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**Knightsen Town Community Services District
P.O. Box 763
Knightsen, CA 94548**



August 24, 2021

Sent via electronic mail

Ms. Abigail Fateman
Executive Director
East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy
Contra Costa County, Department of Conservation and Development
30 Muir Road
Martinez, CA 94553

Dear Ms. Fateman:

As you know, Charles Gardiner from Catalyst Group, has scheduled two meetings with small subgroups of Knightsen residents. A meeting has been scheduled on August 26th with residents who live on Eagle Lane, and a meeting has been scheduled on September 1st with residents who live around the intersection of Byron Highway and Delta Road.

Enclosed is an email I received from Eagle Lane residents Carolynne and David Steen (Enclosure #1). They point out that your consultant has stated that these two meetings are not “public” meetings. I understand participation is restricted to the residents that live in these areas. At least one other Knightsen resident, Sandra Maxfield, is being told she cannot attend AND participate in the meeting. The Steens also reminded me of commitments you made regarding outreach in your response to the Knightsen Town Community Services District (KTCS D) on February 28, 2020 (Enclosure #2).

In your letter dated February 28, 2020, you stated the following:

*“At the community meeting, it was suggested that future meetings be noticed in the Brentwood Press in addition to posting a sign at the Knightsen post office, sending an email notice to the KTCS D and the project email list. People who are interested in receiving project updates and notices can sign up on the project website: <https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/7624/Knightsen-Wetland-Restoration-Project> . **The Conservancy is planning to notice meetings using all of these suggestions that were received.***

*There was a suggestion that the Conservancy convene a citizen’s advisory group. The Conservancy and partners have considered this and would prefer to host a series of topic-focused outreach meetings **that are open to all who are interested, not a selected subgroup of the community.** These meetings will be structured to provide information as well as engage in dialog to receive comments and*

answer questions. **These meetings will be noticed (as indicated above) and be facilitated by a 3rd party.”**

These two meetings with subgroups of the Knightsen community directly violate the commitment you made in February 2020 that meetings would be public, open to the entire Knightsen community and publicly noticed in the manner you committed to.

The Steens as well as others in the Knightsen community have asked that Sandra Maxfield and I be allowed to attend these two “private” meetings. People have asked us to be involved because Ms. Maxfield is a professional Hydrologist who happens to live in Knightsen and I have considerable knowledge of Knightsen and the proposed wetlands. Nevertheless, Mr. Gardiner advised Ms. Maxfield that if she attends, she will not be allowed to speak. Also, in Mr. Gardiner’s response to the Steens, he states that I am allowed to “listen in” implying my active involvement may not be permitted. This is not at all consistent with what Mr. Gardiner communicated to me. My clear understanding was that I would be allowed to attend with no limitations on my involvement.

Community members have also informed me that they are concerned about this significant shift from public meetings to private meetings with small portions of the community. They are concerned that these are blatant attempts to “sell” the proposed wetlands without the participation of persons who may have educated and knowledgeable concerns about what you are proposing. People have also expressed concern that by having segregated meetings with parts of the community there may be inconsistencies in what is communicated to various parts of the community. The term brought to my attention is that this is an attempt to “divide and conquer.”

Given the concerns voiced by constituents I believe that you should reconsider having these separate private meetings with portions of the Knightsen community.

Ms. Fateman, having led the past two outreach meetings in Knightsen, you understand MANY Knightsen community members have very serious concerns about the proposed wetlands. Furthermore, many members of this community distrust the County generally and distrust assurances made that they will not be impacted by the proposed wetlands. Although you may believe otherwise, I do not believe the concerns of Knightsen residents will simply disappear over time.

I believe that moving forward you should be greatly concerned about implementing steps such as these private meetings with portions of the community that are so clearly contrary to the open, public and publicized meetings you committed to in writing.

Sincerely,



Trish Bello-Kunkel
Chairperson, Knightsen Town Community Services District

Enclosures:

- 1: Email from Carolynne & David Steen to Trish Bello-Kunkel & Sandra Maxfield, dated 8/23/21
- 2: ECCHC Response to KTCSD, dated 2/28/20

Cc: Delta Conservancy Board & Executive Director, Campbell Ingram
Sandra Maxfield, Knightsen resident
Carolynne and David Steen, Knightsen residents.