



## City of Half Moon Bay

Planning Department  
501 Main Street Half Moon Bay CA 94019  
Phone: 650.726.8250 / Fax: 650.726.8261

CITY OF HALF MOON BAY

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RECEIVED

### APPEAL FORM

**ACTION OF CITY BEING APPEALED:** Planning Commission Decision at meeting of October 22, 2024

**PROJECT OR REFERENCE NUMBER:** PDP 072-13

**LOCATION:** 1100 Block of Main St (APN 065-012-030); 100 Seymour St (APN 065-012-020); North Side of Seymour St (APN 064-352-150)

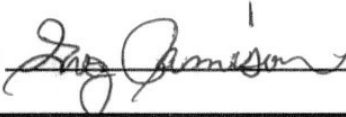
**DATE OF ACTION:** October 22, 2024

**DATE APPEAL PERIOD ENDS** November 5, 2024  
(If Applicable)

**NAME OF APPELLANT:** RGJC South LLC, Et al., Greg Jamison, partner  
(Please Print)

**ADDRESS:** P.O. Box 426, Half Moon Bay, CA 94019

**PHONE NUMBER AND EMAIL:** 650 243-8954 / greg1@coastside.us

**SIGNATURE OF APPELLANT:** 

#### STAFF USE ONLY

Action Appealable to Coastal Commission ☐ Yes ☐ No

Subject to City Appeal Fee Per Master Fee Schedule ☐ Yes ☐ No

City Fee Collected: \_\_\_\_\_

Received by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please Attach a Separate Statement of Appeal That Describes in Detail the Grounds for the Appeal and the Relief Being Sought

## **Applicant/Owner Greg Jamison**

**P.O. Box 426  
Half Moon Bay, CA 94019  
greg1@coastside.us**

October 31, 2024

Hon. Mayor Joaquin Jimenez and Council Members  
Half Moon Bay City Hall  
501 Main Street  
Half Moon Bay, CA 94019  
Attn: Steve McHarris, CDD Director

**Project:** City File #PDP 072-13 – Appeal from Planning Commission

**Location:**

Vacant Parcel (5.02 acres), 1100 Block of Main St. (West Side), APN 065-012-030  
James Ford Auto Dealership, 100 Seymour St. (South Side), APN 065-012-020  
James Ford Parking Area, 101 Block of Seymour St. (North Side), APN 064-352-150

**Dear Mayor and members of the City Council:**

On October 22, 2024, the proposed development for PDP-072-13 was denied approval by the City of Half Moon Bay Planning Commission. The denial was based on three policies found in the City of Half Moon Bay LCLUP. Policies 9-3, 9-12, and 9-23. Attached as **Exhibit A**.

Here is a **“Transcript”** obtained from the video of the Planning Commission meeting held October 22, 2024, listing the findings read by the City Attorney to the Planning Commissioners to support a motion for a denial. (PC Video 4:39:03).

- 9-3**     *“The project does not preserve and enhance Half Moon Bay’s unique visual quality because the projects height and mass interferes with expansive views of upland slopes from the coastal terrace.”*
- 9-12**    *“The project which is in close proximity to and visible from Hwy 1 does not protect views to upland slopes as seen from Hwy 1.”*
- 9-23**    *“The project does not protect broad views of upland slopes and prominent ridgelines from the Hwy 1 scenic corridor because it is not sited and designed to minimize intrusions into the ridgeline through the application of appropriate height and setback restrictions.”*

**Roll Call:** Vote 3-2 in favor of a motion approved for a denial resolution. **Meeting Adjourned.**

**I am the applicant representing the above-mentioned project and disagree with the findings.** Through the eight public hearings going back to 2016, all policies have been followed as the proposed development plan has gone through several revisions in response to input from the City Staff, Planning Commission, Architectural Advisory Committee, the California Coastal Commission, public input, and implementing design elements into the plan in response to environmental concerns from the various studies that have been completed on the subject property. **The project complies and is consistent with all local and state codes, policies, regulations and conditions.**

## **Analysis of the Planning Commission Meeting held October 22, 2024**

### **Regarding Aesthetics**

During deliberations it was clear that all five commissioners supported the design of the hotel. Comments made during the meeting are as follows:

