



AGENDA NO: B-1

MEETING DATE: October 29, 2024

**AGENDA CORRESPONDENCE
RECEIVED BY THE PLANNING
COMMISSION FOR PUBLIC REVIEW
PRIOR TO THE MEETING**

Angie Buoncristiano

From: Jeff Odell [REDACTED] >
Sent: Monday, October 28, 2024 6:58 AM
To: Planning Commission
Subject: Tidelands Lease change of use, 495 Embarcadero

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The proposed change from marine contracting, a designated water-dependent use of public lands, to visitor serving, will eliminate a valuable business activity from the waterfront. The fact that the City is choosing to side-step public input at the Harbor Advisory Board undercuts any effort to fulfill the Tidelands Act's intent to maintain water-dependent uses.

Many Tidelands lease sites are requiring major work and maintenance; it is in the City's best interest to retain that type of marine contracting business as a tenant in our harbor.

Jeff Odell

From: betty winholtz [REDACTED] >

Sent: Monday, October 28, 2024 3:43 AM

To: Bill Roschen <broschen@morrobayca.gov>; Joseph Ingraffia <jingraffia@morrobayca.gov>; Mike Rodriguez <mrodriguez@morrobayca.gov>; Asia King <aking@morrobayca.gov>; Eric Meyer <emeyer@morrobayca.gov>

Cc: Kim Fowler <kfowler@morrobayca.gov>

Subject: agenda item b-1

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Dear Planning Commissioners,

Views are not protected with a viewing deck; water-dependent uses are not preserved by eliminating them; public parking is not reserved for the public by filling spaces with private, for-profit use; and culture is not honored or passed on by destroying iconic buildings.

I believe there are portions of the City's *General Plan* and *Zoning/Implementation Plan* that are not considered in the staff report. I quote them below. The policies involve historic/cultural resources, viewshed, height, and parking. I could not find a definition in either the *General Plan* or the *Zoning Ordinance* for the word "cultural." In the process of taking a definition from an online dictionary, I discovered that the State of California has dedicated cultural districts of various peoples. This reaffirmed for me that "cultural" is not restricted to indigenous or native cultures.

Cultural means "relating to a particular society and its ideas, customs, and art....a deep sense of personal honour which was part of cultural heritage." I believe Morro Bay residents, as reflected in the introduction to the General Plan, honor our maritime heritage and the quirkiness that makes us unique, i.e. our culture, our character.

General Plan: "Morro Bay's downtown and the **waterfront Embarcadero areas are** the commercial and **cultural core of the community.**"

The history and culture of Morro Bay is a priority in the community, and the built environment should reflect this importance. This objective can be achieved through adaptive reuse, wherein the City can encourage development projects that **preserve historical and cultural legacies.** Older buildings that may be considered significant resources can be repurposed for use by the community. This approach is considered **more sustainable and culturally sensitive** than simply constructing new buildings. (4-27)

POLICY C-2.3: Protection of Cultural Resources. **Ensure the protection of historic, cultural, and archaeological resources during development, construction, and other similar activities. Development shall avoid,** to the maximum extent feasible, adversely impacting historic, cultural, and/or archaeological resources, and shall include adequate BMPs to address any such resources that may be identified during construction, including

POLICY C-9.1: View Enhancement as a Priority. **Enhancing all public views and the scenic qualities of the coastal zone shall be a priority in all City actions and decisions. Development shall only be allowed that protects,** preserves, and enhances the coastal zone's scenic and **visual qualities** consistent with the Coastal LUP.

POLICY C-9.2: Public View Protection. and **Public views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas shall be protected and enhanced,** and alteration of natural landforms shall be minimized.

POLICY C-9.7: Massing, Height, and Orientation Requirements. **Require** massing, height, and orientation of new development or construction to be sited and designed to **preserve public coastal views to and along the ocean** and scenic areas.

Zoning Code

17.11.030 Land Use Regulations

A. Additional Use Allowances and Limitations

2.WF District

b. Development Priority. Development **priority shall be given to coastal-dependent uses.**

17.11.050 Supplemental Regulations

A. Architectural Treatment.

1. The **architectural** and landscape **design** of a project, including materials, **shall be consistent with the character of a working fishing village**

Chapter 17.14 Coastal Resource Protection (CRP) Overlay District (IP)

17.14.010 Purpose and Applicability

B. Protection of coastal resources shall be a priority in all City actions and decisions, and development must conform to all applicable LCP policies related to hazards, water and marine resources, **scenic resources,** biological resources and environmentally sensitive habitat areas, **cultural resources,** and public access and recreation.

