

**From:** [Linda Kranen](#)  
**To:** [Priya Bhat-Patel](#)  
**Cc:** [City Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** public hearing re variance/permit for Begonia Court retaining wall  
**Date:** Monday, June 24, 2024 11:32:20 AM

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Priya,

I've just received written notice of a Council meeting tomorrow with an agenda item regarding a variance for my downhill neighbor's retaining walls.

After attending the previous Planning Commission meeting in this regard, I have become concerned and increasingly disturbed by the intransigence and bloody-minded stubbornness shown toward my downhill neighbor by the city's planning staff and commission regarding his hillside retaining wall issue.

My stake in this is that (1) I do not want to increase the risk of hill destabilization that would affect my property; (2) for the sake of myself and all Carlsbad residents, I want to see a friendly, helpful, pragmatic, solution-oriented mindset exhibited by city officials and staff toward the residents paying their salaries; and (3) I do not ever want to hear the words "Cost can't be a consideration in this decision" from a Planning Commissioner's mouth ever again, upon pain of leaving skid-marks down the sidewalk.

My neighbor built an unpermitted and nonconforming series of retaining walls behind his house, and has been refused a variance recommendation by the Planning Commission. He has also submitted plans developed by a professional engineering firm (also requiring a variance) to suitably strengthen the installation, but City Planning has insisted that the only acceptable solution is to rip everything out and regrade the entire hill. This is patently unaffordable for any individual homeowner, would cause disruption from noise and dust throughout the neighborhood for months, and would scrape off groundcover and disturb the 50-year-old network of acacia roots that now lock the hillside in place, leaving a bare sand surface vulnerable to the coming winter rains.

The Planning Department's proposal is rubbish, their refusal to accept an affordable and less intrusive professionally-engineered solution is outrageous, and their stubborn hostility toward a homeowner left with nowhere to go is unprofessional. No homeowner in the city of Carlsbad should be subjected to this. Yes, he brought the problem on himself. Now it has to get solved, and I suggest Planning set aside their bad attitude and get on with it.

This last winter was an unusually wet one, and there have been no problems with my downhill neighbor's unpermitted terracing. I see no reason not to grant a variance for the walls as-is. Alternatively, grant a variance for his professionally-engineered modification. Under no circumstances do I want my hillside's stability jeopardized by a meat-headed Planning Department recommendation, nor do I want to see the planning staff and officials get in the habit of blindly mandating absurdly disruptive and unaffordable solutions.

- Linda Kranen  
7305 Lily Pl, Carlsbad

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