

Attachment No.11

Correspondence

4-153

March 10, 2011

Chad Wittstrom
1100 W. Centre
Shandon, CA

County of San Luis Obispo Planning
Attention: Jay Johnson
Regarding: Shandon Community Plan Update

1/31/11

Dear Mr. Johnson,

As we discussed earlier today I am drafting you this letter to formally request our property; located at 1100 West Centre Street, be reincorporated in the Shandon Community plan update with the RSF zoning designation. There are certain property features that make this property more suitable for development than others mentioned in the plan.

- **Fire Safety:** Mesa View is currently a "balloon on a string." By developing the mentioned property it would improve fire safety by allowing secondary access away from Shandon Heights in the case of an emergency.
- **Access to Utilities:** 1100 W. Centre Street currently has natural gas, high speed internet, telephone, power, and has elevation that is ideal for community sewer.
- **Riparian Habitat:** The property mentioned is free from any blue line stream or prominent drainage ways.
- **Circulation:** Mesa View is currently dead ends into the mentioned property. By allowing a RSF project this will allow lower traffic impacts to the interior roads servicing the Heights.

Thank you,



Chad Wittstrom

March 6, 2011

Planning Commissioners:

Five or six years ago, when the Shandon Community Plan was first being worked on, the dropping groundwater levels in the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin were a distant worry. Not that they weren't real -- they just hadn't been defined very well at that time. So the Shandon Plan rolled on.

During the years the Shandon Plan was rolling on, several things occurred:

- Several studies of the groundwater basin were completed.
- A Resource Capacity Study has been completed, and after multiple public hearings, the BOS declared a Level of Severity III for the basin and instructed the staff to prepare plans for conservation, and limits on lot splits in areas not served by supplemental water.
- A volunteer Paso Robles Groundwater Basin Advisory Committee has formed, and with substantial help from Planning and Public Works, has begun planning an education campaign and voluntary measures to stabilize the groundwater levels through voluntary conservation.

You will notice the word voluntary appears several times. There's a reason for that: it's the only tool big enough to solve the problem. Each of the thousands of land owners in the basin need to use less water, and there is no judge to tell each of them how much they can withdraw from the basin.

The Shandon Plan rolled on, as though it was not part of the groundwater basin and had unlimited water. That is not the case, however:

- Groundwater studies of the Shandon area show one well level's decline of about 30 feet over the last 12 years, and another's to be 80 feet during that same time period. Similar results show elsewhere over the Shandon area.
- The Shandon Plan proposes to pull 91% of its additional water from a basin that is already in serious decline.

As the Shandon Plan rolled on, somehow the county planner became an advocate for the project, leaving criticism to others. The WRAC's comments included:

Because the entire Paso Robles Groundwater basin is in decline, the possible approval of so many homes relying solely on groundwater raises grave concerns not just for the immediate area, but for the larger groundwater basin as well.

The planner's response was:

In the year (2049), the estimated additional groundwater pumping for urban demand in Shandon would represent about 0.5 percent of the total groundwater pumping in the entire Paso Robles Groundwater Basin (120,000 afy).

We are right now at or beyond the safe yield of the basin. There is some question as to whether, even with all our conservation attempts, we can keep the basin from going into

overdraft. We will need all the basin-wide goodwill and cooperation on conservation that we can generate.

So I want to know how the planner intends to explain to each of the thousands of current users that each of them must not only cut his present use to preserve the basin for his own future use, he must further cut his individual use so Shandon can be expanded.

If you approve Shandon, how will you ever be able to say no to any new development based on lack of water?

Now you may hear the argument that agricultural landowners can use unlimited water as long as the use is "reasonable and beneficial". That's true, and that brings up two points:

- Why should an agriculturalist install expensive water conservation equipment so a new town can be developed in Shandon.
- If conservation fails, there is dry-land farming. But there is no dry-land housing.

Please look carefully at the Shandon plan's "plan" for water, and deny any and all parts that cannot be provided for by state water.