7.14.040 Land Uses

A. **Visitor-serving uses shall have priority** over private residential, general industrial, or general commercial development, **but not over** agriculture or **coastal-dependent industry**.

C.3.a.ii. **New low cost visitor overnight accommodations shall** be provided on at least a rate of one new low cost accommodation for every four new high cost accommodations....A request for a reduction in the number of low cost accommodations is not allowed on State tidelands.

17.14.050 Community Design

In order to protect and maintain the **City's unique natural setting and character**, to promote orderly development, and to maintain consistency with the LCP's Land Use Plan (LUP), development **shall conform** to all applicable LUP **Community Design and Visual Resources and Viewsheds policies**.

A. Design and Siting. Development **shall be sited and designed to maintain public views and community character**.

B. Coverage. Building and other site coverage **shall be limited to the degree necessary to protect and maintain existing public views**, maintain adequate open space to preserve small-scale visual landscapes, protect water quality (including by limiting impervious surfaces), and **maintain community character**.

C. Heights. Building and other structure heights **shall be limited and upper-story step backs shall be provided** to the degree necessary to maintain existing public views, pedestrian scale, and **community character**.

E. Off-Street Parking. **Off-street parking spaces shall be required** in the number necessary to ensure that residential, **customer, and employee parking needs are provided on-site and do not conflict with public parking needs, including for public coastal access**. Factors to consider when determining off-street parking requirements include the size of the lot, proximity to the shoreline, and adequacy of public parking opportunities for public coastal access in the vicinity.

I gave up referencing the *Waterfront Master Plan* when it did not appear in the first 5 pages of the City's search engine.

I want to make 3 comments regarding the **staff report** for this hearing:

1. I like that **Section XII** gave the Commission options on how it could proceeding.

2. The Historic Resources Evaluation is a disappointment. More time was spent on the County and the City than on the properties. Were the properties mis-numbered 451 and 471, rather than 431 and 451? It did not mention that Dr. Fry's son, Ray, who grew up in the house, went on to become a beloved Harbor Patrol Officer serving the Waterfront and Harbor professionally for decades.

The property at **495 was not even mentioned**. It was previously owned by Mary Pitkin, whose surname is the same as the famous Pitkin leases. A house similar to the still standing bungalows was knocked down and Reggie Whibley hand-built the building that stands there now. If you have not been inside, you need to see the unique features it holds.

3. It seems a bit disingenuous to not show in the **simulation pictures** that the new 2-story building is directly across the street from 456 Embarcadero Inn and will obstruct the value of that business. The discussion has surfaced at the City Council: to what end are more hotel rooms desirable when overall occupancy is at approximately 60%.

As you know, the first conceptual review offered no concrete recommendations because the Commission was a body of 3 rather than 5 at that meeting, and the Commission chose to wait for a full complement before making comment. The Commission did ask for the Harbor Advisory Board (HAB) to review the proposal. I think it would be informative for the **HAB to give input to the Planning Commission, particularly with regard to the loss of a marine construction business.**

Sincerely,

Betty Winholtz

456 Embarcadero Inn & Suites
456 Embarcadero
Morro Bay, CA 93442
info@embarcaderoinn.com
10/27/2024

Subject: Concerns Regarding the Conditional Use Permit Proposal for 431, 451, and 495 Embarcadero

Dear Planning Commission Members,

We are reaching out to share our concerns about the proposed Conditional Use Permit for development at 431/451/495 Embarcadero. While we wholeheartedly support efforts to grow and revitalize our waterfront area, this specific proposal raises concerns regarding obstructions to the waterfront views that are integral to the operations of our hotel, the 456 Embarcadero Inn & Suites.

As the owners of 456 Embarcadero Inn & Suites, we are dedicated to providing our guests with an exceptional experience, which includes the iconic views of Morro Bay's harbor. These views play a pivotal role in attracting guests, many of whom choose our hotel specifically for its direct waterfront appeal. Regrettably, the proposed two-story building would compromise these views, limiting our ability to offer this distinctive feature and reducing the allure of our accommodations. Such an impact would disadvantage us as established hotel owners, likely leading to a reduction in revenue as guests may seek alternative locations with unobstructed views of the harbor.

We respectfully request that the Commission explore a balanced approach that allows for the development of 431/451/495 Embarcadero without causing undue harm to our business and other neighboring establishments. We would support new vacation rentals on the site, provided that the design does not further obstruct views beyond what existing structures currently do. Incorporating design considerations to preserve our sightline to the water would enable both our business and the proposed development to flourish together, contributing to a harmonious and appealing waterfront for Morro Bay.

Finding a balance between new developments and preserving essential views for existing businesses is essential to maintaining a vibrant and inclusive waterfront area that benefits both new ventures and long-standing enterprises.

