

Betty S. Furuta

2633 Moyers Road
Richmond, CA 94806
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May 16, 2016

Mayor Manny Cappello and Council Members
City Manager James Lindsey
Director of Public Works John Cherbone

Re: Master Plan for Hakone Estate & Gardens

I write in support of the Master Plan for Hakone Estate and Gardens and seek the City Council's endorsement as well. The proposal to maintain the integrity and, where deemed necessary, to improve Hakone is commendable for its clarity of vision, comprehensive review, and strategy for implementation including financial investment. The identified four phases for incremental improvements appear realistic and prudent. I assume that all work will reflect Japanese aesthetics and quality controls.

Hakone will remain a splendid iconic site as a Japanese estate and gardens built in California and worthy of the National Trust for Historic Preservation designation. It's now becoming a treasure that will endure in perpetuity for all visitors to enjoy.

On a personal note: During Maj. Charles Lee Tilden's and family's era of private ownership (1932-1960), my parents, James and Shizu Sasaki, were the sole resident gardener and cook-domestic employees at Hakone. Three of us children were born in the Saratoga-San Jose communities and attended Saratoga Elementary and Los Gatos High schools. As Japanese Americans, we were incarcerated for the duration of WWII at Topaz, Utah Internment Center and, following release in fall 1945, our parents were re-employed at Hakone. It isn't surprising that their gratitude and devotion to the Tilden family were unwavering. Hakone remains a special place to us.

On behalf of us two surviving Sasaki sisters, Jane Abdalla and myself, thank you for the opportunity to write this letter of support for the proposed Master Plan. May the vision and plan for an ever better Hakone Estate and Gardens come to fruition.

Sincerely,

Betty S. Furuta

Cc: Shozo Kagoshima
Alexa Gregory
Peter Stine
Jane Abdalla

Dear City Council members,

I am writing to support the proposed Master Plan for Hakone Estate and Gardens. The following information is in response to comments made by citizens opposed to the plan with the intention of providing different perspective.

What is a “Japanese Garden”? This question has often, and continues to be discussed by Japanese Garden professionals belonging to the North American Japanese Garden Association. Can a garden be a “traditional Japanese Garden” if it is not in Japan? Is what makes a Japanese garden different from other gardens styles its design and techniques? My opinion is that all gardens, including Japanese Gardens, are created by people for the enjoyment of people. Enjoyment can be interaction, relaxation, study, celebration, connection with nature, or basically anything that makes people happy. This opinion has never been challenged by my peers. If I am correct, then why would it be appropriate for an event to be hosted at any garden style except a Japanese garden?

Professor of landscape architecture Dr. Takao Donuma, a long time consultant and friend of Hakone, explained the following to me when I started working at Hakone more than 7 years ago. Among the oldest style of garden to appear in Japan was the strolling pond garden. What made the strolling pond design so popular among the high ranking Japanese that could afford to build or purchase them was the prestige they brought and the awe that they inspired within their guests. The private gardens large size allowed owners to host grand gatherings with their guest taking small boats onto the water, viewing seasonal landscapes, or playing drinking games in which the guests raced to write Haiku before a sake cup floated by them down a stream.

A recent study done by the Tokyo School of Agriculture found that today many such gardens in Japan are becoming City properties in order to preserve them, as the owner’s ancestors are less able to maintain large parcels of land. The Cities have most often opened them to visitors, charge a small admission fee, and are heavily subsidizing their operations cost with help from the national government. The study also showed that many municipalities have either adopted, or are investigating a rental fee structure.

Promoting and appropriately demonstrating Japanese culture is an important piece of Hakone’s mission. It is also a common goal among public gardens belonging to the North American Japanese Gardens Association. This promotion of Japanese culture is linked to the “Peace” gardens built after WWII in which Japanese designers and planners combined a variety of traditional garden styles. This was done to showcase Japanese cultural elements linked to those gardens such as Tea ceremony and Zen meditation. Despite the fact that Hakone is far older than the peace gardens of the 1960’s it is open to the public and a fixture of the community. Hakone Foundation fully intends to continue developing cultural programs, for which better facilities, for visitors and staff, and expanded garden spaces are important.

