



POINT SAN PEDRO ROAD COALITION

"Promoting Quality of Life in our Community"

May 13, 2024

Coalition Directors

Co-Presidents

*Denise Lucy
Bonnie Marmor*

Secretary

Kati Miller

Treasurer

Kevin Hagerty

Directors

*Winifred Dajani
Alan Schaevitz*

Standing Committee Chairs

Disaster

Preparedness
John Lenser

Loch Lomond Marina

Alan Schaevitz

Pt. San Pedro Roadway

Robert Sandoval

S.R. Rock Quarry

Denise Lucy

Wetlands

Winifred Dajani

To the honorable members of the San Rafael City Schools Board of Education:

We are writing to you on behalf of the Board of Directors and Wetlands Committee of the Pt. San Pedro Road Coalition (Coalition), regarding the planned sale of SRCS District property abutting Glenwood Elementary School that has been designated "surplus." The Coalition is a 501(c)(3) non-profit in San Rafael. Our organization's mission includes the preservation of the environment in our area. Among other activities over the past 20 years, we have provided education to our community about the importance of our wetlands and advocated for the preservation and restoration of these wetlands, including the Glenwood Wetlands.

During an era when the importance of wetlands was not fully appreciated, vast wetlands in our area were filled to build homes. Many of the developments which were built on fill are now in areas designated by FEMA as flood zones. The Glenwood neighborhood is among those that have been identified as vulnerable to what has now been determined will be inevitable and considerable sea level rise. In fact, our area is already experiencing periodic flooding. The potential role wetlands can play as an important component in sea level rise mitigation has recently been established, as well as their importance in filtering groundwater and sequestering carbon. Therefore, we want to ensure that these precious wetlands are protected, and consideration is taken regarding the implications of future development within the flood basin that composes part of these parcels to assess risk along with the pursuant insurance that would be required to underwrite it.

In addition to sea level rise related concerns, there is a habitat and environmental value in that the parcel has served as a "living laboratory" for natural science projects that educators at Glenwood Elementary school have organized throughout the years. Our Coalition Wetlands Committee, in collaboration with teachers at Glenwood, has formed the Glenwood Wetlands Restoration Alliance to pursue a program to restore the wetlands in partnership with Students and Teachers Restoring a Watershed (STRAW) of Point Blue, an environmental conservation organization with expertise in wetlands restoration at large, and more specific educational collaborative restorations partnering with schools throughout the Bay Area.

The goal has been to initiate an incremental wetlands restoration plan at the Glenwood Wetlands, with the direction and participation of John Parodi, the Director of Point Blue's STRAW program. Communication was ongoing with former Superintendent Jim Hogeboom, with a detailed recommendation sent to him, as well as Carolina Martin, the Trustee for District 4, in addition to Dan Zaich, then the District's Executive Director of Capital Improvements, Sustainability and Construction. A preliminary soft presentation was made at a school board meeting by teacher Angela Hood and several students, who

spoke about the multiple natural science projects they had been involved with both within the Glenwood Wetlands parcel, as well as wetlands restoration projects they had participated in with STRAW at other sites. Unfortunately, an impasse to this restoration initiative was reached when the district began the process of declaring the parcels as “surplus” and entertaining offers for them.

We understand that the SRCS District needs to raise funds and has multiple factors to consider. We also understand that legal mandates direct that the sale of the property requires priority offering to developers of low-cost housing. Although we do appreciate that housing is sorely needed in San Rafael, we also believe that the process being followed by the SRCS Board has left many residents feeling shut out due to the lack of adequate notice to the community and the failure to provide an adequate mechanism for considering community input regarding the public benefits of this parcel, including the wetlands.

We care about the school district’s needs, but also think environmental considerations are very important as well. Among our Board and Committee members are parents of former Glenwood Elementary students for whom walking through those wetlands allowed them to appreciate firsthand the precious ecosystem that characterizes it. We are aware of active community interest in, and concern for, these wetlands dating back more than 40 years, when a committee was formed to advocate for preservation of the Glenwood Wetlands.

In conclusion and in view of the considerations outlined above, we urgently request the school board to extend adequate time for community involvement in the process as it entertains offers for these properties. For the public to be supportive of your process, it is crucial to allow for substantive input relative to the benefits and disadvantages to how this land is used, in particular regarding the designated wetlands within them. We urge you not to move forward hastily, leaving the issues for others to grapple with in what may be a lengthy, contentious, and costly process.

Best regards,



Bonnie Marmor
Co-President



Denise Lucy
Co-President