

Open Letter to Bo, BPUD, BCLT.

Last week, a neighbor contacted me and asked my view about BCLT's plans on the 20 acres on 130 Mesa -- which is right across Mesa from me. It took me a minute, because I thought we were talking about the plans that started in 2018, and were still on BCLT's website. I supported that project and had been saddened to learn that the well-planned project could not proceed, though for valid reasons. I was dismayed to learn that BCLT was trying to back-door an "emergency" trailer park on that same land after having publicly announced that development on that land was "impossible" because of "biologically sensitive wetland." (Hearsay 4/28, p.3.)

I went down the rabbit hole of trying to see through the confusion / gaslighting to figure out what is going on. Here is where the rabbit hole took me:

Bolinas's wetlands need protection

Biologically sensitive wetlands deserve protection; Bolinas usually respects that. Why doesn't the BCLT? The plans BCLT submitted show that the trailers will be actually within or at most at a 50 foot setback from wetlands (instead of the usual 100 foot setback). How is that allowed? Construction towards that plan has already begun with gravel poured in wetlands, without mitigation, to make a path look like a road.

I, like most Bo people, generally knew that people live on the ranch. But, news to me: the ranch has been under a receivership since at least the mid-2000s. Usually a receiver is a court-appointed person responsible for addressing and resolving problems. Usually, that person is

accountable to the Court. I do not understand how this receiver failed to gradually and humanely abate the problems over the many years under his paid supervision -- and instead, appears to have increased the trailers, population, and problems until a child fell ill.

I read about how the Bo fire Chiefs have tried to stop the addition of trailers but didn't get support from the County. Now, the officials who let the situation grow and fester for decade(s?) want an emergency permit to create a trailer park on a wetland. Why aren't those people being held responsible for allowing this to develop?

Just because these officials fell down on their jobs doesn't mean BCLT should build a massive septic system in or next to a designated wetland.

Meters don't make water

Bo needs water for life and fire fighting. Regardless of whether BPUD grants a meter or increases a cap, there isn't new water added to the supply. The water moratorium is at risk. Any developer, including the BCLT, should be required to bring water to support a proposed development. (News flash: State Farm just announced it will not issue new home owners policies in California because of fire risk.)

Pressuring BPUD to relax the water moratorium does not add water supply. BCLT's pressure on BPUD asks that long-term mismanagement of this situation is glossed over. This is bad water policy and bad precedent. One or two water meters should not be allowed for 60 people. At the last public BPUD meeting, this same board threatened a resident with terminating his

water meter because his family marginally exceeded a cap. (See Hearsay, 5/15, p.7, #8.) This kind man spoke of his six children and his heroic efforts to limit the family's water use. How can BPUD **fairly** threaten to terminate one family's water meter while entertaining 10x on another? Perhaps, because the BPUD president has conflicts of interest and other BPUD board members are members of BCLT? It is said that the BPUD president recused himself, but he still lobbies for the project. What about other BPUD board members who are members of BCLT? They are conflicted too and must recuse themselves. BPUD must start over any process in which a conflicted board participated.

In other words, BPUD cannot **fairly** threaten to terminate one person's water meter because he has 6 kids while permitting a new development for 60 people. It is **the same** water supply. These are facts that provide ammunition to destroy the water moratorium. If BPUD proceeds with this, it should be prepared for well-organized and well-funded applications for developments for 60 people on a single water meter. Forget about enforcing water restrictions on existing meters. Political winds these days are against communitarian places like Bolinas; we shouldn't be tearing down our own protections by violating our own rules. For those who need a reminder:
<https://bcpud.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/plfvspud.htm>.

Housing & Priorities?

Finally, I worry that the caring words about the people who now live on the ranch are just words. Maybe these people would get emergency trailers, but trailers will not solve their problem. It will take years to develop the permanent housing, if it ever

materializes. If the housing does materialize, at what cost and for whom? BCLT sometimes says the residents are "farmworkers," but few of the 60 are farmworkers. BCLT sometimes says they are "workforce." Are each of these workers already on BCLT's 200 person wait list for housing? (See Hearsay, 5/15, p.9.) Are these workers higher priority than everyone else on the waitlists? Marin median income numbers drive "affordable" rent rates. Will these individuals qualify? I ask that BCLT back up its words with a clear statement on whether it can actually and legally guarantee that permanent housing will benefit these individuals -- and that BCLT be held accountable for its statements.

People or Pawns?

In the analysis, it seems unlikely that these individuals will benefit from BCLT's plans. Instead, they are being used to push through development, build on a wetland, and break the water moratorium.

For reasons unknown, decades passed without addressing the ranch's housing problem. The receiver and the County's neglect isn't a reason to cast away Bo's hard-won protections.

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