



Gregg Dieguez <mccgreggd@gmail.com>

Request for Immediate and Shared CFPD Analysis of Midcoast Fire Concerns

10 messages

Thu, Dec 7, 2023 at 11:56 AM

Gregg Dieguez <mccgreggd@gmail.com>

To: Gary Burke <gburke@coastsidefire.org>, csherrill@coastsidefire.org, jbcockrell@coastsidefire.org, bmackimmie@coastsidefire.org, phanna@coastsidefire.org

Cc: "Griffin, Patrick@CALFIRE" <patrick.griffin@fire.ca.gov>, "Seely, Austin@CALFIRE" <austin.seely@fire.ca.gov>, Ray Mueller <rmueller@smcgov.org>, Gina Quiney <gquiney@smcgov.org>, Michael O'Neill <MJOneill@smcgov.org>, Kathryn Slater-Carter <kathryn.s.c@gmail.com>, Steve Monowitz <smonowitz@smcgov.org>, Mike Schaller <mschaller@smcgov.org>, Clemens Heldmaier <clemens@mwsd.net>, Scott Boyd <scott@mwsd.net>

Bcc: Jim Harvey <ja_harvey@yahoo.com>, Lisa Ketcham <lisa.ketcham@comcast.net>, "Gus (MCC) Mattammal" <midcoastgus@gmail.com>

Cynthia, Gary, et al:

I write asking for your advice on how to proceed on the matters described below. They might be handled by a written reply to the concerns stated below and in prior MCC analyses (links provided). They might be addressed by holding an MCC meeting with attendees from CFPD and/or CalFire. We might hold a joint public meeting, or begin with a working group meeting of a subset of your Board and the MCC. With several of these matters deep into analysis by SMC Planning, including the Moss Beach Fire Station and the MidPen Cypress Point development, I suggest that there is some urgency in getting joint understanding and agreement on both the problems and the solutions. There appear to be 3 related matters: the recent fire, the updates to the Moss Beach fire station, and that proposed dense development nearby in Moss Beach. Perhaps multiple avenues are required. I look forward to your

counsel.

The fire that destroyed 1452 Alamo, Montara on 9/29/23 punctuates concerns the MCC raised in prior years about fire hydrant testing and pressure, and additional concerns most recently described in some detail in its report and [comments on the proposed Cypress Point](#) 'affordable housing' project in Moss Beach (the Project). This week I obtained a copy of CFPD's comments on that Project's DEIR; they appear to be generic requirements and not reflective of a site-specific plan review. The one sentence reply provided me on 9/13/23 by Patrick Griffin to my questions is not sufficient evidence that CFPD has thoroughly analyzed the fire risks posed in Montara/Moss Beach, both those extant and those which may be exacerbated by this dense housing Project. Perhaps there are additional documents I have not seen which cover these concerns.

Accordingly, this email describes the concerns from both the recent fire damage, and the prospective complications and risks posed by that development, and requests a written response on these matters before Planning makes a decision on various projects. We believe the deadline for those comments to Mike Schaller is Dec., 2023.

Recent Problems

As witnessed and chronicled by current and former Board Members of MWSD, the response to the fire at 1452 Alamo took 20 minutes to respond (from time the call was placed) and another 10 minutes to get water on the fire. That fire is 1.2 air miles and 1.8 miles by road from the Stetson station in Moss Beach. They observed that the fire responders as well as the Battalion Chief, possessed an inaccurate hydrant map and could not immediately find the hydrant, costing time. The responders, on first attempt, positioned and attached the large hoses between the trucks incorrectly, costing five minutes of time. The first truck did not squirt water on the fire directly from their truck, but waited to get the large hoses set up from the hydrant in tandem succession through the first and second

truck, and then to the fire.

The house was lost. What after-action assessment has CFPD produced and what are its recommendations? To what degree was this response delayed by road and traffic issues nearby the Moss Beach fire station?