Thank you for your attention to our perspective. We look forward to a productive conversation that considers the interests of all community stakeholders. Please feel free to reach out if we can provide further insights or information.

Warm regards,

Owners, 456 Embarcadero Inn & Suites

[\(805\) 772-2700](tel:8057722700)

Angie Buoncristiano

From: Nancy Bast [REDACTED] >
Sent: Monday, October 28, 2024 9:55 AM
To: Planning Commission
Subject: B1 - 431, 451, 495 Embarcadero Road

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Dear Planning Commissioners,

The picturesque and colorful cabins perched next to the bay at the south end of Embarcadero have delighted residents and visitors as a remnant of such iconic bay and beach bungalows that once typified the quaint fishing village that is Morro Bay.

The owner, Reg Whibley, responsible for such creativity, was an out-sized colorful character that built the Associated Divers headquarters building and the beautiful Art Deco glass lighted tower on the quonset hut on Main Street next to Little Morro Creek. He never built anything plain or standard and when he got a creative idea, Reggie followed through till it was finished as he had conceived it.

Reggie sometimes bent the rules a little, sometimes to the delight of the town - as the time he secretly tied his work barge in the middle of the bay, then set off 30+ minutes of fabulous fireworks in honor of his own birthday.

Never mind permits, bird and marine life disturbance! Reggie was a hero! I've heard Reggie had an airplane used as a permanent guest room on his ranch in south county; common was not in Reggie's lexicon! Reggie was generous with his employees and friends, he once took them all to Santa Barbara on the train to attend a concert, another time his group filled two rows at a Carlos Nakai concert at the old auditorium at Cal Poly.

Over more than four decades, Reggie worked on almost every lease site on the Embarcadero water side as well as the State Park Marina and the T-piers, and also at marine facilities up and down the coast.

Reggie facilitated the establishment of everyone's favorite restaurant, Dawn Borst's Bayside Cafe, when Reggie secured the maintenance contract for the State Park marina.

Reggie was synonymous mainly with the waterfront, but his interest was everywhere in town as shown by the Main Street Deco quonset hut.

I was lucky to be familiar with what went on on the waterfront during Reggie's heyday as I fished commercially for fifteen years, after which I sat on the Harbor Commission for two years in the 1980's.

It is the people of a town that makes it memorable, Reg Whibley contributed much to Morro Bay, it would be sacrilegious to replace or make unrecognizable the uniqueness that Reg Whibley had created in keeping with our small town funky, but wonderful character.

Sincerely,
Nancy Bast

Angie Buoncristiano

From: Andrea Lueker <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, October 28, 2024 10:50 AM
To: Planning Commission
Subject: Comments on Case No.: CUP24-04 Site Location: 431, 451, and 495 Embarcadero Road, Morro Bay, CA

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Dear Planning Commissioners,

Thank you for considering my comments on this proposed project. While not a resident of Morro Bay, many residents in Los Osos consider the Morro Bay Harbor as part of our community due to the proximity and the sharing of the Morro Bay Estuary.

After working for the City of Morro Bay for 27 years and knowing all the waterfront lease holders and their properties, I felt compelled to comment on this proposal. While I certainly understand progress and the need to increase the revenue that comes to the harbor fund, it is also so very important to retain some of the historically significant buildings (perhaps these buildings don't meet the "letter of the law" of historical, but they certainly meet the spirit of historical). As well as keeping in mind that the beauty of the Embarcadero includes some spaces that aren't improved as well as spaces that aren't further commercialized. Additionally, the former lease holder Reg Whibley, while sometimes unorthodox, made many, many positive impacts in Morro Bay and especially on the waterfront. He was also instrumental in many marine projects up and down the coast. While honoring him with a plaque is a nice thought, I believe keeping the original structures/concepts of these sites is much superior.

I noted in the staff report that there is a comment about this end of the Embarcadero not being well discovered. But in fact, Tidelands Park which is immediately adjacent to this proposed project, is one of the most well-used, well-loved parks in the county. The uniqueness of Tidelands is the play structures were purposefully designed to allow children and adults to use their imagination at the park. The pirates ship and the sea creatures lend to that goal, and this unique and dare I say "historic" building is a perfect end of the more commercialized part of the Embarcadero and a lead-in to Tidelands Park.

It appears there may be some good compromises that will retain the history and rustic appearance while still allowing the developer to have an acceptable return on investment.

Please consider in your deliberations and decisions the importance of retaining history and keeping some areas of the Embarcadero more rustic and less commercialized.

Thank you,
Andrea Lueker
Former Morro Bay City Manager