

2546 Rolling Hills Ct.
Alamo, CA 94507

June 25, 2024

VIA EMAIL AND HAND DELIVERY

City of Watsonville
Watsonville City Council
275 Main Street
Suite 400 (4th Floor)
Watsonville, CA 95076

**Re: City of Watsonville “Community/Neighborhood Meeting” to be
Held on June 26, 2024, at Marinovich Park and Community Center**

Dear Members of the Council:

I’m presenting our citizen’s report citing issues with a notice regarding the City of Watsonville’s “Community/Neighborhood Meeting” scheduled to take place on June 26, 2024 at Marinovich Park. Some neighbors received the notice; many did not. The notice for this meeting was apparently sent out on June 13, 2024. The purpose of the meeting appears to be that “The City of Watsonville has recently become aware of issues affecting your neighborhood, and we would like to hear more from you.” It is surprising how the City maintains it “recently” became aware of these issues when:

(1) In September 2023, your Planning Commissioner Dan Dodge opined on the open meth use in the neighborhood,

(2) There has been significant crime, including homicides, near the levee in the industrial zone,

(3) I personally brought up the crime and vandalism occurring in the industrial zone during the March 23, 2024 Special Council Meeting, and

(4) During that same meeting, Police Chief Zamora presented a map with blue dots that represented calls for service connected to anything to homelessness. The preponderance of calls is in District 1 (with the size of the blue dots being proportional to the number of calls).



Moreover, Zamora added:

“I believe that the volume of calls is higher. I also believe that some people have stopped calling the police because they just feel that we either don't respond or won't do anything. We're hamstrung by the way that the laws are written...”

Ironically, the notice doesn't specify what type of “issues” the City will discuss despite during the last City Council Meeting, Council Member Montesino stated that the meeting was to address crime. The notice **does say** that “this meeting will **NOT** address the potential Tiny Homes Project.”

In addition to the vague and restrictive topic, the mailing protocol of this communication **is a disaster**. Again, some neighbors received it; many didn't. Failing to notice an underserved Latino population in District 1, is a pattern for the City Staff. In September 2022, the City sent a notice regarding a community meeting regarding

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CEIBA. The letter was sent on official Watsonville City Government letterhead and signed jointly by the City Manager and Ceiba's Principal. (See attached). Some stakeholders received it; many did not. It was also only in English.

It is unclear who exactly the City wants to hear from in District 1 when it fails to notify stakeholders in the neighborhood. Like in September 2022, some stakeholders received the notice; many didn't. It is notable that many of those people who have spoken in opposition to the Tiny Homes Project evidently weren't on the City's mailing list.

These repeating actions continue to undermine our confidence in the City's ability to exercise any fairness in its professional administrative duties regarding the impact of crime that inevitably occurs upon concentration of homeless people in an area.

Respectfully,



Marta Bulaich

Attachments (2):

1. City of Watsonville Community/Neighborhood Meeting notice for June 26, 2024
2. Letter dated September 27, 2022 from Marta Bulaich to the City of Watsonville regarding the City of Watsonville and Ceiba's "Information and Listening Session" Scheduled for September 29, 2022, at the Civic Plaza and attachment.



Community/Neighborhood Meeting

Reunión Comunitaria/Vecinal



June 26, 2024 | 26 de junio del 2024

6:00pm - 7:30pm

Marinovich Park and Community Center

120 2nd St, Watsonville, CA 95076

The City of Watsonville has recently become aware of issues affecting your neighborhood, and we would like to hear more from you.

This Community Meeting is organized to address concerns you are currently experiencing. Please note that this meeting will NOT address the potential Tiny Homes Project.

Let's come together to address your neighborhood concerns! Staff from the Watsonville Police, Public Works, Community Development departments, and District 1 Council Member Montesino will be at this meeting to listen and identify solutions.

La Ciudad de Watsonville recientemente se ha dado cuenta de los problemas afectando a su vecindario y nos gustaría saber más sobre ellos.

Esta reunión se organiza para abordar las inquietudes que usted tiene actualmente. Tenga en cuenta que esta junta comunitaria NO abordará el posible proyecto Tiny Homes.

¡Unámonos para abordar las preocupaciones en su vecindario! El personal de los departamentos de Policía, Obras Públicas, Desarrollo Comunitario de Watsonville y el Concejal Montesino del Distrito 1 estarán en esta reunión para escuchar e identificar soluciones.

