



As I Was Saying...

Publisher | Steve Penna

Another issue that will undoubtedly be a major topic of conversation in our community for years to come, the development of the Cargill property, is starting to really heat up and we have only begun the review process.

Since the plan for the development was submitted late last year, our City Council has been virtually silent on the subject and has asked our community to respect and follow the process that is designed for development projects. Our community has followed that guidance.

But other city councils and groups can't seem to respect the process as our residents have.

Take for instance the comments from two Menlo Park council members (Andy Cohen and Kelly Fergusson) who decided it was their business to voice their opinions on the development publicly and try to get their colleagues to agree to come out against the proposed development.

That did not work and no vote was taken. Then a local newspaper reported that the two were in fact working with members of Save The Bay to orchestrate some backdoor deals and it was all "caught on e-mail."

Seems Cohen is so against the development — even without knowing what it will be — that he was corresponding privately with a member of the Save The Bay organization and planning to create an enticement of "housing

densities" to our council to make them vote against the project. This is exactly the type of politicking the public has become outraged by.

Mind your own business...

Then two council members from Belmont decided to come out publicly against the project and "vowed" to meet with Redwood City officials.

That might be a good idea instead of trying to find ways to "entice" them. Regardless, I don't really know how much weight any view from that council would carry since they are seen as dysfunctional as any government body can be.

Mind your own business...

What this all comes down to is that a few elected officials are teaming up with Save The Bay to try to block the development, and in the meantime they have all totally disrespected the guidance of our council and the residents of our community who have respected the process so far. Once they started to speak out, the developer felt the need to defend its position and now we have newspaper headlines, letters, blogs and columns before the process has even really begun. Tit for tat.

For some reason, the Save The Bay people and other special interest groups are supposed to be the voice for all of us as far as anything goes for the environment. Why do they think they have a greater say about the bay than we do? They are not elected officials or appointed by

the people; they are just led by money and the opinions of special interests, most of whom do not live in Redwood City. We do.

It is not their bay; it is all of ours. And most importantly for the residents of Redwood City, this proposed development is in our community and we have the final say. Not out-of-towners who scare us with traffic, water and other concerns that we really don't know exist because they are speaking before the process lets us know. How can we believe them later when we will need that information?

I am tired of hearing those naysayers who do not interact in an educational debate about the project or let us know how they will restore the so-called wetlands. How much will the property cost? How will they purchase the property? How can the site be restored to wetlands? Who will pay for it all? That is what we want to know. Give us a legitimate option.

In the meantime, let's all follow and respect the process. Give the developers the opportunity to present their plans and have it go through the review process, and then have the naysayers submit their plans and see where it all goes.

This is all about more than just a proposed development; it is about keeping our community focused on other issues that are affecting the quality of all our lives — not just turning all our attention to them and seeing our community divided again. There are too many issues that are vital right now — stay focused.