



City of Fort Bragg

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Meeting Minutes Special City Council

Thursday, March 19, 2015

6:00 PM

Town Hall, 363 N Main Street

Central Coast Transfer Station EIR Public Hearing

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Mayor Turner called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Supervisors Tom Woodhouse, John McCowen, Dan Hamburg, Carre Brown and Dan Gjerde, Mendocino Solid Waste Management Authority Executive Director Mike Sweeney and City Manager Linda Ruffing.

Present: 5 - Vice Mayor Lindy Peters, Councilmember Michael Cimolino, Councilmember Scott Deitz, Councilmember Doug Hammerstrom and Mayor Dave Turner

1. PUBLIC COMMENTS

2. PUBLIC HEARING

15-062

Receive Public Comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Central Coast Transfer Station Project

Mike Sweeney, Mendocino Solid Waste Management Authority (MSWMA) Executive Director, reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR). He noted that the EIR begins with some explanation about why this transfer station project was undertaken by the City of Fort Bragg and County of Mendocino. He reviewed the process of developing the EIR, which began in 2006 with a siting study conducted by professional engineering consultants Winzler & Kelly who surveyed every single parcel in the region that met basic criteria of suitability (25 sites were analyzed in detail). He noted that the public comment period on the draft EIR lasts until March 26. The best way to comment is in writing, either letter or email, but this public hearing tonight is being held to allow people to make their comments verbally. No comments will be responded to tonight; they will be responded to in the final EIR. Sweeney then summarized the findings in the EIR.

The public hearing was then opened and the following comments made:

1. Charla Thorbecke: Pygmy forest will be compromised. Pygmy forest is a gift. Two thousand acres is all that is left in the world. We are abusing it. It is unique. The transfer station is not going to protect it. It is going to harm it. Pygmy holds water in a different way. Supports pygmy forest park as we enter Fort Bragg. It's a short-sighted approach to save money and put the trash here.
2. Sean Keppeler: You're talking about the Noyo River watershed, the water source for the City of Fort Bragg. Be careful about putting something there that can be damaging to the Noyo River. Oil flows. Toxics flow. Antifreeze is one of the worst elements you can put in the ground. Paint thinner goes right through any type of soil. Fractures in soil go all the way to Noyo River watershed. Transfer station would harm tourist industry by putting it on road into Fort Bragg. Bought his property on Highway 20 without knowing transfer station would be put

there. Eighty percent of the people on Road 409 bought properties after 1967. You will go down in history if the worst-case scenario happens.

