



## MINUTES

### CITY OF HALF MOON BAY PLANNING COMMISSION

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2020

ALL REMOTE/VIRTUAL WEBINAR VIA ZOOM

Chair Benjamin called the hearing to order at 7:05 PM

**PRESENT:** Chair Benjamin, Commissioners Ruddock, Polgar, Holt and Hernandez

**ABSENT:** None

#### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND ROLL CALL

Chair Benjamin led the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**September 8, 2020**

**M/S:** Hernandez/Polgar

**Roll Call Vote:** 5-0 (yes: Benjamin, Ruddock, Polgar, Holt and Hernandez)

**October 13, 2020**

**M/S:** Ruddock/Holt

**Roll Call Vote:** 5-0 (yes: Benjamin, Ruddock, Polgar, Holt and Hernandez)

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

None

**ITEM 1.A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** An application for a Coastal Development Permit to allow five investigative geotechnical borings to characterize subsurface units and gather information on the strength of soils at the closed Half Moon Bay landfill, owned and maintained by the County of San Mateo, on the coastal bluffs south of Poplar Street, Half Moon Bay.

**FILE NO.:** PDP-20-043

**LOCATION:** Half Moon Bay Closed Landfill/APN 064-410-030 and -040

**APPLICANT/OWNER:** County of San Mateo

**PROJECT PLANNERS:** Brittney Cozzolino, Associate Planner (650) 750-2014

**Brittney Cozzolino, Associate Planner,** presented project to the Planning Commission.

#### Planning Commission Clarifying Questions

San Mateo County Senior Civil Engineer/Project Manager, Krzysztof Lisaj representing the applicant provided answers to the Planning Commission's clarifying questions along with staff.

**Q.** Had been under the impression that the landfill ends east of where the Coastal Trail is now; but the packet materials indicate that the landfill may be closer to the bluff edge.

**A.** The applicant explained the potential extents of the landfill. Orange line represents the western extent of the landfill. San Mateo County has had several studies done in this area; identified historical limits of the landfill; and as part of this project studied the limit of the landfill area through a preliminary investigation.

**Q.** Is the waste flowing underground or moving?

**A.** The Geotechnical survey does not confirm the limits of waste. The areas in green are the limits of the waste. This is high level analysis at this point. The waste is not "flowing."

**Q.** What is purpose of the borings?

**A.** Geotechnical borings not directly associated with clean closure study; it is solely for Geotechnical purposes to determine retreat rate, sloughing risk, and estimated time until landfill is exposed.

**Q.** Timing on further study? Seeing extensive erosion in this area; including sloughing (e.g. HMB B-3).

**A.** Currently working on clean closure study. Expected along with cost in the middle of 2021. The study will determine erosion rate and risk of sloughing. County does quarterly inspections of the landfill. Trying to determine how much time they have, and what they can do in the interim if get into an emergency situation.

**Q.** Trying to understand the composition of the material is helpful for the Commissioner's consideration. Is there any other information about the soil than the agriculture study that was conducted with respect to the area?

**A.** Soils vary throughout the site. Depends on location with respect to how much landfill and if the soils are native. Half Moon Bay Public Works Director Doughty noted that past borings in the area varied for locations near Smith Field and near Seymour Watercourse (WC).

**Q.** Impression was part of the reason that this project had come to pass is that there is already leachate?

**A.** Did see some foam-like substance on the beach; it was tested and it did not have leachate. Will confirm with County staff who monitor the landfill.

**Q.** There is expectation that erosion will retreat back to where the yellow outlines are on the site plan. What are the impacts on the project? Wants to understand how County is weighing the information about the stability of the site.

**A.** Walked the site with design team of geotechnical engineers. Based on their experience, they do not believe that any kind of boring will destabilize the bluff. In their experience have not had experience with destabilizing with respect to slip outs or landslides. Believe that the concern is the wave run up and the erosion.

**Q.** What is the setback from edge of bluff?

**A.** Would implement a safety standard. The locations shown on the map are general locations. Would be done through best practices.

**Q.** What about the other mapped portions on the site plan? The blue section? What about the eastern extent?

**A.** Blue is a high conductivity area. Would have an overall high concentration of metallic waste or something else. With respect to eastern extents, have historical information of where the

waste was filled. This is a high-level study to establish cost analysis, set up the project to be eligible for grants, etc. This is not programmed into any of the County projects at this time.

