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June 22, 2012

Chair Farr & Honorable Board of Supervisors via e mail
123 E. Anapamu St.
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

**Re: Cavaletto Tree Farm Infill Housing
Hearing date and agenda item, No. 6, June 26, 2012**

Chair Farr and Supervisors:

On behalf of Larry and Jackie Cavaletto and the whole project team we are pleased to present the Tree Farm project at the hearing of June 26, 2012.

It has been the product of a tremendous amount of planning for 12 years with over 40 different detailed plans and literally hundreds of fine tuning changes through the years, responsive to different voices. It is truly a result of receiving, filtering, and including a myriad of suggestions from neighbors and other interested parties on its many details along the way.

It went from formative neighborhood meeting in 2000 to unanimous Planning Commission approval after five hearings and accolades of it being a “lovely project” with endless steps in between.

The process has been so daunting because the Cavalettos were required by the County to give up their residential zoning to be able to sell Christmas trees from the site. They did give up their residential zoning to continue having income for their family, the only property to be required to do so. Moreover, two of the three parcels of this property were actually previously approved for a development project but were cut off by the 1972 water moratorium.¹

Project Benefits

Please see the myriad of project benefits (attached) many beyond normal legal requirements.

Environmental

The main environmental issue has always been the impact of the project on traffic on the Patterson Overpass. The EIR shows that the planned improvement of dual left turn lanes to the southbound onramp substantially improves traffic flows, in fact reducing delays for that turn from 33 seconds

¹ We incorporate by reference into the administrative record the studies, communications and submittals between the applicant’s team and County representatives concerning this project.

down to 16 seconds. This is with the full development of the project and all of its homes. This improvement will be processed for approval at the beginning and completed during Phase 2.

Land Trade with the County

One component of the project is a land exchange where .5 acres of private land near the creek is transferred to the County and .48 acres of County owned land on the east side of San Jose Creek is transferred to Cavalettos, thus allowing a shallower and more natural appearing detention basin. This property which the County may exchange is not accessible now.

Conditions

Attached are separate discussions on Applicant's proposed fine tuning of conditions. One involves delaying installation of the new public street on the east connecting with Patterson Ave (beyond what is required in the Circulation Element) (Cost \$1.36 million). A second is to accept the Parks Commission recommendation for a 50% credit for parks fees which applies by County ordinance and State law when the project provides onsite recreational facilities that exceed that credit amount (\$670,00 is remaining fee). The third is for road fees (\$300,000) to a separate agency- City of Goleta which are not factually justified.

In our effort to create an economically viable project, the issues of phasing the project from its western creek-side common area and phasing of public improvements have been issues of great importance.

It has been a challenging 12 year process with the housing market having had a 35%+reduction in values and substantially greater difficulty in having new buyers qualify for loans. With that said, Santa Barbara still has a vast shortage of housing compared to jobs and interest rates are at 50 year lows for mortgages, so it is a unique opportunity in time for the next generation of homeowners to get their stake in the community.

Please take the actions suggested by staff as to recommending approval of the project, and adopt our alternatives for conditions, attached.

The mission given to the project team many years ago was to create an optimum design for this property including affordable by design components. The zoning designation and rules would follow rather than drive the design. We have done so using team members with outstanding local and national experience and using LEED ND design principles. We have done our job.

On behalf of the Cavaletto family and the project team, we thank you for your consideration of this project.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey C. Nelson

CC: Larry & Jackie Cavaletto & Project Team