Respectfully,

Della Barrett

Cc: Jason Giffen, Planning Director
Jay Johnson, Senior Planner
Courtney Howard, Public Works

SHANDON ADVISORY COUNCIL
P. O. Box 92
Shandon, California 93461
shandoncouncil@yahoo.com

Commissioners
San Luis Obispo County Planning Commission
976 Osos St.
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408

Via Electronic Mail

March 22, 2011

Subject: Comments to PC on March 10, 2011, Hearing item 4

Commissioners:

We, the members of the Shandon Advisory Council, are writing in response to comments made at the March 10 hearing regarding the community plan update. Several commissioners asked what the residents of the town thought of the plan. In an effort to assist you with "what the town thinks," attached is a letter drafted after much discussion and submitted to the planning department last May as the consensus of the whole Shandon Advisory Council with input from many community members.

This letter was part of your staff report on the 10th; it is exhibit pages 4-90 to 4-95. It details, rather completely, our view of the plan (we're going to get one so we should work toward one we can support) and the difficulties we have with it. After calling a special meeting on the 17th of this month, we agreed to re-send the letter to you so you can see what our concerns have been all along and have not entirely been addressed.

Sincerely,

Kate Twisselman

Kate Twisselman, Secretary
Shandon Advisory Council

SHANDON ADVISORY COMMITTEE

PO BOX 92
SHANDON, CA 93461

May 20, 2010

Jay Johnson
Planning Department
County of San Luis Obispo
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408

Dear Mr. Johnson,

At a meeting held May 19, 2010 of the Shandon Advisory, the Committee and the community drafted a response to the Public Review Draft of the General Plan Update. While there are some aspects of this document that we support, because there remain some key concerns to the community which we feel have not been incorporated or adequately addressed we cannot support this plan in its present form. We believe these items to be imperative components to a successful expansion of our community, and we have been consistent in voicing these for the nearly nine years this process has been in the works. I have included the document used in our discussion that resulted from comments submitted to, and discussions of the Advisory Committee for your reference. It is our feeling that this is not a "wish list," but a compilation of items that are required elements to the Update. We look forward to seeing each of these items incorporated into your document so that we can have a Plan Update that Shandon can support. Should you need clarification on any of these items, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Randy Diffenbaugh
Chair, Shandon Advisory Council

SAC Meeting May 19 2010

Comments and suggestions submitted for inclusion by SAC in response to "Public Review Draft of General Plan Update for Shandon:"

TRAFFIC/COMMUTE/EMPLOYMENT

- With increased development, VMT (vehicle miles traveled) increases dramatically. This would impact the air quality. Additionally it means increased traffic on the San Juan River Bridge and increased pedestrian traffic on the same bridge as well as the 46/McMillan Cyn intersection
- The current configuration of the San Juan Bridge does not safely accommodate pedestrian traffic. This needs to be rectified prior to the addition of more residents across the river from the town services (school, shopping, park, etc)
- Although population would increase there would be no increase in jobs. This would increase the "bedroom community feeling" of people living in Shandon because they can *afford* to live in Shandon, not because they *wish* to live in Shandon. As soon as their circumstances change these same people tend to move to other towns. Generally, they are not vested members of the community when they live in Shandon. Many children from these families go to school, church and athletic programs in other towns.
- Increased development would mean more traffic without additional infrastructure upgrades. There are safety concerns about vehicles getting onto Highway 46. Improved traffic flow needs to be addressed as well as how to fund any recommended solutions.
- County Planning and the Board of Supervisors should expedite permits for businesses that want to establish locations in Shandon. This should be a stated requirement of the County to accomplish the promised establishment of jobs in Shandon
- Shandon has historically been an NPD Community and wishes to retain this status.

SCHOOLS:

- The schools in Shandon have physical capacity for a maximum of 300 more students. How will the facilities for the additional students (700-2000 depending on the formula) be financed.
- It is uncertain as to the financial ability of the schools to deal with additional enrollment.

