

REDWOOD CITY

City sorting through a mountain of concerns about Saltworks

BY BONNIE ESLINGER
Daily News Staff Writer

Questions about air and water quality and the possibility of downsizing the Saltwork development are among the piles of comment letters Redwood City is sorting through about the project.

City staffers and consultants are looking through about 900 pages of documents from government agencies, environmental groups, advocacy organizations and residents.

The city solicited comments to help shape the study of the development's expected impacts and environmental issues as well as proposed alternatives and mitigation measures. The scoping process sets the stage for a more intensive, state-required environmental impact report needed for the Saltworks project.

The 1,436-acre development would be built on the Cargill salt ponds east of Highway 101. About 12,000 new homes, five schools, offices, commercial shops, athletic fields, and a 200-acre Bayside park would be built there.

Many letters had concerns about environmental issues, such as the development's impact on air and water quality and on endangered and threatened species and their habitats.

Other letter-writers wanted the city to investigate how the project would affect wastewater systems and utilities, transit and traffic, and the local port economy.

Some inquired about how the project would be affected by an expected rise in sea levels and future flooding.

A significant number of respondents said the project should be downsized — or turned down.

A law firm writing on behalf of Oakland-based environmental group Save the Bay, which



The Cargill Saltworks site in Redwood City, in February 2010. The city has spent nearly \$3.5 million on various studies of Cargill's proposal for reuse of the land.

Bay Area News Group file photo

has long opposed the development and advocated for the entire tidal marsh to be restored, suggested in its letter that all the development proposed for the Saltworks site could fit in downtown Redwood City.

Government agencies that submitted comments included the California Highway Patrol, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board, and the California Department of Transportation.

Neighboring cities also wrote letters of opposition or concern, including Menlo Park, Palo Alto, Portola Valley and Woodside.

Jay Reed, a Saltworks spokesperson, said the developers were eager to see and respond to the gathered comments. Some changes to the project would likely happen, he said. However, Reed said he wouldn't comment on the question of downsizing the development.

"It's too early at this point," he said. "We'll

see what's been submitted."

Redwood City has spent almost \$3.5 million on city staff, environmental consultants, outside planning assistance and legal help to vet the Saltworks project, according to Senior Planner Blake Lyon. The developer, Arizona-based DMB Associates, Inc., is legally obligated to reimburse the city for the costs, Lyon said.

A summary report of the comments should be ready by summer, Lyon said. City officials will then meet with Saltworks representatives to see if they want to make any project revisions before going forward with the environmental review process. Lyon said that timeline would be determined by DMB.

"The timing and responsibility will be related back to the applicant, since they will need to determine if they want to revise their project description," Lyon said.

Email Bonnie Eslinger at beslinger@dailynewsgroup.com.

SCHOOL MATTERS

Year's last PTA general meeting on Wednesday

Many issues are expected to be covered on Wednesday at the year's last general Palo Alto PTA Council meeting.

Superintendent Kevin Skelly and trustee Barb Mitchell are to report on the state of the district. The PTA Council will vote on several issues, including the selection of



PREEVA TRAMIEL

next year's officers and discontinuing the PTA Council's Wardrobe (which maintains a variety of children and adult-sized clothing to be given, at no charge, to families in Palo Alto Unified School District).

Also, Amy Drolette, district coordinator of student services, is to deliver a report on the Project Cornerstone survey results. A copy of the report can be seen at http://pausd.org/community/board/mgtgs_materials/index.shtml.

"This last meeting of the year is very important," said Terry Godfrey, PTA Council president for the past two years. "The executive board can only make recommendations for council actions. Nothing is official until voted in at the general meeting."

Nominees for the PTA Council were announced a month ago on the council's website and through email. They include Louise Valente as president; Micaela Presti as executive vice president; Lynn Drake as secretary; and Laura Mifflin as treasurer. Keri Wagner is to continue as historian, and Julie Schwardt as parliamentarian.

The executive board has nine elected vice presidents that cover areas of responsibility. Three positions — education, health and safety, and hospitality — were unfilled as of Thursday. The list of candidates and positions can be seen at http://paloaltopta.org/moreinfo/Nom_Comm_11_Report-slate.pdf.

Nominations for open positions can be taken and voted on at the Wednesday meeting. A call for nominations from the floor is part of the procedure — anyone can nominate him or herself or someone else at the meeting.

