

Open Letter to the City Council

by Brooke Eisenberg-Pike, Del Mar resident, Design Review Board member

In your publicly stated goal to hasten and streamline the approval process for outdoor dining and ensure that private property owners would not have to pay for plans you circumvented the design review process that this community has come to rely on for decades. As far as I know you are the first Council since the community plan that has ever allowed private developers to encroach on the public right of way without the review of the Design Review Board. I would also like to remind you and the public that in 2008 the zone code amendment that allowed for this irresponsible process was not approved unanimously for various reasons. Only three council members approved it, both Mayor Druker and Councilmember Abarbanel voted no.

You approved the permits for the walled in outdoor seating on 15th street without ever having plans to review. You only had concept drawings. The result of your negligent and lax review process is a cramped passage down to our beautiful parks and beaches. We can see a string of heat lamps and we will soon see a clump of umbrellas.

You did not review view impacts.

You did not review potential bulk and mass impacts.

You did not review a lighting plan.

You did not review a landscape plan.

You did not review potential impacts to sight lines to other businesses west of the walls.

You did not review potential visual clutter of heat lamps and umbrellas.

The Design Review Board would have.

There were no plans at your meeting for you or for the public to review and that was at your direction.

The outdoor café dining and pedestrian experience that we all envisioned was not realized. You made a huge mistake. I hope you will have the moral fiber not to scapegoat your staff. They did what you asked them to do.

You need to remove the walls that were built. You need to stop any construction on Camino Del Mar. You need to send these projects to the Design Review Board. You need to make a commitment that you will not allow coverings over these cafes.

Finally, when one looks at what your negligent review produced on 15th street one cannot help but draw the natural conclusion that if you continue down this road with Form Based Code the product will be equally unacceptable. And if this were the case a

referendum might be the result. In order to lift the shroud of suspicion and distrust that has resulted from your attempt at circumventing process you need to have a reliable and accessible public record of the FBC meetings. These need to be televised or available on DVD. So that the public can easily follow the direction that the committee is taking because this code will result in dramatic changes to our downtown and you will be responsible for them.