3. Leanne LaDue: Lives on Prairie Way. Because (Caspar) transfer station isn't very secure litter along Russian Gulch State Park is incredible. The trash along our road is terrible. It's a small road that can't handle the traffic. The new site looks wonderful. To me it makes sense to have it close to where it needs to go. The highway is safer. The turn lane into Road 409 is really dangerous and there have been a lot of accidents.
4. Elaine Tavelli commented on the following:
 - a. Impact Air Quality 1. Without mitigation there are violations in air quality pollutant, due to motor vehicle traffic, construction and wind erosion of the disturbed area during construction. There are mitigations proposed such as turn off of idling machinery and other best management practices, but there is no enforcement other than posting a sign giving a phone number to call and report violations. As offered in one other section of the draft EIR, trained observers could be on-site at all times during construction to monitor and enforce mitigation measures. This would slightly increase the projected \$5 million price tag.
 - b. Impact Air Quality 2. Expose sensitive receptors (people) to substantial pollutant concentrations. Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people. The project is anticipated to include features to reduce odors. The control features are not available at this time and a building design for the enclosed system is not included in the draft EIR. As no building design is in the draft there is no mitigation presented that offsets the significant impact of objectionable odors.
 - c. Biological Impact 1. There are substantial adverse effects on special status species. The mitigation method again applies "best management policies" but enforcement is absent. Without enforcement there is no mitigation, so as mentioned in the draft EIR, the role of 2 full time trained observers during construction can be used. Also the county and city have minimized the amount of impacts by adjusting the footprint of this project from 5 acres to 4.72 acres thereby avoiding other protections which could be applied to this proposed project.
 - d. Biological Impact 2. There is substantial adverse effect on sensitive natural community. Destruction of the cypress forest, or pygmy as we know it, is to be mitigated by preservation of trees at an off-site location north of the current Caspar facility. The pygmy forest on Highway 20 will be lost and inaccessible. The mitigation method offers no protection for that adverse effect.
 - e. Impacts Geology and Soils Geo 1. Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects involving strong seismic ground shaking or ground failures.
 - f. Geo 3-- location on soil that is unstable as a result of the project or would become unstable.
 - g. The mitigation method for the two Geo significant impacts is to conduct a geotechnical study of the soils yet a study has not been done of the soil & the geology. These studies must be prepared and offered to the public before the EIR can be certified.
 - h. Impact Geo 2. Substantial soil erosion or loss of topsoil. The mitigation method for erosion and loss of topsoil is to prepare a stormwater pollution prevention plan for the project. A stormwater pollution prevent plan has not been prepared so there has not been any mitigation measures offered to prevent soil erosion.
 - i. Impact Geo 4 -- the project is located on expansive soil creating substantial risk to life and property. The extent of expansive soil is not known at this time or addressed in the draft EIR as a geotechnical study has not been done and presented.
 - j. Conclusion: There are still studies and plans to be completed on this proposed project including the building plan design, the geotechnical and soil studies, and the stormwater pollution prevention plan along with more refined mitigation measures.
5. Pat LaDue: EIR is thoroughly researched. Potential impacts are either not significant or can and will be mitigated to no significant impact. The Road 409 (Caspar) alternative is not

feasible due to inadequate Road 409-Highway 1 intersection that cannot accommodate extra-long trucks due to the proximity of the Caspar Creek Bridge. The "do nothing" alternative is inefficient and wasteful due to the Caspar transfer station location seven miles south of Fort Bragg.

6. Rick Childs: There is no perfect place for a transfer site. It has to go someplace, and the process has identified the site with the least impact which can benefit the coast most. The reduction in truck miles from the site and the cost savings should be included in the final EIR. (Distributed a sheet). Self-haul miles saved of 162,000 miles per year, generates at 50 cents per mile \$81,000 saved by public. Larger savings from the garbage trucks: 117,000 fewer garbage truck miles, at 30 mph and \$90/hour to operate, reduces cost of operations by \$350,000, over 20% of the transfer station operating budget. That is very significant.
7. Kelly Fairall: County General Plan policy RM-25: prevent fragmentation. Clearing 5 acres of forest is fragmenting. Policy RM-28 states that the County wants to protect pygmy forestlands and transitional pygmy including prevention of vegetation removal, disruption of vegetation and minimize the introduction of water and nutrients due to human activity. This transfer station will be removing pygmy, removing vegetation and introducing water and nutrients due to human activity. Also stated in Goal DE-1 is preserving the rural character of Mendocino County. Adding a transfer station in the middle of a currently forested area isn't preserving rural character. The previous sites have no specific plans to reclaim land to natural state. The Highway 20 site is part of Noyo River hydraulic area. This area is listed as impaired for sediment, siltation and water temperatures. Transfer station would worsen these problems. According to the EIR, 68% of pollutants will be removed by bioswales. There is a 26% increase in runoff according to Table 3.9-1. There are other current locations with less biological impacts than the project site. If the project goes forward, the Caspar land should be reclaimed. We keep taking from the environment and don't put anything back.
8. Kent Pember: The EIR is efficient, logical and well-appointed. It is a hazard to have the Caspar dump where it is. The roads are way too narrow. It's foolish not to conserve our future fuel costs, our future road use costs, everything having to do with the transport. Going down a dead-end road and back seems crazy. The transfer station belongs somewhere on Highway 20. Former D.A. promised that the (Caspar) dump would close.
9. Rixanne Wehren: Representing the Sierra Club. Concerned about the pygmy vegetation and the Bishop Pine forest. The Bishop Pine forest was misclassified as not a protected habitat but it is. Taking any part of the pygmy forest is not a viable option, it has been recognized as a world-class habitat that exists only in this county and a few small places around the world. It is a very unique ecosystem. Total protection is needed, not partial. Conservation easement doesn't mean you aren't affecting the pygmy. Hydrology study isn't quite adequate because of pygmy hydrology. We're asking for better hydrology study of pygmy forest and the Bishop Pine forest. The cumulative effects were not evaluated as widely as necessary. Did not mention the ongoing destruction of pygmy by the county in siting of two other transfer stations on pygmy forest: Albion and Caspar. We consider the swap to be a lose-lose-lose situation. We will lose the protected trees from Russian Gulch which go into the (Jackson Demonstration State) Forest. State Parks is going to have to take the (Caspar) dump. And we lose the new pygmy forest being cut down. State Parks has said they value their trees a lot more than the dump site and so there has to be money changed.
10. Barbara Rice: Listen to the experts, don't go back to default position to leave it at Caspar. Consultant Steve Salzman in 2007 said location off Road 409 would not be considered today if things done all over again because it is inappropriate and it was only history that you consider it today. There is a school, State Park and State Forest on the road, the transfer station is incompatible, harassing walkers and bikers. The environmental impact is greater the farther the site is from transportation corridor. Highway 20 makes sense.
11. Elizabeth Keppeler: [written statement submitted that includes and expands upon her verbal

