

Hello Fellow Residents,

Many of you have read about the alleged corruption Anaheim which involved members of the City Council, Anaheim Chamber of Commerce and Disneyland officials. If you haven't just to the Voice of OC's website here: <https://voiceofoc.org/>

A 353-page report by the JL Group initiated by the Anaheim City Council found the city's regulatory approach failed to ensure transparency, with multiple lobbyists accused of hiding their meetings or improperly influencing city leaders. A recent Voice of OC article stated **“That kind of influence at Anaheim city hall led to millions in taxpayer dollars being misspent with little review or oversight according to the investigator's report.”**

No city government of any size is immune from the influence of special interests seeking special favors and our city is no exception. This article is the **first of a series** I will be publishing that examines the kinds of special favors being asked for, at the expense of residents.

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## Who Benefits From a One-Foot Easement?

### [A Special Report On 759 Marlin Drive:](#)

At the June 2, 2023, City Council meeting, the Council rejected a recommendation supported by the Director of Community Development and the Planning Commission to give a one-foot easement on City-owned land to the owner of a two-acre parcel at 759 Marlin Drive in the Portofino neighborhood. Councilmembers Rounaghi, Orgill, Whalen, and I voted this down. Mayor Whalen only joined when he saw the vote would not go his way.

The attempt to approve this entitlement raises questions. The landowner **already** has access to his parcel from the top end of the property on Alisos Avenue, but gaining

access from Marlin would provide easier, more private access to the lot and allow **an estate-sized home** to be built. Neighbors pointed out that this project would be incompatible with the pattern of development in the Portofino neighborhood.

Neighbor, Mick Donoff, stated in an email, "**There will be many ramifications to this privately owned space if such a road is developed, including impacts to the seasonal water course running through the property. We probably all agree that a 'negative declaration' should not have been made. City Staff did not demonstrate ANY benefits to the city or neighborhood for allowing the easement. It appears to be an attempt to increase the value of the property.**" Many other neighbors opposed the approval of the easement at the Planning Commission Meeting **to no avail**, and at the Council Meeting. (success)

Which begs the question - why did the City Staff recommend approval of an easement that benefited only three parties: the **listing** agent, Bob Chapman, the property owner, and a future buyer? Did Mr. Chapman, who is the City's "**go to**" agent for real estate transactions, have a potential conflict of interest regarding this easement? At the very least should it have been made known that Mr. Chapman was involved?

Who contacted property owner, Merrick Leckey and prompted him to hire land use consultant Gregg Vale. Actions taken by Mr. Vale led this item being endorsed by City Staff and sent to the Planning Commission and City Council for approval. Mr. Merrick has owned the property since 1988 and in his 80<sup>th</sup> year is unlikely to be building his dream home.

At the June 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting Community Development Director Mark Weiner and Sr. Planner Chris Dominguez were asked if a 3,000 to 5,000 square foot home would be allowed on the site, neither would answer. A conceptual design for a 5,000 sq. ft. home had already been created.

Why did City Staff endorse this easement despite it not being compatible with the pattern of development of the neighborhood and **without a review** of its potential environmental impacts?

***The facts need to be made known.*** The neighborhood residents deserve better and so does our town.

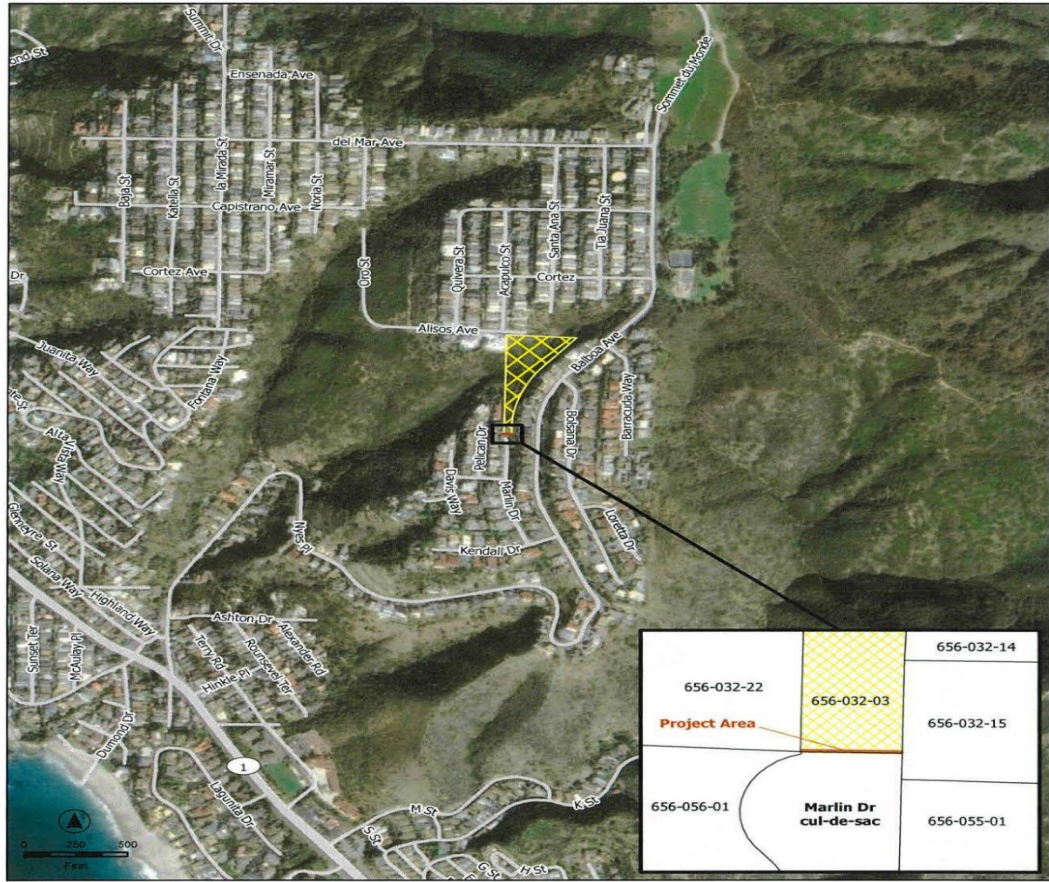


Exhibit 2-2. Project Location

**The Map above shows the location, access point of the easement, and relative size of the Marlin lot.**