

800 2nd Avenue
Westhaven, California 95570
16 November 2021

Re: Opposition to PLN-2017-13733, APN 514-112-019
"HANKS COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT, SPECIAL PERMIT"

To: Humboldt County Planning Clerk & Zoning Administrator
via Planningclerk@co.humboldt.ca.us

I bought my house in Westhaven a decade ago come January in large part because it is located in a wooded forest place next to a creek. I have been a lover of the forested Westhaven neighborhoods since first coming across them in college in 1988, and was thrilled to be able to buy a house here 24 years after falling in love with the area.

The letter I received from the County regarding the above-referenced project arrived in my mailbox in November 2021 with a hearing scheduled for "Thursday, November 18, 2021, at 10:00 a.m. or as soon thereafter as the matter can be heard" but the permit filing date is "8/9/2017," thus I am unclear whether this project has already started in part and this is a continuance, or if this is regarding removal of an additional 15 big redwood trees, or if this hearing is some sort of after-the-fact occurrence for some reason and all 15 of the trees have already been removed. If my memory serves me correctly there has already been a bunch of trees removed from the three-parcel property in recent years.

If this hearing is regarding continuing removal, it would be helpful to know if there are 15 **more** trees to be removed, or if some of those have already been removed, or if there are say only one or two left to be removed of the original 15.

I have questions about and am opposed to this project for a number of reasons. IF there are only 1-2-3 trees left to be removed of the original 15, I am not as opposed, but still have concerns about the wildlife/environmental ramifications from this project.

1. What is not clear from the parcel map {attached}, is that there is a creek running between the properties on 1st and 2nd Avenues. This creek and the riparian zone surrounding it are used by all sorts of plants for water, and by animals ranging from the occasional mountain lion and bear to more regular visitors like deer, fox, raccoon, skunk, smaller rodent creatures, frogs and toads, bats, all sorts of birds, and probably all sorts of other small creatures I do not know of, for both water and as a travelling corridor. As such, has any kind of environmental impact review been done?

I am concerned with more trees being cut in this immediate area there would be a hole in the riparian zone that would negatively impact both plant and animal wildlife.

2. Related to the above concern, our creek has suffered a lot during the drought. I cannot remember the last time I heard water rushing through it in the last few years. I am concerned

that with more tree removal, the earth would be negatively impacted for a substantial amount of time from the heavy equipment compaction {and consequent reduction of the soil's ability to absorb water} and that the area "logged" would be prone to erosion run-off. I am concerned we could end up with a bunch of mud clogging our creek, negatively impacting all of the life forms dependent upon the creek, including the creek itself.

3. As current dendrological science is now showing, trees grow in communities. For example, they are connected below-ground through mycelium and help protect each other from infection and share food sources when there is scarcity. Their roots help prevent erosion and help catch water to filter down into groundwater aquifers, maintaining a healthy soil ecosystem for the community. They are connected above-ground as neighbors to lean on, providing support to one another in wind storms. With redwoods having shallow, spreading roots, this underground and above-ground mutual support within stands of trees is crucial for tree health and stability, especially here along the coast where we get some pretty substantial winds.

Once a hole is cut into a community of trees, which has already begun on this property, it makes it more difficult for the still standing trees to stay in good health – they need time to recover, and if removal continues so does the unhealthiness of the trees, it spreads, and could follow to the horrible conclusion of cutting down an entire forested area if there are any habitable buildings in it.

Wouldn't it be better for tree health and subsequently building and human safety to remove any truly hazardous limbs? And if there are any actual complete trees leaning dangerously over the residence maybe remove just those?

4. From my familiarity with the neighborhood, to my albeit layperson's eyes, I just do not see 15 trees of any threat to the residence nor outbuilding. I also do not see 15 standing mature redwood trees, I mostly see spruce trees.

These observations again bring up the question of is this hearing regarding the continuance of tree removal that began when the permit was filed in 2017? Or the removal of an additional 15 trees? Or ???

5. I do wonder, since 15 large, 20" – 50" DBH, redwood trees would net a person a substantial amount of money, if this is more about selling lumber than safety of persons and property as described. And if that is the case, shouldn't it be evaluated as a timber harvest plan and subjected to the rigors put to THPs complete with riparian protections, not as a hazardous tree removal plan, and taxed as such? Are THPs even allowed in the residential Westhaven neighborhoods?