Lastly all efforts being made by both the Hakone Foundation and the City staff to mitigate and monitor noise are being made voluntarily because the Foundation strives to be a good neighbor.

Jacob Kellner 5/16/16

Head of Grounds Maintenance, Hakone Foundation

Peter A. Stine

11531 Prospect Hill Drive, Gold River, CA 95670
pastine52@gmail.com

5/11/2016

Dear Mayor/City Council of Saratoga,

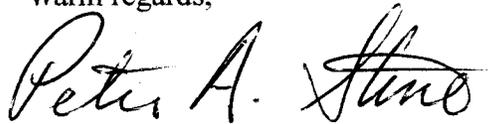
I am writing this letter in support of the proposed Master Plan for the Hakone Estate and Gardens that the City is currently considering. I am the grandson of Isabel Stine, the founder of Hakone Gardens. I first want to once again extend my gratitude to the Hakone Foundation and the City of Saratoga for the many years of care and vision that you have given to this very special place. It is not only important and meaningful to me and my family but it has become a distinguished landmark for the City, the Bay Area, and the entire west coast. Hakone has been identified by the National Trust for Historic Preservation to receive their prestigious "Save America's Treasures" designation, and has been included on the National Register of Historic Places. These unique gardens are now a national and international attraction. There are many who deserve credit for forging this vision and looking forward to what it could become. Now it is time to continue that vision and take the next steps to permanently establishing Hakone as the icon for the community that it has become.

I was married to my wife, Ann, at Hakone. Both my daughters were married at Hakone, and I hope that each of my three granddaughters will have the opportunity to be married there as well. But for Hakone to maintain its splendor it must continue to be cared for. The Master Plan intends to do just that, continue to take care of the gardens with the very best stewardship that is possible. There are two very critical reasons that I think the City ought to keep in mind with regard to this proposal. First, Hakone offers a spectacular venue for a wide variety of events that bring positive attention and acclaim to the community. This will support the local economy and continue to sustain a proud landmark of the region. Second, in order to maintain these values, investment is necessary and will require significant resources in the coming years. The Master Plan has the vision to

maintain/restore the grounds and expand existing facilities to enable the kind of venue that can support Hakone indefinitely.

In closing I want to thank the Mayor and the Council for the efforts they have made over the years to sustain this iconic place that means so much to my family and to the many, many people who have enjoyed Hakone over the years. I implore you all to continue that vision and take the steps necessary to approve and implement the proposed Master Plan. Thank you and do not hesitate to call on me if I may be of any assistance.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter A. Stine". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "P" and a long, sweeping underline.

Peter A. Stine

From: [Peggy](#)
To: [Mainini Cabute](#)
Subject: comments on Hakone Master Plan
Date: Tuesday, April 19, 2016 2:13:17 PM

Regarding Hakone Master Plan,

This Hakone Master Plan should be stopped dead in its tracks. This train has been driven by the incompetent, Private Hakone Foundation and their financially supporting partner, the Saratoga City Council.

I attended many of the meeting listed on your public notice dated April 4th, 2016. This master plan does not represent what the public attending the meetings wanted. What this Master represents, is what exactly the Hakone Foundation and the Saratoga City Council was planning all along, with total disregard from the public input.

Margaret Lynne
21075 Bank Mill Lane
Saratoga, Ca 95070

From: [Jasim ahmad](#)
To: [Mainini Cabute](#)
Subject: Hakone Estate and Gardens Master Plan
Date: Tuesday, April 19, 2016 9:37:25 AM

Hello

I got a letter from city stating that we can leave comments on Hakone plan. Why city of Saratoga needs Hakone so badly? We live close to Hakone and it has been nothing but nuisance to the neighborhood. Our repeated plea regarding the noise issue, city and Hakone completely ignore us. They do not monitor the noise they generate according to the standard or regulation city set.

City should have issued an warning to Hakone last week during a party. I am not sure at this point our comments has any weight on the Hakone plan.

