

Jomsky, Mark

From: joancathcart@charter.net
Sent: Monday, April 09, 2007 9:37 PM
To: Madison, Steve
Cc: Jomsky, Mark
Subject: Desiderio site w/ Arroyo Ctr

Steve, please preserve the Army Reserves' building as site for Arroyo Ctr for Art & Environment. I went on a tour last week, and wow what a place. It will fit wonderfully w/ Habitat houses if they go along the street path, where in fact the houses get a better view. Please. let's make both purposes work. Thanks. Joan & Mike Cathcart

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May 16, 2007

Mayor Bogaard, City Council, City Manager, Stephanie de Wolfe et al,

As some of you may have read in the May 7th Star-News, I am involved in the formation of the Citizens for a Public Arroyo mentioned in Janette William's article. The need for this group arose from two issues: first, the actions of the City Council in their decision to not follow the staff recommendation to keep the buildings at Desiderio in combination with Habitat for Humanity, and secondly, the last minute decision of WPRA to represent that a majority of the neighbors supported the removal of the buildings.. In an attempt not to be redundant, I am attaching the mission statement of Citizens for a Public Arroyo for you to read as a further clarification of our position.

It is very discouraging to back a position to only realize that, in the end, it appears to be "politics" and "who knows whom", not the merits of the project. To say that the Arroyo Center did not present" any specific proposals for fundraising and for a project team and so on" is not true. In fact the Arroyo Center was forthright in their City proposal package, disclosing their plan for a \$6 million capital campaign and that they had already been pledged \$1,000,000 towards the project; they produced support from virtually every major museum in the City, the architect from Habitat designed an alternative plan that preserved the Desiderio building and realigned the Habitat houses, which he believed made better sense. Furthermore, the Arroyo Center produced a low-impact traffic plan that was prepared by a leading traffic engineering firm. What did Habitat present to the City? Did they present how much traffic would be forthcoming and what the need for public services and school busses would be? Did you ask one thing about how Habitat would pick the families, how it would structure the "sales", who would have title to the land, or, even, how Habitat works? You did not ask them one question yet, the Mayor is quoted in the same Star-News article saying that the Arroyo Center did not provide "any specific proposals for fundraising and for a project team and so on." Has there been any discussion how the City of Pasadena is going to pay for the cost of installing an Arroyo parkland and maintaining it in an ongoing matter? What will be the ongoing cost to the taxpayer? And, most importantly, where is the "broad public use" called for by the U.S. Government?

CPA also needs to be formed because the West Pasadena Resident's Association does not accurately represent the views of the community on this issue. Our

membership is made up of many residents of West Pasadena and the neighborhood immediately next to the property who disagree with the last action of the WPRA board demanding that the historic Army Reserve buildings be torn down. That action was taken without broad notice, failed to invite representatives of either the California Art Club or the Arroyo Seco Foundation to explain their project, and as a result, was based on faulty information about the Arroyo Center's plans for the site. This can be seen by the erroneous information put out on WPRA's website after the Board's vote.

A close examination of the actions of WPRA during the period from when they held their "informational" meeting for the members of WPRA to the last minute Board approval of the Planning Commission recommendation shows a bias towards the Open Space concept which was not reflective of the WPRA membership and had never been a concept for consideration. WPRA asserted that they were responding to the immediate neighbors to Desiderio. This assertion is highly suspect, and, in fact, if you take the really immediate neighbors, perhaps two out of 10 want the WPRA package. You ignored the map that we provided for you, yet took the word of WPRA versus ours.

And, finally, I want to address the issue of the Arroyo Seco Foundation going to Hahamonga. There was much discussion and hand wringing about the ASF going to Hahamonga but, in the end, there was no substance.

The truth of the matter is, that while the Arroyo Seco Foundation had been anxious at one time to pursue the Hahamonga situation, it was never contacted during the recent planning stages of Hahamonga. When Mayor Bogaard as much as told the ASF that he was sure they "would be very happy at Hahamonga", it turned out, when the Hahamonga project was announced some 10 days later, there was no spot at all for the Arroyo Seco Foundation, and never had been. It was to be "City" run.

