

LIST OF PUBLIC COMMENTERS

Mark Clough, Pajaro Valley Electric
220 Pine Street
Watsonville, CA 95076

Fay Hilt, Pajaro Valley Electric
220 Pine Street
Watsonville, CA 95076

Anka Bulaich, local resident
305 Second Street
Watsonville, CA 95076

Nick Bulaich, local resident
305 Second Street
Watsonville, CA 95076

Guadalupe Flemate & Mara Rodriguez, local residents
243 Locust Street
Watsonville, CA 95076

Mr. and Mrs. Johnny Howard Clark Jr., local residents
239 Locust Street
Watsonville, CA 95076



Deborah Muniz <deborah.muniz@cityofwatsonville.org>

[CDD] Public Comment

2 messages

Mark Clough <mclough@pveinc.com>

Tue, Mar 29, 2022 at 8:50 AM

To: "cdd@cityofwatsonville.org" <cdd@cityofwatsonville.org>

General Plan Amendment, 525-Student Charter School. APP #1737

I have no objection to the Charter School and their curriculum for the students I think it is a great asset for the students and their families. I do strongly disagree with the location of the school and the traffic issues that the school bring with it. Locust Street is a very narrow two-way street in a residential/business area. The parking for vehicles is limited and typically full and makes the street even narrower and the additional traffic makes it very difficult to safely drive down the street. The crossing guards provided on Walker, 2nd and Locust need to be trained as to when to allow the students to cross the street safely. It's very apparent that their prime concern is to allow the students to get to school quickly. The crossing guards have no concern for allowing traffic to flow thru the area and to allow the students to cross when there is a break in traffic. The guards will stop the traffic before the students even arrive at the intersection, so they don't even need to wait, this adds to already congested traffic on the narrow and busy roads.

I'm hoping that someone from the city will spend time in the morning and afternoon to observe the traffic congestion to the area before the Public Hearing.

Mark Clough

Pajaro Valley Electric

220 Pine Street, Watsonville, CA 95076

Tel. # 831-724-4757

Fax # 831-724-0324

Cell # 831-320-2659

email MClough@pveinc.com

<http://www.pveinc.com>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Fay Hilt** <fhilt@pveinc.com>

Date: Wed, Mar 30, 2022 at 7:37 AM

Subject: Hearing for Re-zoning for charter school @ 215 Locust Street

To: citycouncil@cityofwatsonville.org <citycouncil@cityofwatsonville.org>

To the Board

Let me start off by saying I have nothing against the charter school. My issue is its location. I work in the area and have observed many traffic issues regarding the school.

This is a very busy industrial area with large trucks coming and going all day. We also have multiple vehicles with the business which come and go all day and have issues with the comings goings of the

students, parents, and staff.

This school has absolutely no control over the parents picking up or dropping of students. They block the street (literally parking on the street) the students do not listen to the crossing guard. They step out into the street wherever they please. You can not make a turn onto Riverside without pulling completely into the lane of oncoming traffic because the parents park their cars right up to the corner blocking any chance of seeing oncoming traffic.

I truly believe it is only a matter of time before someone either gets hurt or killed due to the traffic issues that this school has created.

Sincerely

Fay Hilt

305 Second St.
Watsonville, CA 95076
April 2, 2022.

RECEIVED

APR 04 2022

Watsonville Planning Commission
250 Main St.
Watsonville, CA 95076

City of Watsonville
Community Development Dept

RE: General Plan Amendment, Zoning Amendment and Use Permit
for Charter School at 215 Locust Street, Watsonville.

Agenda Item 6.b. of April 5, 2022 Planning Commission Meeting.

Members of the Commission:

I request that the Commission deny the General Plan Ammendment, Zoning Ammendment and related Special Use Permit as presented to the Commission. The following text will present the reasoning for my request.

The charter school was established eight years ago in an existing industrial building situated on industrial zoned land via a Use Permit of ten year life span to provide a temporary location for the school until a proper permanent location could be found.

