

March 31, 2025

Honorable Mayor Joan Cox  
Councilmember Melissa J Blaustein  
Councilmember Ian Sobieski  
Councilmember Jill Hoffman  
Councilmember Steven Woodside

RE: Bridgeway Improvement Project Public Meeting, March 29, 2025

Dear Councilmembers,

After attending the meeting Saturday at City Hall I feel compelled to send this letter of concern.

I am a retired landscape architect who, for over 40 years, served as a principal in two of the most renowned firms in the country. My work focused on the public realm and was in cities all over the United States and abroad. Because of its public nature, I was hired by many city councils and public agencies and made presentations to them as a part of the design process.

What I experienced on Saturday was, on several levels, appalling.

The community was loud, rude and obnoxious and there were inadequate efforts made to contain them. It felt like the Council was supportive of the outbursts. Not having heard the presentation before, I was irritated that I could not even hear the speaker at times due to the barrage of negative comments that were being spewed around me. This was unacceptable.

I was even more shocked at many things that were coming from the Council itself. The consulting firm Parametrix is a highly regarded and very capable firm, which I assume you already know because you hired them for the work. The firm's Sausalito work is excellent – they even went beyond their scope and fee to provide good service. However, I was stunned at how Mr. Parisi and his colleague were treated.

At one point they were grilled as if in an inquisition. Your role as Councilmembers is to ask questions and listen to answers, rather than telling them how to do their work.

The ongoing and excessive questioning about the number of collisions was irrelevant. The important point was not whether there were 40 or 50 or 60 collisions. Even one collision is too many, especially in a Vision Zero community, regardless of whether Ms. Hoffman believes that "that's not so many". (I'd like to hear her say that to one of the victims.)

I couldn't believe it when Mr. Parisi's honesty and ethics were questioned, as if there was some kind of conspiracy happening. You should trust your consultants to provide what you have requested and paid them to provide. There was no conspiracy there and even alluding to one was highly disrespectful and demeaning.

It was obvious to me that Council's decision had been made prior to the meeting. This is your prerogative but should not be made evident in how you interact with the consultants, city officials and community. The staff report stated that neither the Police Chief nor the Fire Chief believed that the

proposed plan would have a negative impact on their activities and when questioned, they confirmed that position. However, they were repeatedly called back and drilled about the same question until finally, upon appearing to be pressured, the Police Chief changed her position. I agree that their position is paramount, but it seemed that they were going to be questioned until you got the answer that you wanted.


And Mayor Cox, while you may have thought you were paying Parametrix a compliment (albeit a backhanded one), publicly telling the consultants that you've seen their presentation three times and that it was much better now was insulting.

All in all, I was embarrassed by the entire meeting and upon leaving I approached Mr. Parisi and said, "on behalf of our town I apologize for the behavior of the Council and community".

I hope you will accept these comments as constructive criticism and hold more respectful meetings in the future.

Very Sincerely,

  
Nancy L. Fleming

  
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