

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Documents Reveal Cowan Allowed to Build Additional Homes on Harbor Bay Acreage Originally Designated as Recreation Space**

*City of Alameda granted developer right to swap 44 acres for 10-acre Harbor Bay Club parcel to serve local residents; now considers building homes on Club land*

ALAMEDA, Calif. – September 25, 2013 – Harbor Bay Neighbors, a grassroots organization of Alameda citizens opposing the rezoning of Harbor Bay Club, today released a series of historical documents revealing the City of Alameda allowed developer Ron Cowan to appropriate 44 acres of designated recreation space in the Community of Harbor Bay Isle in exchange for building the private 10 acre Harbor Bay Club. In the documents the City asserts that “the purpose of the Harbor Bay Club is and shall continue to be to provide quality recreation facilities for the residents of Harbor Bay Isle residential development.”

The documents are particularly significant as Cowan’s Harbor Bay Isle Associates (HBIA) seeks to rezone the current Club property from “commercial recreation” to “R-2 Residential” so it can be sold to a luxury home builder. HBIA has indicated they will use the funds from the sale to build a new Club on property they own at Harbor Bay Business Park. The business park is not within Harbor Bay Isle, a PUD (planned unit development) with 20 homeowners associations and a master board of directors that provide community governance.

A Planned Unit Development (PUD) is defined by the Center for Land Use as a pre-planned community that, “...is planned and built as a unit thus fixing the type and location of uses and buildings over the entire project” to balance the components of housing, recreation space and community amenities.

The City approved changes to the “recreational commons” defined in the master plan over a number of years, reducing 44.4 acres to 18.2 acres and then to ~9 acres when Cowan received approval to build Centre Court (112 townhomes) on the other 9 acres adjacent to the Club parcel. With the reduction of recreational space, the City imposed special requirements on the operation of Harbor Bay Club specifically to benefit Harbor Bay residents, including:

- Outside members were phased out in favor of Harbor Bay Isle residents,
- The number of memberships would not exceed 1,200 family memberships and 200 junior memberships, and
- Facilities were provided at no or nominal cost to the Homeowners’ Associations for meetings.

The City allowed changes to the approved PUD plans ostensibly in response to Cowan’s requests citing tough economic times for his development company. With the release of the documents today, Harbor Bay Neighbors proves that the developer and city altered a previously-approved master PUD plan so the developer could designate more land for homes, thus resulting in less recreation space and increased housing density in the completed Harbor Bay Isle development.

“HBIA claims they are ‘entitled’ to build more homes at Harbor Bay—which is not true—and now insists on tearing down a city-mandated community asset to do so. Homeowners throughout Harbor Bay have already sacrificed 44 acres of public recreation space in their neighborhoods

in exchange for a 10 acre recreational facility,” said Tim Coffey, leader of Harbor Bay Neighbors. “Enough is enough. Rezoning the current Club for homes offers no benefit whatsoever to this community. Removing this important amenity and building more housing will decrease our home values and increase density and traffic. If Cowan wants to build more homes, the City should let him build at Alameda Point.”

Harbor Bay Neighbors indicate they will continue to vehemently fight the further removal of recreation space from the Community of Harbor Bay Isle and take their campaign to the voting booth or pursue legal action, if necessary.

The document package is available on the Harbor Bay Neighbors website at:

<http://harborbayneighbors.wordpress.com/timeline-of-harbor-bay-club/>

### **About Harbor Bay Neighbors**

Harbor Bay Neighbors is a grassroots community-based organization formed in July 2013 to oppose Ron Cowan’s HBIA proposal to rezone the current Harbor Bay Club. The volunteer organization represents more than 700 residents from Harbor Bay Isle, Bay Farm Island and the Island of Alameda who are concerned about the myriad problems the HBIA rezoning proposal presents. Additionally, the five (5) Homeowners’ Associations that have declared opposition to the proposal represent 1,500 homes in Bay Farm. For more information, visit:

<http://harborbayneighbors.wordpress.com/>

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