For more information please call | Para obtener más información llame al
(831) 768-3010

2546 Rolling Hills Ct.
Alamo, CA 94507

September 27, 2022

VIA HAND DELIVERY

City of Watsonville
Watsonville City Council
275 Main Street
Suite 400 (4th Floor)
Watsonville, CA 95076

**Re: City of Watsonville and Ceiba's "Information and Listening Session"
Scheduled for September 29, 2022, at the Civic Plaza**

Dear Members of the Council,

By way of introduction, I am a former resident of Watsonville, and my immediate family resides in Watsonville. I am also a property owner here and a member of a grassroots movement opposed to the Ceiba College Preparatory Academy ("Ceiba") spot zoning application. Last month, I presented material issues to the City Council regarding Ceiba's aggressive expansion plans and purchase of toxic waste properties.

As you know, the Ceiba charter school, located on industrial land along Riverside Drive, is operating under a temporary Use Permit that expires next year. Ceiba was granted that Use Permit in violation of the Watsonville industrial zone regulations and has been an objectionable adverse impact on the adjacent neighborhood since opening.

The Watsonville City Planning Department has formally acknowledged that the school is not a permitted use and, consequently, has not allowed the Use Permit to be modified regarding the expiration. Instead, the Planning Department has guided the school to pursue an amendment to change their industrial zoning to a children's school zoning.

However, in April of this year, the Planning Commission did not approve that amendment due to neighborhood opposition. Watsonville City Staff has been working with the school officials to try and make things appear better before the matter comes before the City Council for a final decision.

As part of that process, it appears that a sort of a governmental meeting, identified as an "information and listening session", has been arranged for this Thursday at the Civic Plaza building. Some households near the Ceiba school have received letters in the mail announcing that meeting. Some stakeholders, like myself, have not. (A copy of the letter is attached). It is unclear what mailing protocol the City used to notify residents.

There are several issues with the planned meeting and the City's letter.

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Despite the fact the letter was sent on official Watsonville City Governmental letterhead of the City Manager's office, the Ceiba School Principal's signature, name and title are at the end of the letter along with those of the City Manager.

The Ceiba Principal, Josh Ripp, is not a Watsonville City Official. Josh Ripp and the Ceiba School are the source of adverse impacts that resulted from the failure of urban planning in the Watsonville City Government. The Watsonville City Government is expected to be the guardian which upholds the public safeguards of the Zoning Code.

Placing the school principal's signature on City Government letterhead blurs the distinction between City Government and Ceiba and thus is deceptive to the public. Such deception is both unseemly and objectionable, particularly for an entity that is expected to be an honest broker of a zoning procedure.

It almost appears that the meeting is intended more for the parents of the Ceiba students to explain the status of the process, which is a valid thing to do. But a question arises as to why the notice was mailed to neighborhood residents who oppose the school operation.

If the meeting is intended for those residents as well, then another issue exists. That letter was distributed and written only in English. No one who reported receiving the letter has received a bi-lingual version with a Spanish translation.

Given that most of the adjacent residents are not English fluent, **this appears to be a serious disservice to them in fairness and transparency of process.**

The Ceiba school was established in the neighborhood through a mass of failed and defective planning procedure. It is notable that defects in your planning procedure regarding Ceiba are still happening now.

I will be reaching out to each of you in the coming weeks to share my ongoing concerns regarding Ceiba.

Sincerely,



Marta J Bulaich

Attachment



City of Watsonville

"A Community of Opportunities"

September 20, 2022

Dear Valued Community Member,

I am reaching out to invite you to an information and listening session for the Ceiba College Prep general plan amendment and rezoning application. The purpose of the meeting is to provide you information on the current status of the process and also to answer your questions. The meeting will be held at the City of Watsonville Community Room located at: 275 Main St. 4th Floor on September 29, 2022 from 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM. Spanish translation and interpreter services will be provided. We will also be providing child care services for children ages 5-10 years old during the duration of the meeting.

The agenda for the meeting is as follows:

- I. Introductions
- II. Intent of the Meeting (Rene Mendez, City Manager)
- III. Status of the Ceiba general plan amendment and rezoning application and next steps (Suzi Merriam, Community Development Director)
- IV. Ceiba College Prep presentation and information (Josh Ripp, Head of School)

I realize that you are probably very busy, but hopefully you are able to carve out some time to attend.

Sincerely,

Rene Mendez
City Manager
City of Watsonville

Josh Ripp
Head of School
Ceiba College Prep



City of Watsonville

"A Community of Opportunities"

September 20, 2022

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I am reaching out to invite you to an information and listening session for the Ceiba College Prep general plan amendment and rezoning application. The purpose of the meeting is to provide you information on the current status of the process and also to answer your questions. The meeting will be held at the City of Watsonville Community Room located at: 275 Main St. 4th Floor on September 29, 2022 from 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM. Spanish translation and interpreter services will be provided. We will also be providing child care services for children ages 5-10 years old during the duration of the meeting.

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I realize that you are probably very busy, but hopefully you are able to carve out some time to attend.

Sincerely,

Rene Mendez
City Manager
City of Watsonville

Josh Ripp
Head of School
Ceiba College Prep