

Message:

Dear Planning Commission Members

I am writing you today as I will unfortunately be unavailable during this hearing on my proposed home improvements. I wanted to take this opportunity to introduce myself, my family, and our project personally.

I was born in the Community Hospital of Carmel-by-the-Sea (yes, it was actually called that before it became CHOMP.). My birth announcement which appeared in the news paper was titled "Fourth Generation Carmelite Baby". My great grandparents owned the Tuck Box and the Scottish scone recipe which is still served to this day was my great grandmother Elsie Grandfield's secret family recipe. (Although I would argue my mother still makes them so much better!)

My family has always been very involved in the community, especially with Carmel Youth Center where my father served on the board and as president throughout my childhood. I grew up playing community baseball (before we had softball in Carmel), volunteering for the youth center and at the community hospital.

After high school, I went off to college to become a third generation dentist in my family and then came back home to practice for over 20 years as a local pediatric dentist alongside my father and uncle.

I have two sons who now represent a fifth generation of my family in Carmel. I have raised them by myself as a single parent for nearly their entire lives- both are on the autism spectrum and have been challenged with several different learning issues and congenital physical issues. It has never been easy for us, but I have learned to appreciate neurodiversity and I am grateful that for all of their myriad challenges they have been gifted incredible strengths. There is nothing more important to me in this world than the safety and support of my children.

I imagine there are very few families like mine with such a history and legacy in this town or who truly know the character of Carmel better than me and my family. It is our home now for 5 generations.

After moving with my children several times we were finally able to purchase our forever home on Torres and 2nd in 2013. The day we got the keys I handed my boys a box of crayons and let them pick their own bedrooms and write their names all over the walls before they were painted. I promised them we wouldn't move again.

It has been 11 years since we moved into our forever home and did the original interior remodel, a little landscaping, and fresh paint. Because I was in the middle of what would turn out to be an extremely contentious nearly 13 year divorce, I could not afford to fix the rusted single paned windows or replace the roof which was in serious disrepair. Now, 11 years later and the divorce behind us all, we are ready to move forward with the very necessary improvements.

I began this process in March of this year when my insurance company

warned that they were going to drop my coverage because our home has a wood shake roof. The roof is admittedly in grave disrepair- shingles falling off, occasional leaking, and rats infesting the attic through the rooftop.

Desperate to move quickly, I went into the city planning department and I immediately found out that I am in the recorded highest fire hazard zone in the city of Carmel. I cannot get proper insurance with a replacement wood roof, nor do I feel it is safe anymore . (Currently I am paying exorbitant rates for temporary California fair plan insurance with no end in sight.)

The clearly obvious solution which is the highest standard of fire safety and aesthetically compatible with my 1951 ranch style home is a standing seam aluminum roof. As my home holds considerable value, it would be unthinkable to put a less fire safe asphalt shingle or an unproven recycled product on my roof. I am optimistic that you will agree and appreciate the warm earthy color palate that my architect and I have worked so carefully to create, and appreciate that the roof we have selected is completely in character of this style of home.

Unfortunately, I was met with a frustrating, cumbersome process in order to be allowed to protect my family and home. It should not be this difficult, time consuming and expensive to protect oneself when facing fire season while living in the highest fire zone in town. I truly believe the roofing "guidelines" need to be rewritten in light of what the insurance companies are covering and the serious potential risks citizens are being exposed to.

As for my fence, I am baffled at the inflexibility that I have encountered in regard to the direction of the fencing material. The logical and proper direction for ranch style fence elements on a ranch style house with horizontal siding and horizontal architectural features is unequivocally horizontal. I hope that this is self explanatory and that you will approve this without unnecessary complication.

Of all of the battles I have fought to protect and advocate for myself and my children, never did I imagine that the direction of my fence or material of my roof would meet such disproportionate resistance. I am increasingly mystified as I walk around town and see several horizontally aligned fences and metal roofs. Or the distinct hypocrisy that homes on scenic do not seem subject to any of the rules and regulations governing less affluent or prestigious home owners. This is clearly a subjective decision and I am hopeful that you will see the logic, reasoning, and considerable thought put into our aesthetically comprehensive proposal and approve it expeditiously.

My house is neither a Cotswold cottage nor a post adobe, and it is in no way historic, or grand, or pretentious. It is a ranch style home built in 1951 by my grandparents' best friends, sold to me specifically above all other buyers by the five girls who grew up in this home. They all wanted me and my boys to live in it- they approve of and appreciate all of the love and light and laughter we have brought to their family home. They

have all visited and remarked that their mother would have loved the Carmel stone and warm airy feeling we have brought to their childhood home. So when we found upwards of \$100,000 in silver coins hidden beneath a cabinet drawer, we immediately knew who they belonged to and promptly returned them to the family. The house definitely has good karma and we have no intention of ever selling it.

Apparently there is also an issue with site coverage allowance. I own three contiguous lots that make up my home site. I have intentionally left two of them undeveloped and natural. If I were to build homes on them I would create over 3,000 additional square feet of impermeable site coverage, but yet somehow the "code" does not allow for a completely permeable area of pea gravel of a far lesser coverage on my 12,000 square feet of property. The pea gravel replaced the original 1951 brick that was uneven, hazardous, and prevented proper drainage. My house is on a significantly sloped part of town where water and soil runoff on my property is a huge issue- every winter there is increased soil erosion and often flooding in the garage and basement. The gravel helps to mitigate the drainage issues, is completely permeable, and prevents my backyard from being a humongous mud pit. I feel that this solution is significantly less impactful than a series of retaining walls to mitigate this issue. I respectfully request your acknowledgment of these serious issues and implore you to decide in favor of maintaining the current drainage solution as is.

When I asked several people (realtors, contractors, neighbors etc) for advice on this subject, they all said the same thing, " just do what they tell you to do and then put it back later, that's what everyone does"! But that's not who I am and that is not who I am teaching my children to be. We are the family that waited 11 years to be able to afford to make these proper and necessary repairs to our family home and we are the family who returned the \$100,000 in silver coins to the rightful owners. I cannot with clear conscience take the unethical path, and I certainly will not teach my children that this is how it is done in our home town, the town where I was born, the town that I love, and the home that my family has enjoyed for generations.

All we ask is that you allow our family to create the best version of what this particular house should be: a simple, safe, light, warm home to last for generations to come.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Brandi Faia

CONTEXT INFORMATION

Profile contacted:

[Chip Rerig](#)

[View results](#)

[Download results](#)