

April 2024

Dear Table Bluff resident

Last June, in preparation for a public hearing before the Planning Commission, I wrote you that Lyn and I hoped to build a home at the intersection of Hawks Hill and Table Bluff Roads. Unfortunately, we were scratched from the Commission's agenda after a complainant filed suit against the County and requested a stay be placed on our hearing. In October the court ruled against the complainant. In March of this year, a final decision confirming the same was handed down. We move on.

As I said back in June, we would like to tell you of our plans and who we are. And once again, we invite you to communicate any concerns you might have, either to us directly or to the County representative, Cade McNamara, who is charged with oversight of our application.

A bit on who we are... Lyn and I have called Humboldt County home now for over forty years, the last thirty-seven of which have been spent here in Loleta. Lyn worked at College of the Redwoods for thirty-six years as administrative assistant in the Counseling Office/Transfer Center and loved her work helping students. I attended HSU and received a teaching degree but was drawn to serving the elderly, first delivering hot meals, then later working with frail adults at the Alzheimer's Center. The last ten years of my work life I was employed by Loleta School as groundskeeper and bus driver. Lyn and I are both retired now and remain involved in the community.

With regards to the Hawks Hill parcel, it had been my dream for half my life. After we first moved to Loleta in 1987, I'd bicycle up Table Bluff and admire the small lot overlooking the valley. I know the property, it's recent history, and have communicated with those still living who've passed through. Frae, of Sequoia Orchids. Cisco, now in his 80's, who had a short go forty years back growing orchids. And the Berkeley couple who hung on for over three decades to dreams of retiring on the Bluff. They never made it back, but in retirement they opened an orchid nursery and named it Hawks Hill Orchids. Nice folks all of them.

Regarding our plans, Lyn and I aim to maintain an inconspicuous footprint, out of respect for the nature that surrounds and for the neighbors nearby. The home, centrally located on the parcel's western side, would be a football field's length north of the nearest neighbor's home across the road. For privacy, a wide strip of pre-existing brush would be left along Hawks Hill and Table Bluff Roads. North of our home would be evergreens and fruit trees and native plants. *Since my letter last June, we have relocated our well pump house and storage tank so that they will not be visible from the road. And we have relocated the driveway entrance north, away from nearby neighbors' drives and homes. Both changes came in response to a complainant's request and made without County prodding.* Most of the work will be performed by a two-man crew, my contractor and me.

I want to address a couple issues that have come up during this process. First, the matter of our excess clearing of vegetation without a development permit. I believe rules are in place for good reason. Any missteps we've made till now have been honest mistakes, owing to misunderstandings. Example one: For purposes of completing a Coastal Development Permit application, the pre-existing leach field needed to be located on our site plan. For the septic company to map the field, they required clearing of brush. I coordinated with the Coastal Commission and Planning Department and was told that 6000 feet of clearing was allowed without a permit. With surveys already in hand—Archaeological, Botanical, and Wetland Delineation—and all saying items of a sensitive nature had been sufficiently addressed, I felt confident. A skid steer operator was hired and given instruction. But I didn't supervise. Upon return to inspect progress, I found the operator had gone above and beyond. An honest mistake but an infraction nonetheless. *Around about this time, a neighbor, for purposes of installing a new fence, cleared an additional 3000 square feet without our knowledge or permission.* Example two: I had correctly understood that a water storage tank of less than 5000 gallons doesn't require a permit and began preparing a 10 x 10 swath upon which the tank might sit. Again, a violation was called in. The County informed me that a building permit isn't required to put in a tank. However, a Coastal Development Permit is to do anything. I apologized for my error.

An additional concern had been raised over items of archaeological significance. A professional survey of the property found nothing. Additionally, Lyn and I have queried local historical societies as well as the Catholic church, again without County prodding. All have responded similarly with no findings to report. Nonetheless, law requires that work stops if evidence is unearthed during building activity. Lyn and I respect this obvious and common sense provision.

With regards to the parcel's preexisting infrastructure, its well and septic, I've had many conversations with the Department of Environmental Health and with the California Department of Water Resources for the purpose of respecting rules and maintaining public safety. The septic system passes inspection, though it will be upgraded with a modern tank. The well is also fine. In compliance with the Department of Environmental Health's request, we've had Fisch Drilling, Pacific Watershed Associates, and North Coast Labs conduct numerous tests. Everything, from bacteria and organic compounds to man-made contaminants, has been checked out. The well comes up squeaky clean. This fact can be corroborated by contacting Patrick Owen, Department of Environmental Health.

In closing, if you have any thoughts or concerns you'd like to share, I welcome hearing them, either to me directly or through the County.

Sincerely

Joel Geck-Moeller, on behalf of Lyn and Joel (Mail: PO Box 688, Loleta 95551 Phone: 707 273 0528)