

Lenzi, Chelsea

From: Villalobos, David
Sent: Tuesday, December 03, 2013 8:06 AM
To: Board Letters
Subject: FW: Tues. Dec. 2nd Mtg. -Please Read- Comments

From: Lori Henning [mailto:lhlivinghistory@aol.com]
Sent: Monday, December 02, 2013 11:02 PM
To: Farnum, Elizabeth; SupervisorCarbajal; Wolf, Janet; Adam, Peter; Lavagnino, Steve; Villalobos, David
Subject: Re: Tues. Dec. 2nd Mtg. -Please Read- Comments

December 2, 2013

Dear Board Of Supervisors,

My family has lived in Las Cruces, on the recently dubbed "Gaviota Coast" for (as long as we know from Grandma's stories) seven generations. We grew up in the Gaviota Hot Springs Canyon and listened to my grandmother's stories of the Inn across the highway (before there WAS a Highway 101), of her working at the Las Cruces Store, of the colorful characters running cattle through the Gaviota Pass and her life growing up in the area. We have been present at many of the Gav Pac Meetings as well as the Planning Commission meetings during the process of developing a Gaviota Coast Plan. Unfortunately, we are unable to attend the meeting of December 3rd, 2013.

We are grateful that GavPac, the Planning Commission and the community have repeatedly supported the retention of the CH zoning on our parcel at Las Cruces. It is a small piece of that parcel that is zoned CH (<2 acres) and (as has been recognized) there is a multitude of potential uses that can reflect the rural character of the area. Las Cruces has a rich cultural history and has always been the crossroads in a community that thrived when economic opportunities were local; this parcel is an essential piece of our cultural heritage and we are grateful that the zoning is being retained. This is one exemplary portion of the draft that shows the planning process considered the needs of the community and took action to see they are insured.

We understand that the intention of this plan is to preserve agricultural heritage, as well as the cultural and environmental heritage of this area. We would like to point out a few essential road blocks to these intentions. First, the plant species listed as ESH habitat and alliances are extensive, and far too common of species. Some of these flora, such as the Bush Monkeyflower Scrub, Sycamore and Valley Oak Woodland, Purple Needlegrass and Lemonade Berry Scrub are as common as it might be to see front lawns along the sidewalks in Santa Barbara and Goleta. Including a speices of "front lawn grass" in an ESH overlay is the equivalent of including some of these species in an ESH overlay for much of the Gaviota plan area. These species are neither threatened, endangered or "unique, rare or fragile"; there is no sense in offering "protection" for such prolific, ambitious species. Furthermore, including them in a list of ESH species will only further prohibit routine and vital agricultural practices based on specific needs such as grazing and planting areas, retaining areas, fencing, etc. This is one example of how inclusion with such a broad focus will be detrimental to the original intentions of the plan, thus to the agriculturalists and people who have been exemplary stewards of the land thus far. We suggest that this list be removed from the plan and the EIR help develop a more appropriate list.

Second, an Agricultural Permit Tier Structure (Action AG-5) is a sensible suggestion to aid agriculturalists in improving their operations and exploring new opportunities for continuing operations. The permit levels are intended to accommodate a landowner who strives to make a living off the land; if these attempts are successful and they expand, then a more extensive, higher permit tier will be required. Agriculture is vital, not only to this community, but to our nation. It is hard enough work in its own right. If we want it to be successful, we need to come together as a community to support it. This is a concrete way we have an opportunity to do this utilizing local policy.

Third, the Gav Pac proposed, and the Planning Commission approved, language to address Existing Legal Lots (Policy Lu-8). We recommend keeping this language which states that "any existing legal lot, except fraction lots, within the agricultural zones shall be allowed all of the uses and accessory structures within the zone regardless of lot size." There are many people (our family included) who have taken time to get and have paid for costly certificates of compliance in order to further legitimize their lots. "Non-conforming" lots were legal until the County down zoned the Gaviota area and made many parcels non conforming to size. We urge you to adopt this language.

The Gav Pac, as well as the local community have worked through an exhaustive process to develop recommendations that are vital to the continued success of the community. The people who staffed it (some of them our neighbors) are committed to seeing this area thrive and that is why they committed long unpaid hours to forge this plan. Because the land is in their hearts, they have carefully tended it and watched its seasons pass for generations and hope to continue to do so. Knowing that extensive, unreasonable regulations will only hinder its success while also aware that measures need to be taken to preserve the many pieces of its inherent beauty, they worked hard to find solutions to aid its continued health, success and growth. Please carefully consider the points addressed. We need reasonable solutions that work for the community and they are available, with your help this community can thrive.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Lori Henning, Cindy Henning, Josh Henning, Lisa Henning and
Debbie Henning