So, our group has been formed because the City Council and the Mayor chose not to listen to their constituents and chose to ignore the 1200 signatures on the Arroyo Center web site; ignore the 400 signatures from the citizens of Pasadena, and ignore the signatures of the immediate neighbors. They chose to ignore the environmentally sound proposal for the rehabilitation, recycling and reuse of these buildings, and ignore the endorsements of the Art Center College of Design, Kidspace, the Huntington Library and Art Gallery, The Pasadena Museum of History, the Pacific Asia Museum, the Pasadena Museum of California Art, and La Casita Foundation to mention but a few. Most of all, they chose to ignore their own staff recommendation. They allowed Habitat to "not compromise" and "be flexible" because they are Habitat. They demanded nothing from Habitat and everything from the Arroyo Center.

The Citizens for Public Use of the Arroyo has been formed to support the Arroyo Center project as a culturally vital gift to our community and to Pasadena visitors,

and to address the importance of preserving the Arroyo Seco culture for the benefit of all Pasadenans for generations to come.

Sincerely,

**Martyn Belmont
Co-Chair, Citizens for a Public Arroyo**

Citizens for Public Use of the Arroyo (CPA)

This organization has been formed to represent the views of the residents of West Pasadena as well as other supporting individuals and organizations who believe that there is a unique opportunity for the Desiderio Property to be dedicated to a broad and inclusive public use. CPA supports the inclusion of the Center for Art and the Environment in utilizing all or a portion of the existing historic Army Reserve building in any plan for this property. The Arroyo Center for Art and the Environment would provide a place where all the people of Pasadena and surrounding communities could come and learn about nature, conservation and the environment in a setting unique to Pasadena and Southern California. It would provide for the display of paintings by the early Pasadena painters of the Arroyo and share this site with present day painters who, like their predecessors, celebrate and record the beauty of nature through their paintings. The linking of the study of art and the environment would provide educational and cultural programs not found elsewhere in Southern California.

The existing buildings are perfectly adaptable to this combined use, with spaces suitable for the display of art, classrooms and other spaces supporting educational programs in art and the environment. The appearance of the building would be greatly enhanced by appropriate architectural changes and landscaping compatible with the area. The construction of a new building at another location on the site would be extremely wasteful, and also goes against the environmental superiority of adaptive reuse of existing structures. The relocation of a new building close to the Colorado Street Bridge would detract from the panoramic views of this significant, historic feature of Pasadena which has become the symbol, as well as the gateway, to the City. Importantly, it was "recycled and rebuilt for re-use" by Pasadena for over \$11,000,000 in 1993. It is interesting that the City can "choose" which landmarks can be "recycled, rebuilt and re-used".

CPA opposes the plan adopted by the Pasadena City Council on April 9, 2007, which attempted to exclude the participation of the Arroyo Seco Foundation and its environmental education programs from this site and force the construction by the California Art Club of a prohibitively expensive new building pressed against the Colorado Street Bridge. By effectively excluding the Arroyo Center for Art and the Environment from the plan for this site, it no longer provides a public benefit. This is because 25% of the property will be sold off for the private use of 9 individual families. The involvement of Habitat for Humanity and the low income housing aspect of the plan does not change this fact. The rest of the property will be set aside for "passive" open space, which would result in a use benefiting no one other than the 9 families and certain surrounding neighbors. When asked at the City Council meeting, City Manager Cynthia Kurtz confirmed that without the Arroyo Center, broad public use would not be expected.

Let's not lose this opportunity to do something wonderful for the City of Pasadena by adopting a plan that truly benefits the public and all the people of Pasadena who care about the history and cultural, environmental and educational future of Pasadena and the surrounding communities. By making possible programs combining education in the arts and the environment through the reuse of the existing building we can have a true public benefit plan that is supported by a broad community consensus.