- The Shandon Joint Unified School District cannot afford to buy land for new schools or build a new school. How will the construction and operation costs be addressed?
- There are some question in formulas used to project student population, this needs to be revisited and explained

INFRASTRUCTURE

- With an increase in population there will be no increase in law enforcement services.
- Developers need to be responsible for any increase in population, by providing for the entire impact of the development. Shandon's reserves may not be used for this purpose. For example, all water need for additional residents must be provided by the developer without using our State Water Allotment or current town wells.
- Developers should be required to bring in a new source for their water as the use of groundwater will be detrimental to the already declining water levels and potentially harm agriculture, our only job base.
- ALL infrastructure should be completed or fully bonded prior to Plan approval.
- The current population of Shandon should not carry any burden from additional development.
- New roads added shall be offered and accepted into the County road system

ZONING:

- Residents who want to live in Shandon do so because they prefer the less densely populated rural atmosphere of our community. We feel the following Land Uses fit our vision of our community:

RSF—this should be the same density as the older RSF neighborhoods found adjacent to the park in Templeton.

MFR—density should not exceed 14 du/acre. No more than two attached units. Each unit should have a garage with a minimum 16 foot door. When multiple dwellings are on one parcel an open common area should be provided. This area is to be maintained by the property owner.

MU—all MFR recommendations above apply to MU. In new development, MU is a store front with an attached residence. It is not a residence next to a business or service. For existing locations rezoned to MU, the neighborhood will be in transition from residences to commercial businesses and services. We see an example of this is

the area adjoining Centre Street with boundaries of First Street on the west and Fourth Street on the east.

- MU north of Crawford W. Clarke Memorial Park is to be reclassified as RSF (Residential Single Family).
- MU land cannot be changed to MFR zoning without an update of the General Plan.
- RS—Residential 2-10 acre lots. These areas abut large agricultural properties. 5 acres is simply too small of a property to provide a fluid transition.
- INDUSTRIAL—The area between the proposed URL and the CS parcel near McMillan Canyon Road is to be zoned to allow for light industrial use, which we believe could be covered under a CS zoning. The original location for Industrial Zoning has disappeared off the map without explanation.
- URL—Change the URL to include all of the Peck property to the west of their proposed development with a western boundary of the current Hwy 41.
- There are no exemptions for land zoned CS at the west end of the URL near McMillan Canyon Road. This property must connect to the WWTF and to CSA 16 water. The visitor-serving and highway commercial uses associated with this parcel demand connection to a sewer system. It would be irresponsible to connect such a project to a septic tank.
- RMF should not be concentrated around the existing park!
- Existing residences qualify at the lower level of the “affordable housing” scale, there is no need to burden us with more, such as the large levels of RMF proposed.

WASTEWATER

- Development cannot continue without a sewer facility. We have concerns about the environmental impact from septic tanks within a large development (i.e. Creekside). How would a sewer be funded without placing a financial burden on the current residents of Shandon?

Comments regarding the Waste Water Treatment Facility being located on the Peck property:

- At the San Juan Road property the prevailing winds come from the east. This is not a desirable location as the odor associated with the facility would be noticed in Shandon.
- “Development of the WWTF in either location would result in the conversion of an additional 65 acres of agriculture.” The Peck property can provide the amount of space needed, the San Juan Road location is on a 40 acre parcel.

- The San Juan Road location is upgrade from the majority of development. Residents should not be burdened with additional operating costs associated with pumping effluent uphill.
 - The proposed San Juan Road facility is in conflict with the State Water Pipeline Right of Way.
 - If the facility is built on the Peck property it would not displace current irrigated row crops.
 - If the WWTF is located on the Peck property there will be less cost for current Shandon residents to connect to the service.
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- If the facility is built at the SJ Road location, it could displace current irrigated row crops. Loss of this irrigated land has the potential of eliminating 13 jobs, with impact to 2 “Head of Household” jobs and loss of two residence occupancies in Shandon. (Not consistent with the promise to attract jobs for residents!)