And if these trees were/are to be removed as part of a fuels reduction plan, thereby protecting persons and property, wouldn't it make more sense to remove the spruce trees who take up significantly more water out of our drought-distressed watershed than the redwoods who absorb much of their water through their leaves and whose bark is fairly flame resistant?

I know I moved here to Westhaven largely in part because many of the houses are surrounded by trees; I value the privacy they allow, all of the things they do for other creatures

including creating beautifully fresh oxygen for us to breathe, and they themselves as fellow living creatures. I do believe in a property owner's right to do what they want to on their property, as long as it does not negatively impact the earth and environment in a way that is way out of balance with consideration to all inhabitants of the property. I am really concerned that cutting an additional 15 large redwoods in this area would have a long-range, humanly lopsided, notably negative impact on the larger, connected community of trees and ecosystem they are a part of.

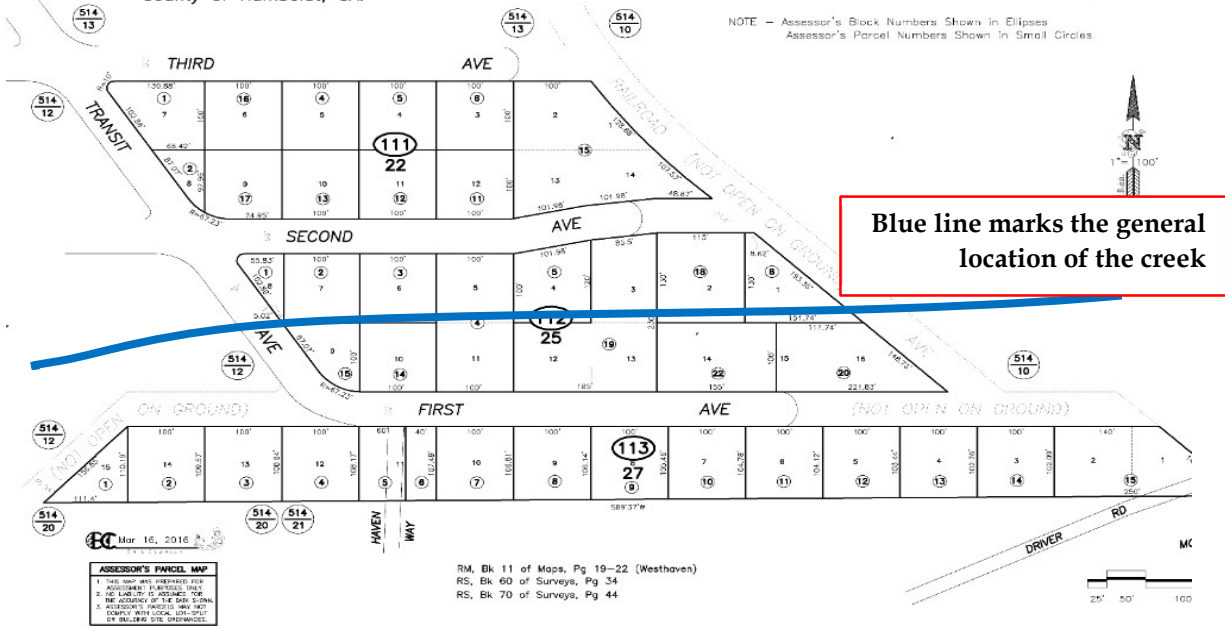
Sincerely,

Kirsten Stanberry

*attachment
copy to:*

*Environmental Protection Information Center
epic@wildcalifornia.org*

NOTE - Assessor's Block Numbers Shown in Ellipses
Assessor's Parcel Numbers Shown in Small Circles



ASSASSOR'S PARCEL MAP
1. THIS MAP WAS PREPARED FOR
RECORDATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH
THE ASSASSOR'S MAP ACT.
2. THE ACCURACY OF THE DATA SHOWN
HEREON IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE
ASSASSOR.
3. THIS MAP IS NOT TO BE USED FOR
ANY OTHER PURPOSES WITHOUT THE
WRITTEN CONSENT OF THE ASSASSOR.

RM, Bk 11 of Maps, Pg 10-22 (Westhaven)
RS, Bk 60 of Surveys, Pg 34
RS, Bk 70 of Surveys, Pg 44