comments].

12. Jeremy James: The overlay of Google earth map and species don't line up. It is cockeyed and slanted. The Native Plant Society says there is no such thing as transitional pygmy. All the areas that show transitional pygmy are actually pygmy. The EPA mandate for transfer stations says they have to account for future growth. So this portion of the parcel isn't the only piece that will be affected. There will be more of this pygmy destroyed. [Read written statement by Erik Thorbecke].
13. John Fremont: The EIR is cooked. It is full of errors. The errors all substantiate the Highway 20 transfer station. The emergency helipad is a private airstrip. It is used to evacuate hospital patients when we are covered in fog. Also used in forest fires. The project is in a very high forest fire severity zone. EIR says it would not create wildland fire risk. Last year helicopters required to put out fires across the road from where he lives, right next to the helipad. There is substantial risk but the EIR does not mention it. The EIR says there are no creeks on the project site. There is at least one creek that runs right through my property heading west, a seasonal creek. It only carries water in the winter time, but this station will operate year-around. The residents of Road 409 have spoken out about the stench, traffic problems, litter, air and water pollution and other environmental hazards and they have forced the joint powers to close their garbage station. The same problems will force the early closure of the \$5 million boondoggle on Highway 20. There are better solutions: a biomass system. The Pudding Creek station goes through town and they complain they don't want trucks going through town. The speed limit here in town is 25 mph, it's a straight shot, on Highway 20 the speed limit is 55 mph and it will clog traffic.
14. Ann Rennacker: Flaws in EIR. The project would cause water contamination in our aquifers and runoff into the Noyo River. Highway 20 should not be subjected to huge semi-truck traffic hauling garbage. No pygmy forest should be cut ever. It is a rare and unique ecosystem. Tourists come from all over the world to walk the ecological staircase. Tourism is our main industry. You can't transplant pygmy trees from one area to another. We need a biologist to come out and do an assessment. Jere Melo was the forester who did the assessment and he only looked at value of board feet if you logged it. Teresa Scholer lives here and her husband wrote a book on pygmy forest. She could give some assessment. The health of our forests is our future. The size of the transport trucks is excessive and dangerous on Highway 20. There is bound to be an accident or a spill. The Pudding Creek transfer station is already industrialized we can use that and take it out by train to Willits.
15. William Lemos: The question is whether Highway 20 is the best possible location. The most compelling argument in the EIR is because it will reduce the carbon footprint by 140 metric tons per year, a significant reduction. The Clean Air Act demands we do what we can. The project objectives 2.3 are cost-effective and environmentally sound solid waste services, increased efficiency in solid waste transfer in order to minimize energy use, greenhouse gas emissions, truck trips and cost. We will have to remove some Bishop Pine but is that going to counterbalance the overall need to look at the environment first in a whole unit as what we can do as a community.
16. Gordon Leppig, senior environmental scientist with California Department of Fish & Wildlife: Concerns with impact on pygmy forest and Northern Bishop Pine forest. Both these natural communities are ranked by the State as highly imperiled. The County has worked with the Department to better protect them from development interests. Both the County General Plan and the Jackson Demonstration State Forest management plan recognize the importance of protecting ecologically significant habitats such as these. As proposed the project has significant impact on Mendocino cypress pygmy woodlands. We find the mitigations insufficient and not described in adequate detail to assess effectiveness. Significant impacts to Northern Bishop Pine forest. DEIR misclassifies, it does not recognize its rarity or State rank. Therefore it did not describe the impact as significant or propose mitigations. The DEIR