Further recommendations and comments:

- Although the San Juan River, Estrella River and Cholame Creek are visually open they are not “open space”. These areas are private property and must be considered as such during the planning process. People unfamiliar with the area might think they are available for the recreational use of the public, these areas are not.
- Currently there are approximately twenty residences in Shandon for sale or in foreclosure. These buildings encompass a variety of design, age, amenities and prices. Currently there is no need for additional development as existing structures are available to anyone with a desire to live in Shandon.
- What is the source for water? The SWP Water was contracted with the stipulation that it could not be used for new development. Additional groundwater pumping could create an adverse relationship between existing ag uses (ie jobs) and residents. It is accepted by the Public Works department that the basin is in decline. Further development could aggravate that.

To: Nicole Retana/Planning/COSLO@Wings,
Cc:
Bcc:
Subject: Fw: Letter regarding the Shandon Community Plan
From: Ramona Hedges/Planning/COSLO - Wednesday 03/23/2011 09:09 AM

Ramona Hedges, (805) 781-5612
Planning Commission Secretary
Records Management Supervisor
Department of Planning & Building
County of San Luis Obispo

----- Forwarded by Ramona Hedges/Planning/COSLO on 03/23/2011 09:04 AM -----

From: Vicki Shelby/BOS/COSLO
To: Ramona Hedges/Planning/COSLO@Wings
Date: 03/22/2011 04:05 PM
Subject: Letter regarding the Shandon Community Plan

Ramona and Planning Commissioners,

We received the email below regarding the Shandon Community Plan and are forwarding it to you for inclusion into your record. Thank you.

