

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

NORTH CENTRAL COAST DISTRICT
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F13a

A-2-MAR-21-0048 (GRONEMAN/SIBLEY SFD)

FEBRUARY 10, 2023

EX PARTE

From: Graham Groneman <groneman4@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 15, 2023 8:10 PM
To: Brownsey, Donne@Coastal <donne.brownsey@coastal.ca.gov>
Cc: Aminzadeh, Sara@Coastal <sara.aminzadeh@coastal.ca.gov>; Ainsworth, John@Coastal <John.Ainsworth@coastal.ca.gov>; Huckelbridge, Kate@Coastal <Kate.Huckelbridge@coastal.ca.gov>
Subject: Groneman Home - 183 Sunset Way Muir Beach

Commissioner Brownsey,

I hope this finds you well. I am reaching out again with the hope that you may help me find a path forward with my Family's home. I have attached a short letter that updates my situation.

I understand you are quite busy but I hope you can find a couple minutes to give this matter some attention.

Respectfully,

Graham Groneman
183 Sunset, Muir Beach
(415) 717-1512

ATTACHED LETTER

Donne Brownsey, Chair
California Coastal Commission
455 Market St Suite 300
San Francisco, CA 94105
Sent via email only

Chair Brownsey,

I am reaching out again to request your assistance in getting a hearing for my family's 2,200 sq. ft. 3-bedroom home in Muir Beach, Marin County. Our project is located on a hillside infill lot surrounded on 3 sides by other houses in a subdivision established in 1922. After over 2 years of thorough planning and evaluation, the County of Marin approved my project on May 27, 2021. However, your Commission found Substantial Issue and took jurisdiction where this projects continues to labor with little movement.

I spoke at your august meeting where Director Ainsworth stated that my project would be before the commission before the end of the year. When that did not occur, I spoke again at your December meeting where Director Ainsworth indicated that I just needed to be patient and that there was no bias against my project.

I feel have shown a substantial degree of patience since Commission Staff appealed this project. I have worked with them respectfully and in good faith despite their misstatements, inaccuracies, and what I

feel is a disingenuous evaluation of my family's home. Staff continues to refuse to move this project to a hearing or even to indicate when it could go to hearing as they feel that Mr. Carl is critical to its evaluation. I am sympathetic of Mr. Carl's need for leave but I hope we can find a path forward that doesn't solely rely on one individual. This is a single-family home that I thought was being evaluated by its compliance with the regulations of the Marin LCP and Coastal Act and not the opinion of one person.

The appeal by Commission Staff and subsequent Staff report stated many reasons why the project approved by Marin was inconsistent with the Marin LCP and Coastal Act. The evaluation did not adhere to the five factor criteria to find substantial issue and as a result during the many months Staff has had jurisdiction all the stated issues have been shown to be untrue.

The principal and only issue that staff is stuck on is how to apply the bluff definition to my property. Staff would like to classify my entire property as a bluff even though that application would be inconsistent with the bluff definition, past Commission action in the imitate area and would re-classify a portion of the existing developed community from bluff top to bluff face. The stance of Staff is neither consistent with the Marin LCP or Coastal Act and I have requested that the bluff definition issue be decided by the Commissioners. My family's home is being held hostage by your staff and is being used a tool to soften the bluff definition so it can be applied further into the coastal zone. This isn't right and I am again requesting your help to move my family's home to a hearing.

At the December meeting Mr. Ainsworth stated that Staff was not bias against this project. I do not believe that your Staff is maliciously bias against this project but, I do however believe that because the same Staff members wrote the appeal, wrote the staff report recommending substantial issue, and have been tasked with the evaluation of this project that their evaluation and views are flawed with pre-established conclusions and bias. These pre-established conclusions and bias have been created because your staff are in many ways the aggrieved appellants. The conditions under which your staff is evaluating my family's home is unfair, unbalanced and is denying my family our right to due process.

I worked diligently with County of Marin Staff in the creation of this project. I followed the rules and made many changes and concessions to achieve the County's approval. The County's approval was fairly evaluated, was the correct decision and was based on regulation and fact, not agenda. Further highlighting Staff's opposition to a fair path forward for this project, Staff provided me a conditional approval that reduced the 2200 sq ft home to a 350 sq ft building envelop. This proposal by Staff seemed to be intended to further delay this project as it eliminated all economic use of the property and if approved would be a great representation of the definition of regulatory takings.

Please help me move this project to a fair evaluation and hearing so my family may find resolution to this matter.

Respectfully,

Graham Groneman
183 Sunset, Muir Beach
(415) 717-1512

From: Graham Groneman <groneman4@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, July 23, 2022 11:05 PM
To: Brownsey, Donne@Coastal <donne.brownsey@coastal.ca.gov>
Cc: Ainsworth, John@Coastal <John.Ainsworth@coastal.ca.gov>; Aminzadeh, Sara@Coastal <sara.aminzadeh@coastal.ca.gov>
Subject: Groneman Home - 183 Sunset, Muir Beach

Commissioner Brownsey,

I hope this finds you well. I am reaching out based on a recommendation from Commissioner Aminzadeh with the hope that you may help me find a path forward with my Family's home. I have attached a short letter that details my situation as well as a PDF document that gives a brief overview of my project pertaining to Commission Staff's appeal.

I understand you are quite busy but I hope you can find a couple minutes to give this matter some thought.

Respectfully,

Graham Groneman
183 Sunset, Muir Beach
(415) 717-1512

ATTACHED LETTER

Donne Brownsey, Chair
California Coastal Commission
455 Market St Suite 300
San Francisco, CA 94105
Sent via email only

Chair Brownsey,

I am reaching out today to request your assistance to get a De Novo hearing for my family's 2,200 sq. ft. 3-bedroom home in Muir Beach, Marin County. Our project is located on a hillside infill lot surrounded on 3 sides by other houses in a subdivision established in 1922. After over 2 years of thorough planning and evaluation, the County of Marin approved my project on May 27, 2021. However, your Commission found Substantial Issue on September 19, 2021, based on inaccuracies and misrepresentations in the commission's staff report that I was not afforded an opportunity to speak to at that time.

I took Staff at their word that the project would be evaluated in a timely manner and that they had a genuine interest to move this on to the Commission for a decision. Unfortunately, their actions these past 10 months have shown me the opposite. While I have provided Commission Staff everything requested in a timely manner and been willing to make reasonable adjustments, Staff has only afforded me one meeting in 14 months and continues to assert that understaffing and a large workload is delaying their review of a "complicated project".

After spending 2 decades in public service myself, I have a solid understanding of the ethics of process and how the government should be mindful of its effects on those they serve. I believe that the strained relationship between North Central Coast District Staff and the County of Marin resulting from a contentious and unresolved 13-year LCP update process is affecting Staff's approach. The heavy-handed opposition I have encountered from Commission Staff has lacked transparency and seems intended to define regulation rather than follow it.

I'm sorry for the harsh words, but I am beyond frustrated. Growing up at Muir Beach, spending countless days in the ocean, has given me a deep respect for our coastline and our access to it. I have always been an avid supporter of the Coastal Act and recognize our society's need to adapt to climate change. Sadly, however, I feel the tactics being used by your staff will erode the public's trust in your organization and eventually overshadow all the great things accomplished by the Commission over the past 46 years.

Please step in and provide the ethical leadership and oversight that this process needs by requesting that the Executive Director bring our application to the Commission during your August meeting. I have also attached an information document that provide an overview of my project, and I would be pleased to discuss this situation further if you wish to do so.

Respectfully,
Graham Groneman
183 Sunset, Muir Beach
(415) 717-1512