

**From:** [Ralph \[REDACTED\]](#)  
**To:** [barbarap \[REDACTED\]](#)  
**Cc:** [-- City Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Grand Jury report on the M Group  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 5, 2023 11:48:49 PM

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---Warning: Use caution before clicking any attachments. THIS EMAIL IS FROM OUTSIDE OUR EMAIL SYSTEM.---

Hear! Hear!

I second every assertion of Barbara's letter and also call for a thorough audit of the M Group's activities. Fourteen years without public scrutiny/accountability of outside planning is not acceptable. Petaluma is too historically and culturally unique to allow this to happen.

Sincerely,

Ralph Haney  
Petaluma

Sent from my Glo-Phone.  
[REDACTED]

On Jul 5, 2023, at 7:50 PM, barbarap [REDACTED] wrote:

July 5, 2023

To: Petaluma City Clerk and City Council Members

Re: Recent Grand Jury Report regarding the M Group Consultants

The M Group was hired by the City Council in 2009 to replace the in-house Planning Department as a cost-saving move. Presumably, this was intended as a temporary measure in response to the national recession and subsequent local slowdown in construction.

I am shocked to learn that not only has the M Group been on the City payroll for 14 years (!) but also that the City has not in all that time done a cost-benefit analysis to determine if in fact the M Group's presence is actually saving the City money. In my opinion this highly irresponsible fiscally on the part of the City Council.

Not only has there been unprecedented, unrestrained, and often unpopular residential and commercial development in Petaluma during those 14 years, but the M Group has insinuated itself into other areas of our local government, such

as the Public Art Committee and the Planning Commission, where it seems to have a strong influence on decisions that are made.

I am writing to insist that the City Council conduct long-overdue current and past annual audits of the M Group immediately and make the results promptly and clearly available to the the citizens of Petaluma. To do anything less is a betrayal of the public trust that put you in office and of your declared commitment to greater transparency and responsiveness to the people of Petaluma.

Thank you.

Barbara Pollack

Petaluma resident

Cc The Petaluma Argus-Courier