Amy Russell

805 434 8383

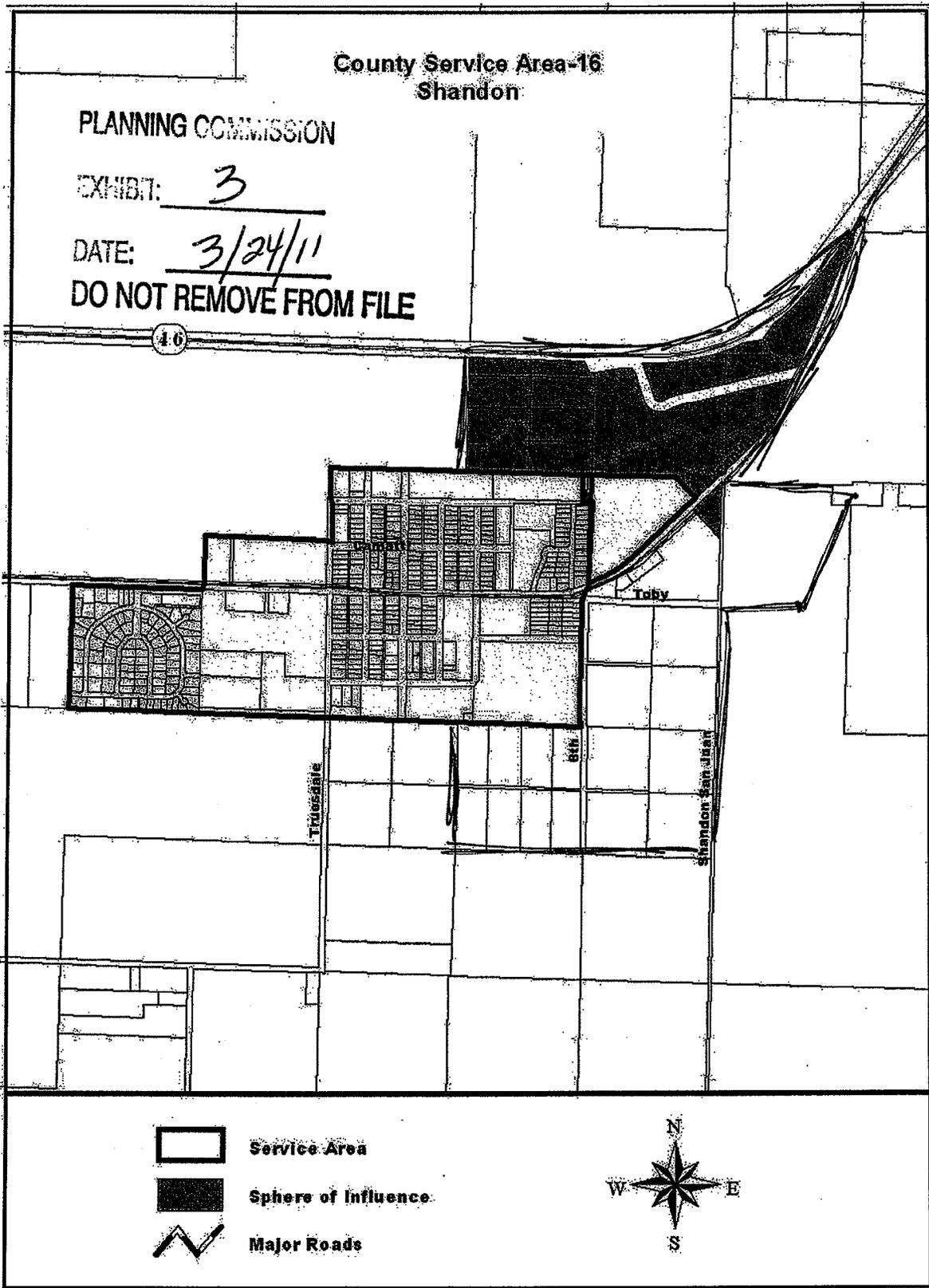
amywahnetta@gmail.com

I am writing you to let you know that as a community member of Shandon I want the Planning Commission to read and act upon the letter sent to them by the Shandon Advisory Council. SAC represents the community accurately.
Thank you. Amy

Vicki M. Shelby
Legislative Assistant
First District Supervisor Frank R. Mecham
1055 Monterey St., D430
San Luis Obispo CA 93408
(805) 781-4491/FAX (805) 781-1350

email: vshelby@co.slo.ca.us

"Thinking a smile all the time will keep your face youthful" - Frank G. Burgess
"Wrinkles should merely indicate where smiles have been" - Mark Twain



June 20, 2011

Planning Commission
San Luis Obispo County
976 Osos Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408

Planning Commissioners,

At the June 9th, 2011 hearing regarding the Shandon Update, an analogy was made which compared the applicant's position to that of someone paying a retirement planner to study their retirement prospects only to be told that they didn't have enough money left to retire. I thought about that comment on the way home enough that it prompted me to sit down and write this letter. First I will explain why it struck such a chord, then I will try to give you a synopsis of the situation from my perspective.

What Mr. Sylvester didn't tell you was that the reason the potential retiree in this analogy had been at this task for so long and had nothing to show at this point was because he chose to take an obstinate, non-negotiable position, choosing to try to take the avenue of political strong-arming, which was more or less unsuccessful. The retiree chose a path that was not successful, but now we are supposed to grant him the retirement of his choice anyway?

This is exactly the position the applicant is taking: Instead of taking responsibility for his tactics, the applicant now wishes us to approve a project simply because he has been at this for 10 years and would like to get something out of it. Because I was there 10+ years ago when this all started, I can tell you that it was stated very clearly by County staff and the First District Supervisor that there was no guarantee to the applicants, (at that time there were three) that any approval would come from this process and they should proceed at their own risk.

If you would indulge me, I would like to give you a relatively brief synopsis from my perspective. I have been involved in this process from the beginning as a member of the Shandon Advisory Council and I try to deliver my comments at your hearings from that of the Council as it has been discussed and delivered throughout that time. However, this letter contains my feelings as an individual rather than that of a SAC member.