The school site lacks adequate parking and automobile routing capacity for incoming vehicles. The main entrance of the school property is on Locust Street which is a narrow street with many curbside parked cars. Large commercial trucks typically pass through the street as they serve the local industrial uses and traffic is awkward when those trucks face oncoming traffic.

When the school began operation, several adverse impacts were obvious from the start. School parking demand spilled out on to nearby street parking of other properties. In addition, many parents transport students in automobiles which results in protracted gridlock of the streets two times a day as cars pour into the narrow street from all over the city.

The school staff regularly place orange traffic cones on the street in front of the driveway to channel cars which blocks larger vehicles. Automobiles related to the school regularly block driveways of nearby properties.

There are many students at the school who walk to their classes. This has attracted mobile food vendors who constantly park on the street to sell candy, ice cream, soda and other items to the students waiting on the sidewalk. The food sales together with the regular loitering of groups of students on the sidewalks

results in litter and trash regularly thrown onto the streets, sidewalks and yards. At opposite ends of Locust Street, there are permanent city signs which prohibit mobile food vendors from operating there, but food vendors violate the restricted area because they get more sales by being closer to the school driveway in order to attract the larger mass of departing students there. Congestion, noise and litter get concentrated in a small area on a narrow street which the signage is supposed to prevent.

Watsonville Police Department places food vendor violations as a low priority enforcement action during school hours due to competing police demands of greater urgency which results in weak enforcement.

Students regularly sit on yard fencing of neighborhood residences while waiting for parents to pick them up from school among other possible reasons. This leads to throwing of litter into yard areas and promotes extended loitering impacts.

The people who live in the neighborhood are mostly working class. It is my sense that most of them are unhappy and disturbed by the negative impact the school has caused on them. I know that the city government has received complaints from residents about the toxic impacts from the school, but nothing seems to solve the problems. It seems that many residents have fallen into a sort of despair over the situation. There are probably cultural reasons why more residents don't petition for redress of the impacts more actively.

The Second and Locust Street area is a mix of residential and industrial properties which have co-existed surprisingly well for more than one hundred years. The charter school has disrupted the previous harmony badly to a degree that I have never seen before in my life.

The proposed Special Use Permit has Conditions of Approval which are offered to mitigate the traffic and parking impacts. Those Conditions of Approval are inadequate and flawed and won't resolve the impacts. If the property zoning is changed from Industrial to Institutional, then the school will transform from a temporary defective and injurious land use into a permanent one.

It seems to me that there was very poor planning used in allowing the school to be established at the site. It is very bad planning to allow the school to continue at the site.

AB to WPC

- 3 -

April 2, 2022.

Please deny the application and encourage the charter school to find a location which can properly and realistically accomodate the severe impacts which the school invariably generates.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Anka Bulaich".

Anka Bulaich

AB

305 Second Street
Watsonville, CA 95076
April 4, 2022

RECEIVED

APR 04 2022

City of Watsonville
Community Development Dept

Watsonville Planning Commission
250 Main Street
Watsonville, CA

re: Planning Commission Meeting—April 2022: Item 6.b-Ceiba Charter School.

Dear Watsonville Planning Commission:

Vote NO on Cieba's request to have a permanent establishment for their Charter School at 215 Locust Street.

Ceiba's operations have done a great disservice to the neighborhood from the moment they opened and the situation simply cannot be fixed to make it acceptable to the area residents and businesses.

As stated in the Staff Report, Ceiba's operations on the property should not have been originally approved and it was fully understood that said operations were only to be temporary for a time period not to exceed 10 years. Yet, here we are nearly 10 years later, and Ceiba is seeking to legitimize an improperly approved project and to be able to permanently continue their operations at the site.

It appears that Ceiba has made little effort to find a permanent site in the years since they obtained their improper and temporary approval, which makes one wonder what they have might been "told or advised" back in 2013 when they obtained the initial approval for the project.¹

I have resided in this neighborhood almost my entire life, and without a doubt, Ceiba's operations have been the absolute worst neighbor we have had here.

