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Land Use and Transportation
Committee
San Francisco Board of Supervisors
San Francisco City Hall, Room 244
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102-4689

Re: Agenda items 3 (200213), 5 (200630), 7 (200635), and 8 (200422).

Dear Committee Members Peskin, Safai, and Preston,

I am the attorney representing appellants Madeline Mueller, Alvin Ja, and Wynd Kaufmyn, who have appealed the Planning Commission's certification of the Final Subsequent EIR for the Balboa Reservoir Project. However, this letter is not directly about that appeal. I will be writing separately to the entire Board of Supervisors on that issue. Instead, this letter addresses the merits of the Balboa Reservoir Project that is on your agenda today, as well as other items addressing the City's pressing need for more affordable housing, and specifically affordable housing for educators.

The Planning Department attempts to focus your attention on the 50% portion of the Balboa Reservoir Project's residential units that would be affordable (low or moderate, or middle-income households). However, given that the land is currently in public ownership, equal attention should be paid to the roughly 50% of the project site that would be devoted to market-rate units. Essentially, that 50% of the property will be permanently lost to the City and unavailable to build any affordable units. You will be sacrificing half of the project site to a for-profit developer in order to build a limited number of affordable units on the other half.

What the Planning Department has refused to consider is the option of building a phased, 100% affordable public project that could potentially build affordable units – and specifically affordable units for educators, staff, and students at City College of San Francisco, over the entire project site. Not only would this have far greater impact on the well-documented and unmet need for more affordable units, but those units, which would serve residents who could walk to their school/workplace, would have far less environmental impact than the proposed project.

At today's hearing, you will hear from Joseph Smooke, a well-known expert on affordable housing whom some of you may already know. He has studied this site and concluded that it can support a phased, 100% affordable, publicly-owned residential project. That conclusion should not be ignored.

Others will provide you with more of the details of this alternative project. My purpose in this letter is simply to urge you to not blindly accept the Planning Department's recommendation to move the currently proposed project forward towards final approval. Before considering approving this project, you should give serious consideration to a phased, public, 100% affordable alternative. It would provide far greater benefit to City College, and the City.

Respectfully,


Stuart M. Flashman