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Sausalito, CA 94965
May 4, 2010

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CITY OF SAUSALITO

The Honorable Jonathan Leone
Mayor of Sausalito
1001 Bridgeway #648
Sausalito, CA 94965

Re: Undergrounding in Sausalito

Dear Mayor Leone,

Thank you for supporting my opportunity to serve as member and Chair of the Sausalito Undergrounding Committee. It has been both a fascinating and an educational experience. It is my ardent hope that my contributions, given with sincere commitment, have helped forward the city's intentions and strengthen the ordinance.

After much consideration during my time on the committee, I have come to the recognition that the opportunity to request a variance from the requirement to underground utilities is, at least currently, being used as a loophole in the law through which millionaires are slipping. With "undue hardship" being the only acceptable claim to avoid funding the undergrounding portion of their construction projects, applicants for variance are, by the very nature of these criteria, encouraged to organize their supporting evidence in order to persuade the committee that they are too destitute to comply with this city's mandate. On many levels, this process is antithetical to building a thriving city of responsible and responsive citizens. It tempts applicants to be deceptive rather than forthcoming, it invites manipulation and it rewards more certainly the clever though not always the deserving.

I herewith propose an alternative, which will eliminate this loophole, the invitation to overstate or fabricate hardships and the Undergrounding Committee itself.

PROPOSED PLAN

For those citizens who believe themselves incapable of financing the required undergrounding, the city of Sausalito will cosign a low-interest loan to cover the work. A lien would be placed on the house for the loan amount, with the city receiving some percentage of the interest. The owner's immediate costs would be only the

monthly loan payments, while the work itself would be concurrent with the construction project.

Benefits are:

- 1) The city's mandate to underground utilities to each home, when it is remodeled, is realized;
- 2) The applicant gains collaborative assistance from the city to explore what is possible, rather than be encouraged to divert attention to what is impossible;
- 3) The city has direct input and investment in choosing the best route for planned future undergrounding;
- 4) Contractors make more realistic bids, once they know the work will actually be done;
- 5) The city benefits from the interest on the loan, possibly adding it to an Undergrounding Fund, which can then be drawn on for the construction of the main runs through the city's streets;
- 6) The city's risk is low to nil with the loan written as a lien on the property.
- 7) Rather than a higher interest private loan on perhaps already extended credit, the owner's monthly payment is lower while simultaneously contributing to the welfare of Sausalito.

At last night's meeting, an applicant expressed his hope that the committee would work with him to create a successful argument against his responsibility to comply with this ordinance. Although the city engineer set this precedent, I believe such collaboration with an applicant is in direct conflict with the stated purpose for the Undergrounding Committee:

18.08.060 Undergrounding Committee created--Purpose.
For the purpose of administering the provisions of this chapter.

The provisions of chapter 18.08 are all, save one, devoted to undergrounding utilities. Therefore, it seems to me, the committee should be, also, thus devoted. Yet, what remains of most concern to me is that a hardship plea as defense for the desire not to underground creates an invitation to exaggerate difficulties and make inappropriate emotional appeals. Subsequently, individuals on the city's staff and on the committee respond with great variation to those emotional appeals, which interrupts logical and reasoned thinking. Having found this to be the situation and having invested four years in attempting to participate effectively within it, I realize I am not the right person to serve on this committee as Chair or member. I herewith tender my immediate resignation from the Undergrounding Committee.

Thank you again for the opportunity to serve this magnificent and lovely city. I shall continue to contribute the most I can and the best I can with a happy heart and much respect for you all.

In good cheer and gratitude,


A.T. Lynne

Cc: Councilmember Carolyn Ford
Councilmember Mike Kelly
Councilmember Linda Pfeifer
Councilmember Herb Weiner

Committee Member Charlotte Mastrangelo
Committee Member Dan Passini
Committee Member Stafford Keegan

City Engineer Todd Teachout