.’

The project is ‘anti-family’. The proponents have even stated, “We won’t need schools” (for the anticipated project population).
There is an over-emphasis on high income housing.

We want housing, but not over 75 ft.
Because it is far from downtown, the traffic impacts will be enormous.
We want reinstatement of the original zoning.
This project will change the character of RWC.
It is proper that the residents vote on this project.
There are many ‘unmitigatable’ impacts.

Councilman Ian Bain:

Takes issues with Lynne’s points.
This was a unanimous council position.
I see this as smart growth.
We have a shortage of housing but lots of open space.
There is little land to build upon, so we have to go ‘up’

There are regional consequences to not building this project.
There is a connection to sprawl in the Central Valley and the decision NOT to build projects like this one, i.e. if we provide the homes here; home seekers will at least have the opportunity to buy homes closer to their Peninsula jobs, esp. those in RWC.

The wildlife impacts, particular the bird impacts, have not been documented.
Even considering potential negative environmental impacts, the benefits outweigh the disadvantages.

The developer will provide a shuttle to the train station. We would like to see an advanced system (more frequent shuttle at minimum, at best a Personal Rapid Transit system) to connect with downtown.

Home ownership is a serious obstacle to families who hail from this area.
“Should the Peninsula only be for wealthy residents?”

Vice-Mayor Barbara Pierce:

The project is about choice.

Density poses serious problems to existing neighborhoods that show distinct character, e.g. Redwood Shores, Edgewood Park. This project would not work in an existing neighborhood, even downtown.

The towers are tall because we are demanding a lot from the developer, a total of 460 accommodations, including pedestrian paths, shuttles, the extension of Bloomquist Rd that will link the project to downtown – this current separation is a major obstacle at present as the only connection is the Whipple Ave overpass of Hwy 101.

Response to “Manhattan “charge – we see it as a more European feel, with plazas and walkways.

Project is meant to serve a different segment of those seeking housing.
Currently \$800, 000 is average price of home in Redwood Shores.

We believe those living in MSV will spend money downtown, and add to its vitality. We see it as complementary to downtown.

Tim Frank, Sierra Club CA Challenge to Sprawl Campaign:

This is a dense configuration ~1 mile from a transit center. What it lacks in proximity to the transit it makes up for in its configuration. Alternatives would be far worse. “One big Prius or lots of little Hummers”. Disappointed in the transit service (shuttle trips – 3 in AM commute, 3 in PM commute).

“Is there an opportunity for the Club to engage in the process?”

Per Tim R., yes – identify wetlands, or uplands areas to be converted to wetlands, to submit to Regional Water Quality Control Board and Corps of Engineers, as this mitigation measure is still in the process of being met. He is working with Audrey Rust of Peninsula Open Space Trust.

Rod: What is on site now?

Tim R: Peninsula Marina and Pete’s Harbor.

Rod: the wetlands?

Tim R: There will be 10 acres of fill in 2 marina basins (pictures shown). These are not true wetlands, rather marinas that were created for boating purposes. Nonetheless, from a

regulatory perspective, if filled, mitigations must be provided on a minimum of 1 to 1 acre replacement.

Rod: What would current 75 ft. zoning allow in terms of housing?

Lynne: 6-8 story development would be acceptable. Right now there is 3-4 story development on site.

Ian: Fewer homes yield higher prices. Affordability is key component to the project. In addition, the city gets fewer benefits...

Lynne: concern about more people, more boats, more impacts.

Ian: There actually will be less boating with the project than exists now, as it replaces the marinas. Rather than more boats, you'll see more pedestrians due to the 'esplanade focus' of the project.

Rod: questions the 'urgency' of this issue in terms of when it will appear on the ballot if it qualifies.

Barbara: good chance council will put it on March ballot.

City Council could also rescind the zoning, thus reverting to 75 ft height limit.

Private deliberations amongst SLU

Rod: Serious reservations about endorsing a referendum that may not occur until March. "The urgency is simply not there".

Having heard the comments of Tim F., he is not ready to support this referendum.

Transit to the site is not ideal, but maybe 'the best we can get'. I would like to see improvements. I think more can be done.

We should send a strong message to conscom asking them to remain neutral.

The project DOES meet sufficient smart growth guidelines. It is a classic example of a 'grey area'.

Tim F: the level of information we have to work on is insufficient. The EIR hasn't been studied...ideally it should be reviewed prior to our making a decision.

Karen proposes to "remain neutral but stay active".

More discussion follows. "Neutral or 'not endorse' the referendum?"

Tim: prefers the latter. Suggests we should consider 'opposing' the referendum and improving the project. However, cautions about taking a stronger position without having read the EIR.

We settle on "not endorse referendum while retaining serious questions about the project".