

Citizen Group Comes Back Together as “Menlo Park Deserves Better”

6-3-2014
Council Meeting
Public Comment
John Boyle

June 3, 2014—Tonight a group of concerned Menlo Park residents and community members calling itself Menlo Park Deserves Better addressed the City Council to express our collective commitment to defeat the ill-conceived, misguided and severely flawed initiative advanced by Mike Lanza and Patti Fry on behalf of Save Menlo.

We are a coalition of a wide cross section of community members, many of whom worked on the successful Measure L ballot effort to control pensions and many of whom were part of the collaborative, public, and transparent 6 year process that created the Downtown/El Camino Real Specific Plan, which Save Menlo seeks to eviscerate. Tonight’s speakers included community thought-leaders who hold or have held leadership positions in our schools, the City Council, the Planning Commission, the Transportation and Bicycle Commissions, the Menlo Park Fire Protection District, the West Bay Sanitary District, homeowner groups, and the business and real estate community (see attachment).

Menlo Park Deserves Better takes issue with the Lanza/Fry assault on Menlo Park’s identity as a City committed to the importance of public engagement. We are especially offended that this poorly drafted ballot measure, which was crafted in secret without the benefit of any professional analysis or CEQA review, makes a mockery of the transparency, hard work, and deliberation associated with the Downtown Specific Plan process.

Consequently, Menlo Park Deserves Better is banding together to defeat this attempt at ballot box zoning for the following reasons:

- Continued blight on the El Camino
- Loss of revenue to our schools, the City, and the Fire District
- Increased traffic
- Increased crowding in schools
- Lack of public process
- Costly litigation and taxpayer expense
- Unintended and unexpected consequences
- Any corrections or changes to this initiative or downtown zoning will require a city-wide vote
- Flawed signature gathering
- Misrepresentations to the public
- Support driven mostly from a single neighborhood

We believe that the vast majority of Menlo Park residents favor the Downtown Specific Plan and appreciate the years of hard work and consensus that went into its passage. Therefore, we urge this City Council and the Menlo Park community to reject such an ill-conceived and severely flawed attack on our inclusive and transparent process—Menlo Park deserves better.

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Speakers:

Henry Riggs

Sara Leslie

Katie Ferrick

Roy Thiele-Sardiña

Scott Lohman

Skip Hilton

Peter Carpenter

Mickie Winkler

Ned Moritz

Katherine Strehl

Richard Li

John Boyle