



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

To: Board of Directors

From: Stephen E. Abbors

Date: October 9, 2013

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "SEA", positioned to the right of the date.

Re: Written Communications

Bar T Cattle Company, LLC
400 South El Camino Real, Suite 1000
San Mateo, CA 94402

12 September 2013

Mr. Jed Cyr, Board President
Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
330 Distel Circle
Los Altos, CA 94022

Re: Driscoll/MacDonald Ranches RFP
Driscoll Event Center

Dear Director Cyr:

This letter is being directed to you as we discussed immediately following the Board meeting at the suggestion of Director Hanko. The purpose of this letter is limited to identifying what may be an apparent misunderstanding or miscommunication between staff and the Board regarding the linkage between the pending decision on grazing rights for the above-referenced ranches and the use and management of the Driscoll Event Center.

I was one of the public speakers addressing the Board at the recent meeting held at the Elkus Ranch Environment Education Center. I am also one of the five finalists being considered by Staff regarding the grazing lease(s).

Comments by some Board members suggest that the grazing lease RFP should not be linked to a future RFP for the Event Center. Mrs. Markegard, who also presented to the Board, endorsed this concept. We hold a contrary view and believe that the survival of the Event Center requires coordination with the grazing rights. Enclosed with this letter is a copy of a memo written by Mr. Rudy Driscoll that supports this position. Mrs. Markegard, however, did not mention their proposal was submitted only as to the grazing rights on the MacDonald Ranch and not on the Driscoll Ranch. This underscores the issue and problem with the RFP limited scope and process. Applicants were requested to submit proposals for grazing rights on the Driscoll Ranch, the MacDonald Ranch, or both. This could allow for selection of one or two lessees for the grazing rights. Prior to issuing the RFP, we had requested Staff to consider inclusion of the Event Center consistent with optional submittal structure of proposed RFP. Staff rejected this request.

Mr. Jed Cyr, Board President

12 September 2013

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It is in the best interest of the Board and the community it represents to expand the scope of the grazing RFP to include the Event Center. There is no ascertainable downside to the Board's deferring selection of the grazing lessee(s) to allow further consideration and analysis that includes proposals to manage one or both ranches in combination (or not) with management of the Event Center. The Board will be better informed whether grazing rights and the Event Center are enhanced if managed by a single applicant.

Our group has been prepared to contribute substantial funds and undertake fundraising to improve the Event Center infrastructure, including installation of a roof over the arena. We are prevented from submitting this proposal under the grazing rights RFP procedure. Forsaking possible donations to improve property seems inapposite to the District's core purpose. For reasons that extend beyond the scope of this letter, we cannot undertake this initiative without also being awarded the grazing lease, at least as to the contiguous Driscoll Ranch portion.

Staff has not made a final selection from among the five finalists for the grazing lease(s). Our group is the tenant-in-possession on the Driscoll Ranch under the current grazing lease due to expire on November 1, 2013. (There is no lease or grazing in place on the MacDonald Ranch.) We urge the Board (working with POST) to consider extending the current lease to the spring of 2014 to allow additional submittals to the RFP grazing lease(s). Staff has rejected the possibility of extending the grazing lease identifying no negative aspects that may arise by such extension.

We are passionate about the Driscoll Ranch, the Event Center and the western heritage preserved by their uses. Staff has unnecessarily limited its approach and procedures with the unintended effect to preclude review of the broader implications of Ranch and Event Center inter-dependency. We are confident that the Board will ultimately and fairly decide these issues; we only desire the Board be fully informed as to all its options and allow sufficient, additional time to fully develop a sustainable, global plan.

Respectfully submitted,
Bar T Cattle Company, LLC



Paul J. Barulich, Member

PJB:ra

cc: Director Pete Siemens w/encl
Director Yoriko Kishimoto w/encl.
Director Curt Riffle w/encl.
Director Nonette Hanko w/encl.
Director Larry Hassett w/encl.
Director Cecily Harris w/encl.

Date: August 27, 2013

To: Whom it may concern

From: Rudy Driscoll, Jr., Current tenant of Driscoll Ranches

RE: Driscoll Ranch Event Center and Grazing Lease

My family has operated the ranch in La Honda from 1968 to 2013. I think we have been good stewards of the land managing it in a holistic manner that also benefited the coastal communities of San Mateo County. Over the years we have had the pleasure of meeting many people on the coast who helped us determine the best management practice and use of the property. I believe there to be a fatal flaw for the Event Center under the current plan. I recommend an alternative plan for grazing that will insure long term success of the ranch as well as the operation of the Event Center, while being enjoyed by the public, and benefiting the coastal communities.