*Commissioner Gorn, "so as a point of discussion, I would say, my personal opinion, is that this is a beautiful project, it's a really nice-looking hotel, in a place where a hotel would be good, where the TOT is not insignificant. Like I see the benefit to us." PC Video at 2:11:38.*

*Commissioner Ruddock, "first of all I agree with Commissioner Gorn, that I personally find that this to be a beautiful project. I think more importantly the reason that the aesthetics are not being debated anymore is partly due to very positive and helpful impact from the public and also our architectural advisory committee made up of three professional architects who have given an awful lot to the city on this project and many others over the years." PC Video at 2:21:30.*

*Commissioner Hernandez, "I agree with a lot of the comments my colleagues have made. I do think after, I guess this is eight meetings now, that have been public, we've ended up with a much better looking project that fits in, uses coastal resources, and I think it satisfies the policy concerns I have about a gateway location from an aesthetics perspective, I think it does, the setback in particular and the inclusion of native plants species that are coastal scrub and other plants and some native trees, does create a transition into the urban setting and it's consistent with the policies and that stuffs pretty clear." PC Video at 2:26:24.*

*Chair Gossett, "the hotel itself is beautiful, I think the design is lovely, but the other thing, so I do want to compliment the applicant on bringing forward something that beautiful." PC Video at 2:49:48.*

*Vice Chair Joanes, "I'm not saying I don't want a hotel there. I am just saying that this hotel as designed, it's a beautiful place, but as designed, how do we resolve this visual quality. That's what I'm saying. The hotel is beautiful, the hotel is needed. The hotel will give us a lot of, you know, possible financial revenues. There is no question about that. Were tasked with this policy and how do we figure this out. And this is what I am saying." PC Video at 3:58:17.*

### **Regarding Policies 9-3, 9-12, 9-23 of Chapter 9, Scenic and Visual Resources of the LCLUP**

During this October 22, 2024, Planning Commission Meeting, three of the Planning Commissioners could not see how the CEQA Guidelines and the LCLUP Policies could apply to the proposed project in such a way to approve the development.

The following provides a history of what has been accomplished over the years from the previous City meetings to address the concerns for these policies:

June 29, 2021, a Special Meeting, Joint Study Session Planning Commission with the Architectural Advisory Committee was held. Alternative 2 was introduced as a reduced plan containing 102 guestrooms. This plan shifted the hotel buildings further to the north and east to create more Open Space along the south end and west side of the hotel to protect the Viewpoints from the southern Gateway area and to reduce visual impacts from the Naomi Patridge Trail west of Hwy 1 when viewing to the east towards the hotel. During the review of Alternative 2 that evening, it was suggested to see if we could create additional space between the two hotel buildings to open up that area more for even better views.

August 9, 2022, Planning Commission Meeting. *(This meeting was held during circulation of the DEIR. The public review period is 60 days from July 15, 2022, ending September 13, 2022).* In response to comments from the June 29, 2021, meeting, the applicant offered to increase the space between the two hotel buildings, by doubling the space from 16 feet to 32 feet apart. The change offered during this meeting was welcomed.

September 9, 2022, The California Coastal Commission (CCC) provided a letter to the City of Half Moon Bay. This letter was issued by CCC in response to the DEIR 60-day public review period and in response to the Planning Commission meeting of August 9, 2022. The **California Coastal Commission** letter is attached as **Exhibit B**. A Quote from the letter states the following:

