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May 11, 2009

The Honorable Neil Coonerty, Chairman
Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors
701 Ocean Street, Room 500
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

SUBJECT: Resignation Letter – Building, Accessibility & Fire Code Appeals Board (BAFCAB)

Dear Mr. Coonerty,

Please be advised that I am still extremely appreciative of the faith and confidence your Board had put in me when you all considered my appointment to the BAFCAB, but it is with a sad and heavy heart that I must now tender my formal resignation.

As I had previously assured you and Supervisor Pirie, my primary goal once I was elected Chair of this Board was to initiate a transparent and restorative “healing” process whereby many of the disheartened citizenry of this County could ventilate their often emotionally laced issues/concerns via a new public hearing process that they were apparently seeking for many years. The small steps we were initiating to slowly begin the citizens’ restorative trust in County Government was obviously the desired public policy goal.

Although we have only had two public hearings as of this date, I have worked extremely hard to ensure that these hearings were conducted with the utmost civil decorum. As the Community Television recordings of these hearings would attest, I think I have done an admirable job maintaining order and considerate dialogue given the often volatile circumstances. (I have been exceptionally defensive of County staff members by immediately cutting off any personal attacks made upon them.)

Even though I would love nothing more than to see this ongoing “healing” process continue to evolve, my only concern now is with the resistance that I seem to be encountering with the planning department’s senior management staff. Some of the recent and rather dismissive verbal exchanges I have had with these staff members during private meetings leads me to believe that they do not respect the incredible amount of time and professional services that I am graciously donating to the County. (The rather brusque and condescending attitudes are what I object to the most.)

At the very least, the only thing I was seeking was just a modicum of respect as payment for all my volunteer services. Absent that, and as I have grown older - and hopefully a little more wiser - the most valuable lesson I have learned is that life is far too short to waste precious time on small-minded people with mean-spirited attitudes. That is why I must now move on to other endeavors where I hope my gifts and talents will actually be appreciated.

I truly wish you all the very best.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael D. Bethke

Cc: Building, Accessibility & Fire Code Appeals Board