



June 22, 2021

Chairman Glenn Warren and Members of the Design Review Board  
City of Del Mar  
1050 Camino del Mar  
Del Mar, CA 92014

**RE: Special Meeting June 23, 2021, review of Del Mar Design Guidelines**

Dear Chairman Warren and Board Members:

We are writing to share our concerns about an item on the June 23, 2021, agenda regarding a “*Staff and DRB discussion and recommendations regarding the use of Citywide Design Guidelines.*” As members of the City’s 2015-2018 Ad Hoc Committee that was charged with working with City staff and the planning consultant firm RRM Design Group in developing the Design Guidelines, we were surprised that there was no outreach to any of us on the Ad Hoc Committee prior to this discussion being placed on the agenda.

As Matt Bator knows, development of the Design Guidelines was a long and arduous process that included three years of listening and taking testimony from all stakeholders, researching possible solutions and best practices in other California communities, and collaborating with staff and the consultant in developing the Design Guidelines and related explanatory guides.

While we certainly support this review and agree that some fine-tuning of any City document like this is to be expected, we caution the DRB members to have some measure of skepticism about the sources of these concerns. It is important to distinguish between legitimate concerns that should be addressed in this review process and would likely result in a more efficient process, and self-interested concerns that are more politically or economically motivated.

We find it ironic and somewhat disconcerting that there is absolutely no sourcing of the “concerns” that seemed to inspire Matt Bator’s memo. The feedback that fuels this review process should not be anecdotal. Any residents, design professionals, and City Council members who have raised concerns should be identified and asked to give testimony. While this review process certainly does not need to be as rigorous as the process that led to the Design Guidelines, it is only right that it should be a well-vetted and transparent process that will rise above hearsay and rumors. We’d like to remind the DRB that prior to creating the Design Guidelines, there was a very high bar set for defining the problems with the design review process. Likewise, amending the Design Guidelines should not be done on the basis of anonymous or anecdotal feedback in a vacuum. This should be an open, transparent, and public process.

Again, we are not in any way objecting to the review of the Guidelines and the tweaking that is likely to follow such a process. Our hope is that at your June 23 meeting, you will collectively agree on an open and transparent process for receiving and vetting feedback from stakeholders, discussing concerns, and agreeing on possible changes to the Guidelines when circumstances justify them.

Thank you for listening. We stand ready to participate and support the DRB and staff in this process.

Cordially,

**Members of the City of Del Mar Ad Hoc Development Review Process Citizen Advisory Committee, 2015-2018**

Harold Feder, Chair  
Richard Jamison, Vice-Chair  
Anne Farrell, Secretary  
Patricia Bone  
John Graybill  
Art Olson