



“ Jobs, Homes & Individual Rights ”

NEWS RELEASE

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SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

David Cobb's article in the April 3, 2008 Time-Standard, leads with “*Democracy Done or Denied: Humboldt's General Plan*”. Good for him for addressing the subject. Too bad he draws the inaccurate conclusion that democracy is being done, when in fact it has been denied for the past 9 years the General Plan update has been in progress.

Mr. Cobb states, “But a small, well-funded group is attempting to hijack the process at the last minute, and is vilifying the Planning Department for having the audacity to include the general public.”

The truth is, several organizations and individuals have struggled to have their voice(s) heard for many years. HAR (Humboldt Association of Realtors) has written letters to the County for years in hopes of being heard. The NCHB (Northern California Association of Home Builders) have been communicating and testifying before the County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors since the 1990's. Over five hundred people from various walks of life signed proclamations in support of HELP's (Humboldt Economic & Land Plan) efforts to promote jobs and housing. HELP came together in January 2004 because there were many sectors of the public whose input was being ignored during the General Plan update. A group of high school students calling themselves HPA (Humboldt Property Alliance) joined in last year in an attempt to impress on County officials their concerns that landowners were being abused. HumCPR (Humboldt Coalition for Property Right) incorporated last year to help protect property rights against County-imposed misguided, and some believe, unconstitutional regulations.

Have things changed at the County? It remains to be seen as far as we are concerned. There is such a ground swell of county residents who are feeling the threat of the County's heavy-handed tactics, that we wonder if the Board of Supervisors are listening. On this point, we are somewhat suspicious, but for the most part remain cautiously optimistic.

Mr. Cobb is correct when he says, “It's important to understand that the General Plan is the basic blueprint to describe the county's preferred (an in some cases mandated) policies relating to design, land use, open spaces and the natural environment, business and economics, community services, neighborhood vitality, transportation and growth issues.” To be more specific, the State of California requires all cities and counties to address in their General Plans: Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Conservation, Open Space, Noise, and Safety.

In his article, Mr. Cobb expresses his opinion of what the citizens of Humboldt County want. Did he form his opinion while living in Texas running for a Federal political office? Actually numerous polls taken in Humboldt County over the past years, result in different findings than Cobb's opinion. One such poll found that the citizens of Humboldt County have the following issues as their primary concerns:

Issue Number 1	Jobs & Economic Development	87 %
2	Housing	69
3	Crime / Safety	66
4	Growth / Land Use	64
5	Taxes & Government Spending	60
6	Health Care for Needy	60
7	Protecting Open Space	57
8	Traffic / Transportation	50

And when asked: "Is growth a good thing?" 66% responded "yes".

State law mandates that all jurisdictions ask for, and receive input from the public. This is where we differ from Mr. Cobb's opinion that some amongst us are trying to, "hijack the public process of the Humboldt County General Plan." Just the opposite is true in our opinion. Those who are committed to telling the truth and following the law, are insisting that those laws be implemented in Humboldt County.

We would suggest to those who may be listening to Mr. Cobb's rhetoric, that they take a closer look at exactly what has been happening with the public input during the General Plan update process. In her March 16, 2007 letter to the Planning Commission, attorney Allison Jackson notes her concerns that County staff does not properly record certain public testimony during Planning Commission meetings. She describes in detail the cherry picking approach staff takes to their record-keeping in favor of those who believe as Mr. Cobb and Mr. Lovelace do – that they be the ones who decide where and how we should live. Do they live in 500 square foot apartments downtown as they would have the rest of us live? No indeed, they do not. But that's the Plan "A" they are peddling for our future.

For the past four years, HELP has been promoting a balanced General Plan which will support good jobs and affordable housing. We continue to encourage all involved to: (1) Tell the truth, and (2) Follow the law. That's all we ask...that, and having the freedom to live where and how we choose as long as it doesn't intrude on our neighbors' freedom to do likewise.

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