The Event Center (EC) is a facility designed to handle bovine and equestrian events and everything from music festivals to ropings as well as being a rally stop to a search and rescue training spot. The EC also is a (the only tractor-trailer) shipping point for cattle on the coast and has the ability to house thirty horses and park many cars and trailers. The arenas, buildings, roadways, water system, electrical system, and fields all require attention year round. It takes expertise, dedication, desire and equipment to operate and maintain the event center. One of the most important tools of the EC is cattle. The cattle that support the EC need to be close to avoid costly shipping expenses that would make it too expensive to operate events utilizing cattle at the EC. I was under the impression that the entire property would be managed by MROSD as one property after POST turned it over to them. I was surprised and disappointed to find out that this is not the case.

If the MROSD wants the EC to remain open it is imperative that the grazing lease be tied to the EC. It is possible that MROSD would make a little money on the EC while having a great way to keep the west alive by educating the public. A ranger will not be able to nor have the expertise to maintain the facility in a cost effective and safe manner, and will be derailed from his/her primary duties. MROSD does not have the experience to operate an EC- it is not the same as keeping a trail or parking area maintained. The only viable solution is for a full time tenant to maintain and run the EC.

Not tying the two together will cause the EC to fall by the way side because it will not be supported by cattle from the ranch, by a manager with the expertise in the type of events to be held at the EC and the experience to manage outside events based upon experience of working with horses and cattle doing these types of events.

Please do not rush and cause the Event Center to fall by the way side as a result of poor foresight and management of the grazing lease that is to be awarded. Award the grazing lease and the Event Center lease to one experienced tenant at the same time.

Driscoll Ranches, LLC
2995 Woodside Road, Suite 450, Woodside CA 94062
Office 650) 851-1735 Fax 650) 851-1798

October 4, 2013

Paul J. Barulich, Member
Bar T Cattle Company, LLC
400 South El Camino Real, Suite 1000
San Mateo, CA 94402

RE Driscoll/McDonald Ranches RFP
Driscoll Event Center

Dear Mr. Barulich:

Thank you for taking the time to submit your comments regarding the Request for Proposals (RFP) for conservation grazing at the former Driscoll and McDonald Ranch areas of the La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve (Preserve) and the future use and management of the former Driscoll Ranch Event Center (Event Center). The grazing RFP was not an agenized item at the September 10th Board workshop. The purpose of the September 10th District Board workshop was to evaluate potential use alternatives for the Event Center that may be considered compatible with the District's mission, basic policy and fit, given known constraints about current staff and management capacity.

Based on the input received at the September 10th Board workshop, staff will further refine these use alternatives and present a recommendation to the full Board at a future meeting later this fall when the Board would consider and decide (1) whether to enter into a Lease and Management Agreement with Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) to manage the property, and if so, (2) what uses to allow at the Event Center prior to undergoing a more extensive use and management planning process. Any uses allowed on the property would be included as part of a Preliminary Use and Management Plan for the Event Center.

The primary goals of leasing the Driscoll and McDonald ranches for grazing are resource management and to support viable agriculture on the San Mateo Coast. With the Driscoll Ranch grazing lease on the Preserve ending on November 1, 2013, the grazing RFP is intended to continue and improve upon the resource grazing benefits to manage the property's grasslands and to protect the riparian resources which flow into San Gregorio Creek. Reintroduction of conservation grazing on the former McDonald Ranch will improve grassland management and watershed protection on the Preserve as well. The District will select the best qualified grazing tenant or tenants to achieve these primary goals. The selected tenant(s) will have use of the livestock staging facilities at the Event Center as this is supportive of the grazing operation on the Preserve.

It is anticipated that the Board of Directors will consider selecting and entering into a grazing lease or leases for the Driscoll and McDonald Ranch areas of the Preserve in November. As you are aware, the final evaluation process of the five grazing applicant finalists is currently in process.

As mentioned earlier in this letter, only use of the livestock staging facilities at the Event Center was included in the grazing RFP. The livestock staging facilities include a cattle chute, scale, corrals, and access tunnel, which have been actively used to support grazing on the adjacent Preserve over the last 12 years. The remaining facilities are not integral to the grazing operation. Moreover, management of the Event Center for outside events is also not a use that is integral to a grazing operation and requires different management skills, experience, and background from what is expected of a grazing operator. For these reasons, the grazing RFP does not include management of the Event Center.

I hope this letter clarifies the District's goals and approach regarding the grazing RFP process, and the evaluation process for determining which potential uses of the Event Center are compatible with the District's mission. Thank you again for your input. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact Assistant General Manager Ana Ruiz at (650) 691-1200 or aruiz@openspace.org.

Sincerely,

Jed Cyr
Board President

cc: Board Members