**Q.** These borings are not for the clean closure study. Want to understand what these borings will inform.

**A.** Reviewed history and context – San Mateo County received a grant through Office of Sustainability and this site was identified as appropriate. Added additional tasks, including a memo to assess interim or emergency measures. These borings would provide County with preliminary options for addressing emergency situation. Would not consider armoring unless an emergency; that is not the intent of the project. Can complete the clean closure study without doing any of these borings.

**Q.** The hazard mitigation evaluation discussed future options – clean closure, or armoring? Is it both or only armoring in emergency situation?

**A.** Two separate projects. Not an either/or. County's preference is to get rid of the landfill. Borings and understanding the risks would only be addressing emergency situations.

**Q.** What are we going to do? What is the remediation plan? Not a question of if, but of when?

**A.** The point of this whole effort is to improve understanding of the composition and extent of the landfill and how much time they have to address it. Staff further clarified that they support the County for pursuing this significant and important project. This project could also have a relationship to Seymour; e.g. to refocus flows to go through this area.

**Q.** Thanks to San Mateo County staff, understands the purpose of the borings better. Has San Mateo County considered other boring locations that may be helpful. Most dramatic erosion is along Seymour WC between the bridge and the beach. Wonders if the County would take borings there.

**A.** City staff noted that borings were already conducted by the City in that area. Can provide more information about these in the next staff report.

**Q.** What about the borings on the beach and how they relate to the sense of timing?

**A.** Gives additional information at the toe of the cliff for the event that any emergency armoring is required because such armoring typically extends beneath the surface of the soil.

**Q.** Some of the borings on the bluff top are behind the existing concrete; one potential threat is a failure of the revetment?

**A.** That is correct.

**Q.** What would be a signpost (trigger/threshold) about safety?

**A.** Geotech report would assess the stability of the bluff.

**Q.** Backfilling of the borings; will be decided with respect to what makes the most sense. What was done with filling the borings by Seymour? What was learned from that?

**A.** Need a permit from San Mateo County for drilling permit; typically filled with grout.

#### **Public Comment**

**1) Dave Olsen, MidCoast Community Council, but speaking as a citizen** - Understands the scope of the application. Upset that the solution of this problem is going to be armoring.

### Planning Commission Discussion

- Overall:
  - Very excited about this project and how San Mateo was able to get grant funding to pursue this forward-looking project.
  - Very opposed to armoring and sees that the County documentation aligns with this intent. Any temporary armoring would really need to be temporary.
  - We need to move more quickly to address this and get in front of it. Would appreciate regular updates on this topic and would like City staff to recommend a governance model to improve this process.
  - Relevance of the past work on Seymour should be considered in their planning.
  - Not the first landfill in HMB that has been remediated; the investigation takes time; the mitigation needs to relate to the risk.
  - It could be helpful for community to be more aware of this area as a unit relative to erosion; biological resources; etc. Some value in considering this reach of shoreline; there is a lot of interaction between the projects.
  - Note the city has a lot of other areas with hazards that also need focus.
- Borings:
  - Thinking more about the borings; filling with grout; seems bizarre to put in more materials that may need to be dug out in the future.
  - Some of the boring locations are coastal strand and thus maybe the impact would not be huge, but would need to cover it.
  - Need to add more information about habitat for listed species.
  - Proximity to the bluff edge; the Initial Study analysis focuses on risk to workers doing the work but does not necessarily address beach visitors after the project.
- Seymour:
  - What are options if there is additional erosion along Seymour WC?
  - Expects that the Seymour WC would be more vulnerable to near term erosion exposure than the bluff face. Would like to include the southwest corner of the project where no vegetation has grown for many years.

Further summary from San Mateo County: It should be noted with respect to the borings potentially being exposed as a future time is that in such a case, the landfill contents would also be exposed; and thus addressing the borings would be but a part of addressing a larger scale problem.

**Motion** to continue this item to a date certain of November 10, 2020 to provide time for the applicant to prepare additional materials and respond to Planning Commission comments.