*3. Visual Impact. The proposed development has several impacts to visual resources in the area. The project site is adjacent to Highway 1, which is not officially designated as a scenic corridor in the LUP, but is described in the LUP as providing "a large share of the visual impression of the City." In addition, Highway 1 contains long-range views of the ridgelines north and east of the project location. As a result, the DEIR states that the City has expressed intent to treat Highway 1 corridor as a visual resource area. In addition, the project is located at the southern entrance of the City of Half Moon Bay and is essentially the gateway to the downtown area. Therefore the project has a greater potential to impact the character of the surrounding area and the first impressions of the City. The selection of Alternative 2 addresses many of these concerns by increasing the setbacks from Highway 1, the Southern Gateway, and Main Street, both reducing the impact to the view of the ridgelines from Highway 1, and the view of the proposed hotel from the southern entrance to the City. In addition, based on communication with the applicant, and from the option presented in the August 9th, 2022 Half Moon Bay Planning Commission Meeting by the project architect, Staff understands that the applicant intends to further break up the building massing, roughly doubling the space between the two proposed buildings to further reduce the impact on view lines inland from Highway 1. **Staff is supportive of the selection of Alternative 2 and the planned design changes.** Per LUP Policy 9-6 "Site Planning and Design for New Development", please ensure that the development is sited and designed to protect and be visually compatible with the character of the surrounding area, particularly with respect to the view from the southern entrance of Half Moon Bay as shown in Viewpoint 2 in Figure 5-9 of the DEIR.*

## Viewpoint Map of the Site

Attached is **Exhibit C**, which is a copy of the **Viewpoint Map, Figure 4.1-2** from the EIR that shows the "Project" as 129 guestrooms. For your convenience, an Overlay of "Modified Alternative 2" (from Figure 5-1, of the EIR) as 102 guestrooms has been added. Modified Alternative 2 includes the increase in space between the two buildings from 16 feet to 32 feet apart. Seeing both plans on the same page shows the major reduction in the footprint of the structures that Modified Alternative 2 provides with how it is positioned on the site and how these changes increased substantially the views from various locations.

## Comments

All the Commissioners had comments regarding these policies, but one that was specifically interesting came from Commissioner Gorn as shown on PC Video 2:11:38 to 2:19:32.

*Commissioner Gorn, "So as a point of discussion, I would say, my personal opinion, is that this is a beautiful project, it's a really nice-looking hotel, in a place where a hotel would be good, where the TOT is not insignificant. Like I see the benefit to us. Personally. I see that. This 3,965 daily VMT trip miles travelled thing, somehow, cutting down to 3,354 is like, I just don't believe that's happening. But those other benefits of having that project in, you know, I could overlook the VMT thing, I could overlook the parking variance, this lot line adjustment, this parcel division, this approving the project with a housing component that is not actually a part of the project but is a part of the approval, ok, you know, maybe but so to me there is two things that stand out that are not, personal opinion that we have to deal with as facts and those are the two big problems with this project. And one of them is the view and where the view is and how that view meets LCP standards. And I don't see LCLUP, I see so many spots where it's a problem. Where I wouldn't want to overrule that. **I think if I was on City Council and I was trying to make a decision about, you know, policy, then maybe I would, you know, somehow overlook that.** But as a Planning Commissioner and what were supposed to look at is the LCLUP I think that is pretty-pretty serious."*  
PC Video 2:11:38 to 2:14:02.

## Conclusion

As the record demonstrates, City review for this proposed development has spanned over eight years. We have made substantial modifications to the proposed development to provide a project that includes a major reduction in size through structural clustering and is in line with the city standards, policies, and regulations. When viewing the site from Hwy 1 looking east, only about 50% of the site has structures. The proposed development provides Low-Cost Visitor Serving elements that comply with the City of Half Moon Bay and the California Coastal Commission policies. These features provide **new public access** to this area that includes two acres of open space with bike paths, walking paths, park benches, educational signage and environmental restoration. This development is a substantial benefit to our community by providing Transient Occupancy Tax Revenues, creating new jobs, supporting the local shops and restaurants, anchoring the south end of Main Street, and enhancing our Southern Gateway to the City.

For reasons clearly identified, I request that the City Council follow City Staff recommendations for approval of this development as is defined in the City Staff Report and Supplemental Documents that are part of the Agenda Packet for the Planning Commission Meeting held on October 9, 2024 and the continuation to the Planning Commission Meeting held on October 22, 2024, including the additional Supplemental Information provided and all agenda packet information as it relates to City File #PDP 072-13.

It is time for the applicant's reasonable expectation of the proposed development plan to be realized, and for the City Council to reverse and override the Planning Commission and approve the project.

Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Jamison", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Greg Jamison