

Guest Column | Paul Grisanti

The benefit of building

In response to “Commission Delays Approval of Bluff-Top Homes,” I think it’s important that we not lose sight of what this project is and how it benefits Malibu.

The project that was presented to the Planning Commission last Monday night called for five homes on a 24-acre site directly adjacent to Bluffs Park. It also called for a donation of sufficient land to add a baseball field or skate park and additional parking to serve the existing amenities.

The next time you spend a quiet afternoon with your family at Bluffs Park, take the time to view this vast plot of vacant land. Then imagine a boutique hotel in its place or a large-scale condo complex, both of which have been proposed for this site in the past.

Now imagine five homes. The developer has offered to reduce the height and visible bulk of the homes as well as to modify the landscape plan to make the project less apparent when viewed from all locations. In a city where low density and slow growth win the day, one would assume that Malibu would embrace a dramatically reduced plan like this. And, in fact, it has.

Our youth sports community, among many others, has voiced its support for the project as it represents an opportunity for the city to fill a major void in the lack of active park space. So, whether it’s the land donation, the \$1 million to finance construction of the new park space or the

improvement to the nightmare that is parking at Bluffs Park, this project will benefit residents and visitors alike.

I think somewhere between the lengthy public testimony and the sidebar about concerns that the Staff’s recommendation to preserve the option of zoning other properties’ “planned development,” we lost focus on what this project is. The plans satisfy our Planning Department as seen by its affirmative recommendation in the staff report. It clearly meets the requirements of Malibu’s strict zoning code. And lastly, the developer is giving something back to the community that we all want.

Finally, as Arnold York stated quite eloquently in his Editorial dated Jan. 8, “Many people live behind or adjacent to an empty lot and once they get used to that view, they get very upset when someone comes along and wants to build on that vacant lot because that new house is going to cut down part or all of their view. That’s the reason we have a zoning code, so it isn’t a popularity contest. I have a right to build on my lot just the way you have a right to build on your lot, just as long as I do it within the rules relating to height and bulk. Many have trouble with that concept, but zoning can’t be that whoever builds first wins and is therefore able to block everyone else from using their lot.”

To me these are ample reasons to support this project, and you should too.



Guest Column | Duna DiVito

Happy new era

I know a very smart black-haired lady named Isabelle whose beautiful blue eyes are always hiding behind her petite eyeglasses frame. She had a good job but was laid off after many years, and, of course, Isabelle lost her health insurance.

Isabelle had colitis and, after a while, she was not able to pay for her doctor anymore. She could not apply for health insurance because of her old health problem. She felt helpless, hope-



less and weak. Isabelle found out her medicine cost 10 times less in Mexico. Lucky her. She lived in Southern California and crossed the Mexican border to buy her medicine. She did not know any Spanish.

Now, 2014 is here! Isabelle’s nightmare is over! Isabelle has already applied for Obamacare. She is happy and confident to look for a job. There are many people like Isabelle in this country. So, happy new era, Isabelle.

Letters to the Editor

The Malibu Times requests that letters to the editor be sent by U.S. mail or hand-delivered to The Malibu Times, 3864 Las Flores Canyon Rd., Malibu, CA 90265; e-mailed to malibunews@malibutimes.com or by fax to 310.456.8986. Name, address and phone number must be included with all letters for verification purposes.

Typed letters must use sentence case (please avoid submitting correspondence typed entirely in capital letters or in cursive). Letters should be brief, 350 words maximum, and may be edited for clarity or length. Deadlines are Tuesdays at noon.

The importance of a view

The Malibu Times’ article, “Commission Delays Approval of Bluff-Top Homes,” (Jan. 8) claims it met with pushback at the Malibu Planning Commission. My friends and I disagree—it sailed through, mostly led by a partial Chairman Jennings. The Planning Commission voted 3-1 to recommend to certify the EIR and even went on to establish development standards for the project.

I understand that staff sent commissioners a 2,700 page package, knowing full well they had no time to read it, and yet still recommended a vote of yes on the project.

Commissioner John Mazza consistently questioned, with surprise, that the project might be approved without the usual considerations.

It was noted that the developers are offering a donation of one million dollars to the city. The Supreme Court recently ruled that cities are barred from accepting donations. The ensuing discussion attempted to get around that.

Our family has lived in Malibu Colony for over 50 years. That looming development would sit immediate stage right of the sunset for Colony residents and would mar the pristine mountain profile of so many highly prominent and well-populated perspectives within the heart of Malibu.

This bluff top is such an important ridgeline as viewed by so many. As a destination, the park is a cultural landmark that should be considered a public good and, thus, not just relevant to those within the immediate vicinity. I

also note that the City admitted that “view was not one of the main criteria considered by them” in 2009 when they allowed the zoning change.

In the discussion of the Ridgeline Ordinance, the Commission considered whether this bluff top should be so restricted, claiming technicalities of slope as reasons why it doesn’t qualify as a “ridge,” per se. The point worth underlining is that the purpose of the ordinance is to protect prominent view sheds as seen on busy thoroughfares like Malibu Canyon, which this development certainly would ruin.

Please don’t let the interests of a few ruin the views of so many, including the 15 million visitors to Malibu each year, forever!