During my time as a resident in this neighborhood, the type of businesses that have operated here or continue to operate ranged from alcohol distributors, hardwood sellers, a chemical company, mechanic shops, contractor yards, cabinet shops, bread makers, spice manufacturers, coffee roasters, metal fabrication shops, and trucking companies.

Every single one of these business operations have responsibly co-existed with their residential neighbors. If at any time, any of these establishments had a delivery to be made, whatever product delivered was almost always quickly unloaded, but never

¹ *At this time*, it might be better for all parties involved not to spend too much time revisiting the so-called "error" in the City's improper granting of Ceiba's initial permit, but it strains believability that said granting was an innocent human error. *For now*, let's focus on that this project was supposed to be temporary and the time is going to expire.

created a situation in which both sides of the street were plugged up to the point of stopping traffic flow. Ceiba does just that on a twice a day, every day of school, basis.

Locust Street is a narrow street with street parking on both sides, but it is also a frequently used street. Focusing solely on the segment of Locust Street from Riverside Drive to Second Street, the length of this segment is approximately 500 feet in length. During the dropoff and pickup times of Ceiba students, this entire segment is completely congested. The entire 500 feet of street is plugged up!

The chaos caused by Ceiba's car traffic has to be seen to be believed. As an important point to also add, the traffic congestion is NOT just limited to Locust Street between Riverside Drive and Second Street. The congestion extends on Locust Street across Second Street toward Beach Road. In addition, both sides of Second Street from Locust Street can be congested because of such cars seeking to turn onto Locust to head toward the school, and at times the cars will even project into the intersection waiting to get onto Locust Street to head toward the school.

Any kind of emergency that might happen toward the middle of the street during peak congestion time would make it impossible for police or fire to timely arrive at the scene of a possible life threatening emergency. There is no room for the congested cars to move to grant access to emergency vehicles. It is a miracle that an emergency hasn't yet happened, but this nightmare scenario is on borrowed time.

In addition to havoc caused by the cars, we also have the issue of students standing in driveways blocking attempts for one to get out of or into a personal driveway. To make it even crazier, there is an ice cream vendor van that comes almost on a daily basis and apparently knows in advance when the students have days in which they are released from school earlier than normal. Said ice cream van's driver will park wherever he can to sell his junk food. Although the city has installed pole signs in the sidewalk stating where such a business cannot operate within a certain distance from the school, the ice cream operator frequently violates the rules and at times blocks people's driveways until he completes his sales for the day.

As if that wasn't enough, many of the students upon consuming their purchased ice creams, chips, candy and such, merely throw all of the garbage in people's yards or in the street.

Over the years I have asked numerous students to stop kicking my fence, to move away from the driveway so that I can either enter or exit my vehicle from my driveway of which some students have refused.

In my one interaction with a Ceiba school official in which I complained about some students refusing to move from blocking my driveway so that I could exit it, I also expressed to the school official the horrific problems with the traffic congestion and the garbage thrown all over the place by the students. His response was that are trying to do something about the traffic and in respect to the garbage he wished that the ice

cream vendor van wasn't coming every day. This gives you an idea on the type of mentality that exists from Ceiba. To think they believe that it is the ice cream vendor's fault for the litter because he sells the ice cream and other junk food to the students who throw the garbage anywhere they feel like. The same ice cream vendor frequents the street at other times of the day to sell his food to children in the neighborhood, and our neighborhood kids are not throwing the junk food wrappers in people's yards or in the street, so we obviously know where the litter problem is originating from.

Of course, Ceiba has done NOTHING to improve the traffic congestion and believe the problem with their students littering is upon the ice cream vendor. What's the point of even trying to reason with such an organization?