must propose mitigations to significant impacts to Northern Bishop Pine forest. The cumulative impacts analysis to these natural communities is inadequate and does not recognize the ongoing threat to them. While the DEIR includes the 3-way property transfer as part of the project the DEIR includes no impact assessment on the ultimate disposition of the other two parcels. Project location. DEIR concludes the project is the environmentally superior alternative. DEIR dismisses other sites without giving them full environmental analysis. The DEIR alternatives analysis should be redone to fully analyze sites occurring outside of threatened natural communities. Water quality impacts and stormwater management. Outfall structures. Where does polluted water go? The DEIR doesn't consider this and defers the design and placement to a future time. The Department fines the DEIR needs substantial revisions and should be recirculated pursuant to CEQA Section 15088.5.

17. Leslie Kashiwada: The alternatives are dismissed out of hand and need to be further evaluated. Not in favor of keeping the Road 409 site open, it's a very poor place for a transfer station. Not a pleasant drive on trash delivery days. There are flaws in the EIR. [Written statement read] Wants analysis of Pudding Creek and rail option.
18. Sue Boecker: Trash needs to be recycled. It needs to be mined. This proposal does not do that. The train seems to be the only logical way. Realizes the tracks are falling apart. There is a way to do the train. \$5 million is a good start. The haulers could kick in as well, there has to be another way. The Summers Lane reservoir is very near. All of Fort Bragg's water will eventually come out of there. Water is our most precious and limited resource. Highway 20 is a very scary place. I go up Ukiah-Comptche Road or Highway 128. It's curvy and fast and big trucks on there. That spot would be a real problem. Tourism is the only viable alternative for coast economy. Trash station on doorstep is not something people want to look at. The litter and odor would not make it a good decision.
19. Rex Gressett: These people are not listening to what you are saying. There is a \$5 million project and they are going to make money on it. You can win. We stopped them on the hotel. This is bad judgment just like that one. Protect the pygmy forests it's the obvious thing. Don't expect anything out of a group of people that have already made up their minds. Get the best, finest, most up-to-date transfer station on earth because we love Mendocino County. Don't let them put in this great big fume-belching monstrosity. Mr. Lemos you should be ashamed of yourself.
20. Meg Courtney: A lot of research was done on this. We had looked at the train. It's not going to work. The Pudding Creek transfer station doesn't work, it's even worse than Road 409. It's not viable. This has been looked at a million ways and this is it. So either take this or I don't know where the thinking is. The advantages to the environment and the efficiency of this transfer station are huge. It's not going to be visible. I love trees and the pygmy forest but when you weigh the two things the savings in gas miles, taking the CO2 out of the environment, to me it just doesn't weigh out. We have to look forward.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Turner adjourned the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

DAVE TURNER, MAYOR

Cynthia M. VanWormer, MMC, City Clerk

IMAGED (_____)