Tim Elkins

Keeping coyotes away

Yesterday during breakfast, a coyote came within six feet of my back door with eyes on two little dogs behind a barking Labrador Retriever. This is the first time in 25 years on Point Dume that a coyote has been so fearless. I wanted to share some tips on creating “unfriendly” coyote neighborhoods.

Q: Why are they in my neighborhood?

Because of the recent fire and ongoing drought, many wild animals have lost their habitat and are looking for new sources of food and water.

Q: What can I do to make my home and neighborhood undesirable to coyotes?

When coyotes find food source-

es in residential areas, they may lose their fear of humans and eventually test both people and pets as prey. Do not feed coyotes either intentionally or by accident as this causes them to quickly lose their fear of people and become aggressive. Anyone who feeds coyotes is putting the entire neighborhood’s pets and children at risk of coyote attack and serious injury.

-If you feed pets outdoors, food dishes should be promptly emptied and removed after pets have eaten.

-Store pet food indoors or in sealed heavy-duty containers.

-Use containers that have tight-fitting lids to prevent raccoons, dogs or coyotes from having access to household garbage.

-Make sure ripe fruits are picked from the garden.

-Keep grills and barbecues clean. Even the smallest food scraps may attract coyotes.

-Do not allow spillage to collect under bird feeders.

Q: How do I keep my family pets safe?

Watch your pets: keep small pets such as cats, rabbits and small dogs indoors, and if outdoors, keep them within enclosed kennels. Large dogs should be brought inside after dark. Never allow cats or small dogs to run free at any time, as they are easy prey. Remember invisible fencing is ineffective on coyotes.

Q: What happens if I encounter a coyote?

If you see or are approached by a coyote, you should exhibit caution. Do not run away. Instead, yell, wave your arms and/or throw an object at the animal. It is a good idea to carry a walking stick.

Laure Stern

From the Web

Editor’s note: The following are comments responding to articles posted on malibutimes.com.

An OK bribe

When someone builds a development in a city, they usually give something back to the community. In this case, it’s land and money for more ball fields. I guess that’s a bribe I am OK with. In addition, if you watched the hearing, a question was asked of the Planning Director: would the city still support the project without the money? Her answer was yes.

Posted by “Concerned Resident” to “Commission Delays Approval of Bluff-Top Homes”

Right to view

The public has a right to the views from the scenic highway as well. That seems to be missing from the local discussion and should be discussed to avoid claims of elitism and lawsuits admonish-

ing that we are ignoring the Coastal Act provisions that the City of Malibu is charged with upholding. That specific spot is well regarded as the first open glimpse of the bay, signaling a sense of freedom from the rush of the city. I see a real big mess coming our way and it won’t be from residents protecting their property values as much it will large organizations that are well funded and staffed for a fight for The Public vs. Malibu. Do we want to just give back all local control to the Coastal Commission which we fought so hard to achieve?

Posted by “mamielebu” to “From the Publisher: New for the New Year”

Serving the community

Some people run for City Council because they want

to serve their community. Others run to satisfy a lust for power. Hamish and Andy need no introduction, but I appreciated this article’s brief description of the third new candidate that I know little about. As an organic gardening professional, I favor Louks.

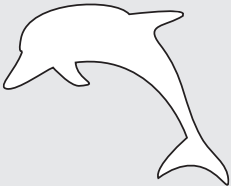
Posted by “Matt Horns” to “Five Consider City Council Runs”

Beach bathrooms

Will the planned restroom be closed most of the time as are the other beach restrooms? Why spend the money for yet another out-of-service restroom? The city evidently doesn’t have the money to keep them open and now they want to build another one. Good planning!

Posted by “MMA” to “Dan Blocker Beach Permit Up For Approval”

Dolphin Award nominations sought



Nominations are being sought for the annual Malibu Times Citizens of the Year Dolphin Awards.

The purpose of the Dolphin Awards program is to recognize outstanding efforts of individual Malibu citizens and, by acknowledging and publicizing their contributions, inspire others.

Readers are invited to submit nominees worthy of being considered for a Dolphin Award, individuals who have made outstanding contributions to improving one or more aspects of Malibu’s community life.

Dolphins are a very diverse group. Some Dolphins may have many years of achievement; others have only recently found an important way to serve. Some have been involved in multiple activities; others have focused on one or two. Some are business professionals, politicians or educators, while still others are retirees, retailers, restaurateurs, homemakers or students. Their interests are as diverse as they are and range from environmental protection to wildlife rescue to education, literacy, the arts, health and safety, teen programs... the list goes on and on.

To submit a nominee, write at least one page describing your nominee’s contribution and why you think that person should be considered.

Please include enough information (several paragraphs at least) for the editorial/publishers board to be able to make an informed decision.

The deadline is Jan. 31.

Be sure to include his/her contact information. Mail or e-mail to agyork@malibutimes.com and to Knowles@malibutimes.com; 3864 Las Flores Canyon Rd., Malibu, CA 90265.

ISSN 10504931

THE MALIBU TIMES

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Periodical postage paid at Malibu, CA 90265. Postmaster: Send address changes to: The Malibu Times, P.O. Box 1127, Malibu, CA 90265