The PTA Council will also vote on the fate of the council Wardrobe.

At the April meeting of the PTAC Executive Board, Rosemary Busher and Mary Vincent submitted a report that noted the Wardrobe was not being distributed, despite having a large inventory of good-quality clothing.

Busher and Vincent said they felt that moving the clothes to a new site at Greendell School would be a waste.

They recommended that a "virtual" PTA Wardrobe be set up, and that families and donations could be directed to the Ecumenical Hunger Project clothes closet.

"A benefit of this solution is that we can return the room at Greendell to PAUSD," according to the report. "The district is tight for space and this will help."

"(Ecumenical Hunger Project) is already used by our families and has an efficient way of distributing (clothes)," Busher and Vincent said in the report.

A voucher program for other organizations was also considered, but tabled for the general meeting.

The 9 a.m. meeting will be at the Staff Development Center at the Palo Alto Unified School District offices, 25 Churchill Ave.

School Matters is happy to hear your feedback. Please email comments to schoolmatters@paloaltopta.org to reach Preeva Tramiel.

SAN MATEO COUNTY

Supes candidates file final finance statements

BY BONNIE ESLINGER
Daily News Staff Writer

Thanks to a last-minute \$135,000 loan he made to his own campaign, Richard Holober has put together the second-largest war chest of any candidate in the race to fill an open seat on the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors, according to finance statements filed Thursday.

The statements are the last the candidates will file ahead of the May 3 all-mail-ballot special

election.

Holober, president of the San Mateo County Community College Board and head of the Consumer Federation of California, has secured \$298,663 since the race got under way last year. More than two-thirds of that amount is from loans he made to his campaign.

Lawyer Dave Pine, a San Mateo Union High School District trustee, is the top fundraiser in the race with \$321,307. He contributed about \$200,000 of that amount.

Millbrae Council Member Gina Papan, also a state deputy district attorney general, has amassed \$164,516. That sum includes \$20,874 from her 2008 run for state Assembly and \$25,000 she loaned herself.

Bringing up the rear, Burlingame Mayor Terry Nagel has \$163,207 in her coffers. She loaned herself \$75,000.

Email Bonnie Eslinger at beslinger@dailynewsgroup.com.

HALF MOON BAY

Treasury secretary takes son, daughter surfing

BY JANNA BRANCOLINI
Bay City News

At first, Half Moon Bay surf instructor Dave Alexander took no notice of the men in khakis spread out on the beach and on a nearby bluff Wednesday.

Then he learned his pupil for the afternoon was Elise Geithner, a Stanford University student and daughter of U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Tim Geithner, and realized the observers were Secret Service members.

While he taught Elise Geithner how to surf, her father and brother, Ben, rode waves nearby, Alexander said.

"It's pretty crazy actually," Alexander said Thursday.

He said he received a call from Geithner on Wednesday morning to set up a surf lesson that afternoon, but he did not realize Geithner was the treasury secretary until Elise told him what

her father does for a living.

A representative for Geithner could not be reached Thursday.

"They're a very mellow, nice family," Alexander said. "I never would have thought anything other than he seemed like a businessman. It was fun; I had a great time."

Alexander is still not sure how Geithner chose his surf school, Open Ocean Surfing, but he assumes the treasury secretary found him at his website, www.openoceansurfing.com.

The Bay Area native has lived in Half Moon Bay since 1981 and began teaching surf lessons in 1990. He earned a degree in education at the University of California, Santa Cruz and worked as a teacher before opening the surf school.

Alexander said he would have been nervous if he had known ahead of time who his student was, but he was already into the lesson by the time he realized two or three Secret Service members were keeping an eye on the group.

Tim Geithner rode a longboard nearby and was an intermediate/beginner surfer, Alexander said.

He said the treasury secretary seemed like an "athletic type" and admitted to playing basketball with President Obama.

"I've never heard of anybody in his position, at that level, being a surfer," Alexander said. "It's kind of cool."

He said the group was on the water between about 1 p.m. and 4 p.m., and that the family and Secret Service members took photos with him after the lesson.

Geithner's trip coincided with a whirlwind Bay Area visit by President Barack Obama.

The president pitched his budget plan Wednesday during an event at Facebook's headquarters in Palo Alto before heading to San Francisco for three fundraisers.

He departed San Francisco International Airport and went to Los Angeles on Thursday.

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