From: Walt and Kay Hays [mailto:wkhays@igc.org]
Sent: Thursday, June 28, 2012 3:48 PM
To: Council, City
Subject: Energy/Compost Facility Action Plan

Dear Council:

On behalf of the supporters of Measure E, I am writing about what we understand will be the staff’s recommendation on July 2, to accept its proposal for an Action Plan and Timeline for Consideration of an Energy/Compost Facility, including allocation of $290,000 to hire Alternate Resources, Inc. (ARI) to assist in the process.

The gist of the Recommendation involves having ARI develop detailed Performance Specifications for dealing with the three waste streams—biosolids, food scraps and yard trimmings—and issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP). The specifications would be quite detailed, but would not specify any technology, thereby leaving it to the Council to decide the best approach, including not only anaerobic digestion, but also export options and others. The RFP would not commit the Council to accept any proposal.

It is true that $290,000 sounds like a lot in the context of current budget issues. However, the Feasibility Study done by ARI prior to the vote on Measure E indicated that under certain scenarios an Energy/Compost Facility could save many times that figure.

If more funds are later required to complete the Action Plan, we urge the Council to consider using a portion of the money provided by Stanford Hospitals for sustainability. We understand that you discussed that issue in response to my earlier letter and that the City Manager agreed to return to you with recommendations. We hope that both he and you will recognize that the vote on Measure E represented the strongest possible public expression of the desire for sustainability, and that you will therefore turn to those funds if necessary for the Measure’s implementation.

The message of Measure E, approved overwhelmingly by voters, was that 10 acres of landfill should be undedicated so the City could seriously explore, through actual commercial proposals, the economic and environmental feasibility of organic conversion of waste to energy and compost. The staff’s recommendations represent a good-faith effort to implement that mandate. We therefore strongly urge you to approve them.

Emily Renzel’s letter requesting delay is a transparent attempt to kill the project. We strongly believe that Tom Jordan’s lawsuit has no merit, and with voter approval of over 60%, the project should proceed unless and until proven illegal or unfeasible. And the only way to finally resolve the conflicting claims about the merits of the proposed facility is to proceed with the Action Plan.

Please support it.

Walt