

Delana Bradford

From: dbradford@cityofpetaluma.org
Subject: Public Comment - Agenda Item 2 June 19

Please send this email to Commissioners and post to the agenda. The presentation should have been posted to the agenda for this public meeting. I requested to receive the presentation and did not receive a response.

Dear Commissioners,

I'm submitting a comment and sincerely hope you will read this and consider and discuss my concerns.

On agenda items, Commissioners can discuss submitted comments

I had hoped to attend your meeting this evening, but nesting season responsibilities, including an encroachment permit in Santa Rosa I manage for support of a large heron and egret rookery must be priorities today. If your Commission had virtual meeting access with the ability to comment I and others could more readily participate.

The proposed amphitheater project is and has been from inception contraindicated in this location.

No reasoning or excuse will make this project in this location acceptable.

Here are some of the faux rationale/reasons for this project I continue to hear:

"The birds can go and nest somewhere else."

"It's much smaller than it was "

"It's at a dredge spoils pond "

"People are already there on the trails."

"Al Hesla got the grant and wanted this project "

This project represents a new and expanded area of human encroachment. Feb 15 to Sept each year, migratory birds nest at the Petaluma Wetlands. Red-winged Blackbirds nest on banks of the fresh water channels in immediate proximity to this proposed stage with seating to accommodate 30-50 people. Shorebirds forage in the immediate vicinity of this proposed project. Other unobserved uses of this area by birds occur.

This proposed project also sends the wrong message to young people, with the claim this "amphitheater" is for education. That message is we'll plop an amphitheater here for US and take a natural area to teach you about respecting habitat and helping birds and wildlife.

If the late Al Hesla were with us today, I would share with him the reality of federal and state regulations protecting nesting birds, which makes this amphitheater and proposed location completely contraindicated.

Some of you may be aware I am responsible via Madrone Audubon for the City of Petaluma Wetlands receiving the international honor of designation as a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance. That process involved four full years of active engagement and regular followup to achieve the official designation.

When a Department of Fish and Wildlife Warden came last year to Lucchesi Community Center, at my request, to give an instructional talk to City of Petaluma department heads and staff, I advised THEN this amphitheater project could not be located as proposed because of protective regulations. The Warden came to explain parameters of the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act and CA Fish and Game Code as a result of contractors and staff mowing down and destroying active bird nests - occurring for YEARS. The City of Petaluma, like all cities, is required to comply with these regulations - and has not.

If an amphitheater is desired, the project could be located at the Ellis Creek operations facility. This was the proposed location of a nature center or educational adjunct discussed by PWA when PWA was fiscally sponsored and a committee of Madrone Audubon. What is being presented to you on June 19 would NEVER have even been considered.

This grant was discussed by PWA as being for education and possible minor enhancements of the existing picnic table area at Shollenberger's entrance where educational groups are hosted. The PWA Board of Directors voted, appropriately, to stop this proposed amphitheater project. Then, with emotions becoming too prevalent, another meeting was held with a low number of PWA members attending and voting to continue with this project, and it moved forward. That should not have occurred.

I have directly shared with Drew Halter he has a responsibility to intervene and stop and redirect this process.

Sincerely,
Susan Kirks
President, Madrone Audubon

Naturalist, PLAN

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