

William L Richards

July 22, 2015

Marin Planning Commission
3501 Civic Center Drive, Suite 308
San Rafael, CA 94903

Re: Black Point Community Plan

Commissioners:

It is with a certain amount of displeasure to provide you with this letter. As a member of the Advisory Committee to County Staff in the update of the Black Point Community Plan, I offer the following commentary.

I participated in a process that should have resulted in a community effort to preserve and protect the great quality and character and unity of a very special place in Marin County; our charge from the County Supervisors to address the 1978 Black Point Community Plan.

While great effort, thought and consideration was put into the essence of the Plan, to maintain the rural and unique character of the area, there was a concerted effort by a very few to subvert the Plan in an effort to divide the community into two distinct areas.

It has been the very few who wish to turn upside down a Plan for this place due to an unwarranted repudiation of the history of the neighborhood and unwarranted fears of ever so unlikely constraints on property rights.

Further it is evident that Staff is unwilling to adopt standards that reasonably will maintain the same goals of this special place.

That all being said, I encourage the Planning Commission to adapt the Black Point Community Plan as the Black Point Community Plan. Beyond all the narrative and proposed new policies I would recommend that the Planning Commission agree with so called Option 2 for house size determinations and agree to set-back provisions as the Advisory Committee proposed. The Planning Commission needs also to agree that alternative/renewable energy is an effort of great import today, and that beyond the brief Staff discussion; alternative/renewable energy options need clarification and forward movement.

Black Point is a grand area of this County. It has a great history. That provenance should continue to provide all residents comfort and a sense of belonging. It is true that there are many neighborhoods, broad and small, street by street and hill by hill. But we must recognize this name.

House size is a curious discussion. While many may become enraged by large scale homes in this rural community, there is a methodology to maintain harmony while acknowledging change in home needs and design. It is with recognition of the rural character that a milestone should be set in place to judge the contribution and the unworthiness of a building for this place. It is with that spirit that the Advisory Committee put forward a plan, Option 2. This plan provides Black Point and Staff a meaningful matrix in which new development can be achieved. The requirements are not difficult today; although certain data may need better collection and verification, there should be no great burden loaded upon Staff or an applicant. The community will benefit greatly from this proposal.

The set-backs issue is a more simple discussion; it is in the realm of common sense, obvious to any applicant and should be to an experienced and interested Staff.

Alternative and renewable energy options should be encouraged in every situation. While there may be concerns of commercial generation in certain areas, generation for residential use needs to be addressed immediately and aggressively. And all alternative energy must be respectful of the Plan, which requires that the history and environment of this Place continue, rural, peaceful and of a jewel of the County.

Now, it seems that a small group of very few members of the community are dissatisfied by the entire process. To this cadre, insufficient notification of meetings and an overbearing Advisory Committee membership and as a side issue, the Black Point Improvement Club, have created a very ugly division intent on upsetting the process and the Plan update itself, possibly asking for a separation. In answer to the above, Staff and the Black Point Improvement Club provided ample mail and placard notices. This group seemed intent not on community wide recognition and preservation, but on specific and generally self-serving interests. We need to reconcile and we can assure this group that the overriding goals of the Plan are superior to small and individual momentary needs.

May Black Point continue to be that special place that so many have found home and may the County in its wisdom continue to place that same value on this place.

I am blessed to be a resident for more than twenty years and look forward to many more.

Thank you for your consideration.

William L. Richards

316 Laurel Avenue

Novato, CA 94945