**M/S:** Hernandez/Polgar

**Roll Call Vote:** 5-0 (yes: Benjamin, Ruddock, Polgar, Holt and Hernandez)

**ITEM 2.A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** A continued item from September 22, 2020 – An application of an application of a Coastal Development Permit and Architectural Review to allow the

demolition of an existing residence and the construction of a new two-story 2,264 square-foot single-family residence, including a one-car attached garage, on a 4,670 square foot site.

**FILE NO.:** PDP-18-089

**LOCATION:** 2909 Champs Elysee Blvd

**APPLICANT/OWNER:** Nicholas French

**PROJECT PLANNERS:** Scott Phillips, Associate Planner (650) 726-8299

**Scott Phillips, Associate Planner,** presented project to the Planning Commission.

**Chair Benjamin:** Ex parte communication – site visit discussed Roosevelt drainage and flooding issues with a neighbor.

#### **Planning Commission Clarifying Questions**

**Q.** Can staff provide feedback on what the applicant has done to address the Planning Commission's concerns from the past session.

**A.** Applicant has been highly responsive and has addressed the concerns brought up at previous meeting. The landscaping was reviewed by the project biologist.

**Q.** Does the design fully address the neighborhoods concerns about drainage? Does it improve upon the existing conditions?

**A.** Yes.

**Q.** Question to landscape architect with respect to the plant palette: Notices how void of vegetation the bank was in this area. Plants need to be able to establish themselves. Could salix (willow) or blackberry be a possibility for the riparian plantings? Will these plants become established, control erosion, and also was asked to not put artificial irrigation in this location?

**A.** The project landscape architect explained that this area is complicated by the large grove of eucalyptus. Might need irrigation to establish. Does not recommend salix, but blackberry is a possibility.

#### **Public Comment**

None

#### **Planning Commission Discussion**

Overall:

- Appreciates the applicant having worked with staff and how responsive the revisions were to the Planning Commission's concerns.

Landscaping:

- Staff asked to clarify options for irrigation. Discussed no permanent system but could have a low impact system (dripper hoses without soil disturbance) during hot months to ensure plants become established.
- Take extra care to delineate the buffer.

Drainage:

- New location of the detention basin is a great improvement.

**Motion to approve** the project as written in the staff report and resolution with added condition of approval allowing temporary irrigation (e.g. dripper hoses, no soil disturbance) during dry season within the 30-foot riparian buffer to support new plant establishment.

**M/S:** Hernandez/Ruddock

**Roll Call Vote:** 5-0 (yes: Benjamin, Ruddock, Polgar, Holt and Hernandez)

#### **DIRECTOR REPORT**

##### *Updates and Agenda Forecast*

- Final Local Coastal Land Use Plan was adopted by City Council on October 20, 2020; staff is preparing to submit to California Coastal Commission.
- November 10, 2020 – 795 Main Street; continuation of Half Moon Bay Landfill investigative drilling.
- November 24, 2020 – 555 Seymour Parcel Map and possibly a single-family home requiring exceptions.
- December 8 – Carter Park, tentative

#### **PLANNING COMMISSION COMMUNICATIONS**

- Planning Commission supports Chair writing a letter to thank staff for LCLUP work.
- Commissioner Hernandez noted that for the Poplar Beach garbage facilities, now only have a dumpster. Would like garbage cans back soon. Has also observed a high number of beach fires, and there is concern about smoke in the mornings on Poplar Beach. Fireworks were noted during the recent red flag warning.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion to adjourn** in memory of active community members John Lynch and Chris Thollaug.

**M/S:** Ruddock/Hernandez

Unanimous

Meeting adjourned at 9:38pm

Respectfully Submitted:

  
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Bridget Jett, Planning Analyst

Approved:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
James Benjamin, Chair

Meeting Attendance on next page\*

**Attendee Report**

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Webinar ID: 971 5639 6712  
October 27, 2020 Planning Commission  
Meeting  
Bridget Jett  
Jill Ekas  
Steve Ruddock  
Brian Holt  
Scott Phillips  
Winter King  
Sara Polgar  
Krzysztof Lisaj  
Rick Hernandez  
James Benjamin  
Karen Aitken  
Brittney Cozzolino  
John Doughty  
PCT LIVE  
Charlie Kissick  
Michelle Dragony  
Seth  
Jo Chamberlain  
Winter King  
Janet Leonard  
Dave Olson  
Dana Riggs  
Nicholas French