Some ten years ago an idea was floated by Fallingstar Homes/Frank Arciero to bring a large development to the east side of Shandon on some land that they had acquired an option on. The development potential was quickly recognized by two other individuals controlling large tracts of land surrounding Shandon; Steve Blumer for Peck Ranch and Marko Zaninovich as MZIRP. These three developers became the primary applicants in the process of updating the Shandon General Plan. When this update idea was presented to the community of Shandon, it, as does any large development, had a varied response from all perspectives. Despite an array of opinions on most aspects of the development, there were a few key concerns that were almost unanimous that the community felt

needed to be addressed before this process was embarked upon. It was told to all parties that there were no guarantees that the applicants would get what they wanted, or even anything at all, but in order to address the community concerns, the process needed to be started. And so it did.

The Community Plan update was embarked upon and, although I can recall most of the details, they were probably fairly typical in the nature of this process; meetings, workshops, letters, etc. As the plan changed in scope, the major concerns of the community did not. They were presented to county staff and the applicants time and again at meetings and in correspondence. However, they seemed to fall on deaf ears. We would hear time and again by staff and the then 1st District Supervisor that these issues would be addressed but we had to keep proceeding with the different aspects of the plan, like the sewer study, the market analysis, and other studies. And so the process went on. Some time along the way Mr. Blumer dropped out but Peck Ranch decided to stay involved themselves. Then MZIRP also stepped out. Still the community voiced the same concerns and the process rolled on without addressing them.

Now the Update sits on your desks without addressing the concerns of the community that have been consistent from the beginning. The applicants are asking you to pass the plan now because, after all, the housing market is depressed and this can all be revisited in four or five years when it gets better, but let's pass something now for the applicants because they have been at this for so long. This is yet another example of the applicants' attempt to not address the key issues of the plan, but to push their way through the system. This same lack of addressing key issues of this plan that make it incomplete and unacceptable has been happening for the last 10 years. It is through the actions, or lack thereof, on the part of the applicants that this process has taken so long.

The driving force behind the resistance to this plan is not the normal "NIMBY" syndrome. Without a doubt, we all have varying opinions on how much development is acceptable and where, and what the format should be, etc. However, the cohesiveness on the core issues comes from our sense of community and what is best for Shandon. It is universally believed that the core issue of the development not being a burden on the existing town is simply not negotiable. The concerns are this development's impact on Hwy 46 access, both in time and safety, the potential financial burden of water and sewer system, the compounding of the safety issue of the bridge in town, and a potential negative impact on the water supply for our one industry; agriculture. This Update has changed formats many times in the past 10 years, but as you can see, these issues still have not been addressed.

It is your prerogative, as the Planning Commission, to attempt to piece together enough pieces to address these issues as you see fit, but it is not my understanding of the system that this is how it is supposed to work. I thought a relatively complete plan was brought before the Commission for fine tuning, not to have the Commission form the actual plan because the applicants didn't do their job. The scope of this plan is such that it is not feasible to ask you to formulate all of the components of the plan in the relatively little time you can allocate to it. Is it the Planning Commission's fault that the applicants,

community and planning staff couldn't draft a complete plan in 10 years and now needs to do it on their time? I am afraid if you attempt to embark on this plan we will create some pitfalls that will haunt the community in its plan for many years to come without realizing it until it is too late.

This attempt to appeal to the Commission on the basis of the time the applicant has invested is really just a smokescreen and last ditch effort to get a plan passed that does not address the issues the applicants want to avoid. Please don't forget that many of us individuals have hundreds of hours invested as well, but unlike Mr. Sylvester and the other applicants we are not getting paid for them. I fully understand and support the idea of capitalism and property rights, but feel that there is a difference in being allowed to develop your property as a viable venture on its own, and developing your property at the expense of your neighbors. If the applicants were to present a plan that stood on its own merit, without burdening the existing community, I would stand behind it with both feet planted firmly.

Unfortunately, after this long time, we have a plan that is not at all like that. It is, in fact, just the opposite, and thus not deserving of approval.

Thank you for your time in reading this and I welcome any comments or questions that you may have in regards to any subject relating to Shandon.

Randy Diffenbaugh
(805) 748-6500
rdiff@yahoo.com