City Staff has proposed a possible path to alleviate some of the traffic congestion problem which is item #29 of Conditions of Approvals from page 106 of the Staff Report. Said proposal is as follows:

29. On- and Off-Site Traffic Circulation. School Administration staff shall be responsible for traffic flow to and from the site during student drop off and pick up. School staff, crossing guards and volunteers shall adhere to the SRTS plan to ensure appropriate onsite drop off and pick up locations. School staff, crossing guards and volunteers shall also ensure queuing of vehicles are onsite and traffic does not back up onto City streets, thereby avoiding causing traffic congesting and unsafe conditions. Any issues arising from poor traffic control shall be remedied by the school upon notification from City staff. (CDD-P, PWD) (Underline added for emphasis.)

With the number of cars that arrive every morning to drop off students and come back again in the afternoon, one can see this proposed plan will never work. The idea of "school staff, crossing guards and volunteers" directing cars away from queuing on the streets is ludicrous.

For the twice a day arrival of cars, what is the alternative for cars queuing in the street when the school site is filled with cars? There is only one option: direct the drivers of the cars to drive around the block in the hope of coming back around to access the school's property.

It is not even remotely plausible to think that parents are going to continually drive around the block in the hope of being able to enter onto school property to drop off or pick up a student, so that means the same awful problem will continue from the past 8 years. Thus, the drivers will either continue to plug up Locust Street or else they will try to get clever and simply plug up Second Street to a far greater degree than they are presently doing.

There is NO realistic solution to alleviate the twice a day traffic nightmare that the school creates, and that by itself is a solid reason to deny approval of the continuation of the school at the named site. The amount of cars that completely plug up a narrow

street, by itself is a deal breaker, and for that reason alone, the City should put an end to this disaster of a project.

In addition, on page 4 of the Staff Report is the following language giving guidance to the Planning Commission for doing their decision making:

Two of the basic criteria guiding the Planning Commission in discharging its function are the "compatibility between the proposed development and adjacent development and neighborhoods" and "protection of the health, safety and general welfare of the citizens of the City." WMC § 14-10.800.

As already demonstrated in this letter, Ceiba's operations are NOT compatible with our neighborhood and with such unacceptable traffic congestion created by Ceiba's operations, the protection of the health, safety and general welfare of the surrounding neighbors is greatly compromised.

Please, DENY Ceiba's request to continue their school operations at this site. This project should never have been approved and now is the time to correct a gross injustice that has been inflicted upon the residents and businesses in the area. This nightmare needs to end.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nick Bulaich". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nick Bulaich
(831) 728-5640

Guadalupe Flemate & Mara Rodriguez

243 Locust St

Watsonville, Ca 95076

April 5th, 2022

Watsonville Planning Commission

250 Main St.

Watsonville, Ca 95076

Re: General Plan Amendment, Zoning Amendment and Use Permit for Ceiba Charter School
Located at 215 Locust St, Watsonville, Ca

Agenda Item 6.b of April 5th, 20022, Planning and Commission Meeting

Queridos Miembros,

Les escribo esta carta para dejar saber que no estamos contentos con los actos de los estudiantes al igual como el de los padres, al igual la estacuela. Disculpe nuestra franqueza, estas son unas de las cosas que ha hecho obligado a soportar:

1. Los estudiantes tiran basura en frente de la casa y en otras casas
2. Estudiantes no respetan areas privadas de la casa.
3. Los estudiantes y padres de la escuela no muestran mas que una falta de respeto y desprecio por la misma comunidad que su escuela afirma representar.

Tengo mis nietos que mi esposa cuida, mis hijas llegan con mis nietos y los estudiantes se ponen hacer cosas no apropiadas enfrente de mi nietos al tiempo que los dejan en casa. Aparte de que la escuela tiene eventos hasta muy altas horas de la noche. Los padres se ponen a peliar con uno cuando ellos son los que estan bloqueando areas que saben que no deberian de estar estacionados.

Estas son algunas de muchas otras cosas que yo y mi esposa hemos pasado.

Claramente la ubicacion de esta escuela no es adecuada para una funcional.

