Harvey, Nancy

From: Iris Tocher [iristocher@comcast.net]
Sent: Sunday, February 14, 2010 5:08 PM
To: Davidson, Don; Lee, Conrad; Balducci, Claudia; Degginger, Grant; Chelminiak, John; Robertson, Jennifer; Wallace, Kyla
Cc: Foran, Patrick; Terry, Matthew; Stu VanderHoek-work; Rich Wagner; Merle Keenney; Marcelle Lynde; Hal Ferris; Doug Leigh; David Schooler; Bob MacMillan; Betina Finley; Stefanie Beighle; Tom Tanaka; iristocher@comcast.net; Bergstrom, Michael; Cole, Robin; Sherry Grindeland-home; John Stokes; Harvey, Nancy
Subject: Work of the Meyedenbauer Bay Park and Land Use Steering Committee

February 13, 2010

Re: Work of the Meyedenbauer Bay Park and Land Use Steering Committee

Dear City Council Members:

I want to point out some facts relevant to where we are in this process.

- It has been three years since the beginning of the planning process for a City of Bellevue park at Meydenbauer Bay and compatible adjacent land uses.
- Five members of the current City Council were part of unanimous Council votes in early 2007 to approve:
  a) 12 Planning Principles to guide the work of a citizen Steering Committee in preparing a Master Plan
  b) 13 members for the Steering Committee.
- The Steering Committee represents:

  >A variety of Bellevue neighborhoods including West Bellevue, Woodridge, East Bellevue, South Bellevue and three who live in the immediate neighborhood of the Bay.

  >A spectrum of experience including the Planning Commission, Parks Board, Human Services Commission, Arts Board, Environmental Services Commission, Transportation Commission, architecture, local business, real estate development, housing, property management, habitat restoration and preservation, parks, heritage organizations, local government, and the boating community.
- A vocal group of residents around the bay (MBNA) organized to make their opinions known early in the process. These opinions are:

  >Strongly felt and expressed.

  >Often factually incorrect.

  >Mostly unchanged by new information.

  >Causing very long meetings.

  >Costing the City time and money in responding repeatedly to familiar complaints.
- The Steering Committee listened to each concern, asking staff for information to clarify that issue and make necessary adjustments to the plan to accommodate any new data. One example of many for how seriously we took MBNA's worries was making sure that 10000 Meydenbauer Condominiums would have unimpaired access for emergency response equipment such as fire trucks. Representatives from the

Bellevue Fire Department attended several of our meetings to assure us and residents that the plan under consideration would meet their requirements. Even the Fire Chief spent an evening with us.

- Conflicting desires among residents and also among committee members required the Steering Committee to learn from the data, the Planning Principles, and each other about how to find the best balance in each case. For instance, virtually everyone wanted improved habitat for wildlife and cleaner water in the bay. Yet there was resistance to changing the existing shoreline and piers, both of which have an impact on that ecology. The challenge was to find the best balance of benefits for the taxpayers of the City of Bellevue. I think we did that.

I understand the role of a citizens' advisory committee to study the facts, take the predictable initial hostility that arises in response to any change in the status quo, become informed as to the issues, and make recommendations to the Council in alignment with the charge they were given. The Steering Committee has shown its commitment to their assignment over an unusually long period and under an unusually adverse environment.

I look forward to the planning phase concluding soon with approval of a Master Plan. While current economic conditions may mean that actual design and implementation are years away, such a plan will guide future decision makers and stand as your legacy for our City.

Respectfully yours,

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cc:
Patrick Foran
Matt Terry
Robin Cole
Mike Bergstrom
Steering Committee members
Park Board Members