Risks Posed by Cypress Point Project

In the [MCC's comments on Cypress Point DEIR](#) (SCH# 2022120189) ("the Project"), we raised the following concerns about fire-related risks. The delays in responding to the 1452 Alamo Fire heightened our concerns for not only the subject Project and its neighbors, but also for the ability of CFPD to respond elsewhere in the Midcoast after that project complicates traffic routes in Moss Beach. The concerns we raised in that report are contained in Section 3.12, pp 62-72. There are 19 fire-related questions in that section which I am requesting CFPD to formally comment on, both to the MCC and to the County. Some highlights of those concerns are:

Evacuation: in the event of a fire at that Project, or nearby which threatens that project, what proof exists that evacuation can occur, esp. given only one entrance/exit to the project site? With the proposed one-way traffic on Carlos St., the addition of 250-350 new residents in the project, and the torturous, winding access through back streets to the Project's emergency entrance, is CFPD confident that response times both in Moss Beach and elsewhere in the Midcoast will remain adequate? *[Note that at the MidPen Moonridge development, 250 cars routinely park on the access road thereto, but the roads near this Project are as narrow as 13'.]* What changes would CFPD propose to the Project to alleviate evacuation concerns?

Communications: is CFPD supportive of a community fiber network in the area to improve communications proven inadequate

both by the 1452 Alamo Fire and the [MCC's report on Telecommunications](#)? Has CFPD raised resolving this communications inadequacy as a condition of prior approval for the Project? Are more audible sirens in the area needed?

Fire-fighting Water: MWSD has had only 400kgal of FFWS for a decade, in spite of continued housing growth in the area. What are the pressure/flow/duration requirements for fire fighting water for the Project with its larger, denser buildings? Does MWSD have the necessary water at elevation to meet those needs in the likely event of loss of power? Has CFPD placed a requirement on the Project for additional FFWS or related infrastructure? Has CFPD commented on the ability of the Project's on-site water tanks to serve the purposes described in the DEIR?

Fire Hydrant Viability: When the MCC last researched this topic, less than 1% of MWSD and/or CCWD hydrants were tested annually, in spite of a rolling 10-year requirement. 39% of the hydrants in Moss Beach were routinely below MWSD standard, and the 2 lowest were/are adjacent to the Project. Has more recent testing been conducted on Moss Beach hydrants, and what are the implications for fire-fighting in the Project, or the vicinity of Moss Beach in the event a fire spreads from the complex? Will the CFPD require new or improved hydrants proximate to the Project? What pressure will be required for what duration for hydrants identified as relevant to Moss Beach fire suppression?

Emergency Access: With the proposed one-way traffic on Carlos St., the addition of 250-350 new residents in the project, and the torturous, winding access through back streets to the Project's emergency entrance, is CFPD confident that response times both in Moss Beach and elsewhere in the Midcoast will remain adequate? *[Note that at the MidPen Moonridge development, 250 cars routinely park on the access road thereto, but the roads near this Project are as narrow as 13'.]* Is CFPD confident that the back roads in Moss Beach can support emergency response vehicles'

size and weight? What conditions of approval would CFPD request to ensure Project access is adequate? Does CFPD support the creation of a more direct access to the Project from Sierra St.? Does CFPD require signals at any intersections in Moss Beach or on Hwy 1 to ensure timely emergency responder access? Given the proven difficulty of accessing the Stetson fire house via the sharp, steep turn at Stetson and California, how does the CFPD plan to route emergency vehicles to respond? *[photos of these concerns and alternatives are in the MCC report cited above]*

Fire-Fighting Capacity: Given that Hwy 1 can be cut by earthquake, storm surges, and/or falling eucalyptus at Surfer's Beach, Frenchman's Creek, Medio Creek and the Lantos Tunnel, is the capacity of the Stetson station sufficient ALONE to handle fires in the larger, more dense buildings proposed in the Project?

I hope these questions and issues are not new to CFPD, but for the avoidance of doubt and risks, I am writing to request a formal response from CFPD on these matters. Further, I invite CFPD to present and discuss their findings at a public meeting of the MCC or elsewhere on the Midcoast.

I would appreciate an immediate acknowledgement of this email, including identification of the person responsible for a reply and an expected response deadline. Given the severity of these concerns and the County's in-process review of the Project, I view this matter as most timely.

Thanks in advance for your cooperation,

Gregg Dieguez

Midcoast Community Council - Chair
P.O. Box 370404
Montara, CA 94037
650-544-0714