The Clark Family
239 Locust st
Watsonville Ca, 95076

April 4th, 2022

Watsonville Planning Commission
250 Main St.
Watsonville, CA 95076

Re: General Plan Amendment, Zoning Amendment and Use Permit for Ceiba Charter School Located at 215 Locust St, Watsonville Ca

Agenda Item 6.b of April 5th, 2022, Planning and Commission Meeting

Dear Members,

We are writing this letter in hopes that you may hear our voice as residents of Watsonville and as sincerely troubled citizens.

We request that the commission deny the General Plan Amendment, Zoning amendment and related special use permit as presented.

We shall attempt to express via this letter the reason behind our request.

Ceiba School has the following Mission statement up on their website:

**CEIBA'S MISSION IS TO PREPARE STUDENTS IN THE WATSONVILLE
AREA TO GRADUATE FROM FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES.**

Our vision is to create exceptional and sustainable public charter schools that close the college completion gap on California's central coast.

We believe that every student, regardless of background, can prepare for college success in an environment of high expectations, individualized support, and a small school culture that values each student's unique contribution. Ceiba Public Schools serves as a model to schools and organizations aligned to the same outcome.

In the above mission statement, they site they hope to create a “sustainable” school.

They also site an environment of **“high expectations”** and **“a culture that values each students contribution”** they go on to say **“Ceiba public schools serves as a model to schools and organizations aligned with the same outcome”**.

Please excuse our candor but nothing could be further from the truth. My wife has worked from home for the past 6.5 years here are some of the things she has been forced to endure:

1. She has been spat on by kids who attend Ceiba
2. Yelled at by parents using expletives, merely for asking them to not block our driveway or to not park in our driveway.
3. She has had to kick kids out of our yard who take it upon themselves to stay after school to loiter, smoke marijuana and cigarettes, and leave waste behind.
4. The children and parents of this school show nothing but a lack of respect and disregard for the very community their school claims they represent.

We have a 5-year-old daughter that needs to be dropped off and picked up at her Transitional Kinder school, parents have simply refused to pay any mind to the fact that she has to leave our home. They will not move and it is a constant confrontation. It truly is very sad to see this behavior.

When the school has events such as dances, they have no consideration of the neighborhood. Just a few months ago, my wife settled in for a night of homework with our daughter, she had just been complaining about a young couple who stood in our driveway and decided it was the appropriate place to suck on each other's faces. We hold no judgement to what these kids do on their free time and in private, but when our child who is 5 years old must see this, it borders on sexual harassment. When my wife asked if they could please leave, they replied with “it's a free country”. When my wife tried to create a space in our own home to teach our daughter, the music from Ceiba shook our home. My wife calmly went over to the school to complain, several teachers / chaperones simply passed the buck. My wife waited 30 minutes, almost gave up but was able to meet the principal. The principal was the nicest of the bunch but also said “nobody else has complained” to which my wife replied : “this is a very humble working class predominantly Spanish speaking neighborhood community, my wife being bilingual assured the principal that the neighborhood consensus is in alignment with hers and that they merely lack the opportunity to complain, since some of them rent they aren't sure if they are allowed to complain. “However, neighbors complaining should not be the reason the school considers what is going on around them. It is obviously clear they do not care how this neighborhood is being affected and do not take accountability. It is our humble and sincere opinion that Ceiba is an absolute disgrace to this community.

Ceiba Charter School does not seem to be putting “**high expectations**” on their students or parents.

The culture the students and parents display are not that of a “**a culture that values each students contribution**” if so they would monitor the traffic congestion, the crossing guard’s would actually control and support traffic, there would be more attention on the students as they exited for home and they would be respectful of their community in all of their actions. Ceiba public schools does not serve as a model to schools and organizations. It would be extremely disheartening to see this school continue to exist in its current location.

The location of this school is clearly not suitable for a functional school. It is understandable that the permit was granted as a temporary fix while the school found a permanent home. We strongly feel it is in the best interest for all involved if Ceiba find a permanent home that can accommodate and support their needs.

Sincerely,

Mr. and Mrs. Johnny Howard Clark Jr.