

From: William McMullen
Sent: Friday, April 14, 2017 1:43 PM
To: Baylands; Holstine, Clay; Council Members; Liu, Lori
Subject: Baylands project

Dear Mayor and City Council of Brisbane,

Over the past few months, I have been receiving expensive promotional materials from individuals trying very hard to sway my opinion on their development of the Baylands. I noted their "survey" which amounted to a clever method to try and sway votes a few months ago, I am sure they were unhappy with my responses.

My wife and I have been residents of Brisbane for 17 years. We are not often too politically active here, but this baylands project has motivated us to reach out to you and lodge our strong objections to what is happening with this project. We have a number of objections and would like you to be informed of them below. I am not certain we will be available to come to the meeting in early May, so if we are not able to attend we hope that this document will serve to explain our concerns.

1. The City Council and Mayor's office in San Francisco appear to have busied themselves over the past decade lining their pockets with money from developers, unions and others interested in pushing new large scale, expensive and profitable building projects in San Francisco. It is clear that developer's and union's interests are both on the same side of these projects as they mean money for developers and income for union employees. Once completed, they mean income in the form of property taxes for the city. Unfortunately, the city council and Mayor in San Francisco have not taken any steps to de-escalate the rampant property speculation that has been happening there. Wealthy individuals from foreign countries have been allowed free access to new housing stock in order to use them as investment tools so that they can offshore their vulnerable money into real estate assets that are beyond the reach of potentially hostile foreign governments. I understand the need to do this, but in our real estate market we have a dramatic shortage of housing and a real problem with lack of affordable housing. The city council and Mayor of San Francisco have allowed housing stock to be bought up by people who will never live in the units they have purchased. I have friends who have lived in some of these buildings that are sold-out, but half-empty. Vancouver British Columbia has had the same problem and the Canadians have implemented a 15% - 20% tax on all foreigners who buy property there to discourage this kind of speculation. Our proximate neighbor to the north has done nothing. While it might be difficult to implement such a tax in the USA, it's clear that there are other steps that could be taken to reduce the speculation and increase housing stock, such as implementing a rule that anyone purchasing a unit must live in it for 2 years before renting it out.

I mention this because our close neighbors to the north have been pressuring Brisbane to authorize an enormous number of residential units in the Baylands. I don't think anyone, except the most naive, believes that such units would improve the housing crisis one bit, given that many of those units will end up selling at inflated prices to foreign investors or hedge fund managers who want to sink their money into a real estate instrument. We will again see prices inflate, units sold, but unfilled, and people crying about how there is no affordable housing in the area. Until San Francisco gets their act together and puts into place disincentives for real estate

speculation, they have absolutely no business telling any other municipality what to do vis a vis their housing options. As for the affordable housing advocates, they are naive tools of the developers at best, and at worst I wonder if some of them are paid by developers to try and sway votes.

2. We are told that the toxic wasteland that are the Baylands have been cleaned up and that the soil and water under it do not pose a health risk to anyone living there. Those of us old enough to remember the scores of times this has been sold to people in the USA over the years know that this kind of statement is unreliable. You have a known area where industrial waste was dumped for decades. There has been some clean up I am sure. But to authorize not only commercial development, but RESIDENTIAL housing on this land is to court future disaster. Imagine the costs to the city both in financial terms and politically, if lawsuits are filed in 20 years alleging that the cleanup was not done as well as it should have been and as a consequence children raised on that land have higher rates of cancer, permanent learning deficits and brain damage. If you believe that this cannot happen, just think back to the statements offered by Brookfield homes when they told you that they had adequately addressed potential erosion issues along Mission Blue during the development of our condo community. They were responsible for grading the mountain in a way that eliminated erosion and allowed the development to proceed safely. I think we now see, more than 17 years later, that significant erosion has occurred above Mission Blue and it is now the city's responsibility because for reasons that I cannot fathom, the city council agreed to take responsibility for that area. Imagine if it were not problems with erosion in an area that did not threaten houses, but problems with cancer or neurological injury to children. I do not believe that there is any way you can safely guarantee residents of the Baylands that they will not have problems down the road.

3. I am not familiar with the plans for the city land fill, but I would hope that this would be closed and covered prior to the development of ANY (commercial or residential) of the baylands because on warm days where the wind is still, the stench in that area would be overwhelming as it is now. If the city is not agreeing to a date certain when SF will stop filling that landfill, I think you can anticipate problems selling any commercial or residential property down there.

4. Finally, we find the heavy-handed and somewhat devious means by which the developer is trying to exert influence over the voting public in Brisbane to be objectionable. Providing voters with neutral information regarding the options that are currently in play is fair, but flooding the region with biased, developer-favorable propaganda is unseemly and for that reason alone, were I on the city council, would prompt my no vote.

These are our primary objections to the development. We are not opposed to ANY development there, but the development has to be reasonable and not influenced by the millions of dollars spent by developers and the heavy handed political influence lodged by irresponsible and corrupt San Francisco politicians. IF the city of San Francisco is agreeing to close the landfill and cover it with earth to a level that prevents stench from spreading throughout that area (reminds me of Staten Island) then we would favor commercial property development in the area, new transit hubs, etc. All of that would be just fine. We strenuously object to residential property as it puts residents at risk for long term negative health effects associated with living on a toxic dump, and it puts the city government of Brisbane at risk in future lawsuits regarding these issues. Finally, if

reasonable minds do not win, and the development goes forward with any residential housing, we would object to any housing that is sold on the open market without restrictions on use. We would suggest, if you must put people in danger from living on a toxic dump, that you at minimum require that anyone buying a property live in (actually occupy) the property for 2 years before renting it out. I hope it doesn't come to that, but if you do authorize housing, then you should at least make sure this helps with the housing crisis and doesn't just line the pockets of developers.

I hope that cooler heads prevail and you remember the mistakes that occurred during the development of the Altamar and Viewpoint properties at the Ridge. Developers will tell you what you want to hear, but your experience should tell you that promises regarding the "cleaning up" of a toxic waste site are as empty as promises that clean coal exists or that Brookfield would follow good practices in building their units. I think you know that there are dozens of examples where those promises fell short. Don't make the same mistakes again.

Sincerely,

William McMullen

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