Jasim Ahmad
(408) 368-6970
21175 Bank Mill Road
Saratoga, CA 95070

From: [Susan Weber](#)
To: [Emily Lo](#); [Manny Cappello](#); [Mary-Lynne Bernald](#); [Howard Miller](#); [Rishi Kumar](#)
Cc: [Mainini Cabute](#); [Debbie Bretschneider](#); dsparrer@community-newspapers.com
Subject: Hakone Gardens
Date: Thursday, April 14, 2016 10:37:14 AM

Attention City Council Members:

Recently it has come to my attention that the city of Saratoga is considering building a new event hall at Hakone Gardens to accommodate weddings and social activities. This is beyond the scope of a traditional Japanese Garden.

"The gardens of the Emperors and nobles were designed for recreation and aesthetic pleasure, while the gardens of Buddhist temples were designed for contemplation and meditation." from Wikipedia.

In our fast paced world, the contemplative nature of a Japanese garden stands out as an island of tranquility. An event hall to accommodate more activities which disrupt the area with high noise levels and increased traffic is contrary this basic concept of a Japanese garden. Saratoga already has several venues (Villa Montalvo, The Foothill Club, Saratoga Prospect Center and others) for weddings and receptions.

An event center may be a money making proposition but increasing the revenue base from 35 wedding to 40 weddings is not substantial enough to justify the cost of a new hall. Although the funding of the structure is intended to be through the Hakone Foundation, they have not demonstrated fiscal responsibility recently. In the end, the city may need to bail them out with our tax dollars. If funding current operations is a problem, then teaming with an open space, Buddhist or Japanese cultural organization could provide additional current resources to promote the authentic use of Hakone Garden.

Do the citizens of Saratoga want a change in the character of Hakone Gardens, from a contemplation and meditation site to a party venue? **No, we do not...**

Sincerely,
Susan and Lynn Weber

April 11, 2016

From: Jackie Welch, 408-741-7636
14500 Fruitvale Ave. #2260, Saratoga CA 95070
To: Shojo Kagoshima and members of the Saratoga City Council

I got an Email from the City saying that the City Council agenda at their May 18 meeting has scheduled a hearing on projects and programs at Hakone Gardens. Among the City's goals are: Connecting to the Community, and Expanding Educational Opportunities .

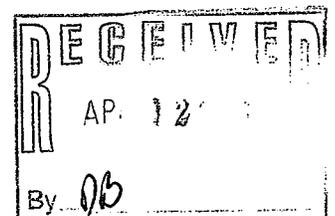
Saratoga is fortunate to have such an authentic Japanese garden, which can serve as a cultural museum and educational site . It is a tourist attraction, conveniently located near the Village of Saratoga. It should not be exploited as a party and convention center . Of course it is important to raise the money necessary to maintain it by renting its facilities for weddings and parties, but these should be held only after park hours. The Cultural Building should be open to the public during park hours offering exhibits and classes in Japanese culture.

Several years ago a group of residents, meeting at the home of Betty Peck, had a discussion on what programs we thought should be offered at Hakone. When Betty had been a kindergarten teacher at Oak Street School many years ago, she took the children in her class to Hakone for programs on Japanese culture. The programs were prepared by a mother who was of Japanese descent. Jack Tomlinson, who was head gardener at the time, was helpful in explaining features of a Japanese garden. As a result of Betty's subsequent meetings, several of her friends put together an educational guide for a children;s program . I was one of the writers. We wondered who would be qualified to carry on such a program. I phoned the Director of the Saratoga Recreation Department to see if such a program could be offered by the Recreation Department. He said he would consider it if I could recommend a teacher. I couldn't think of anyone. Perhaps you know how to implement such program. Following are the chapters of our education guide for children:

Tour of the Garden,:Meaning of features and Philosophy, water, rocks etc; Bamboo Garden;
Japanese Dancing and Music; Taiko; Sumi-e class; Calligraphy class; Ikebana class;
Wood block printing; Origami ; Haiku; Tea Ceremony

Of course, there could also be classes for adults: Bamboo fence tying; Japanese style of Pruning; Garden design, in mosses and shrubs and rocks, no lawns,; Architecture, mortis and tenon joinery ; Screens, for insulation., Shoji, Armando, Fusuma, Rice paper ; Bonsai; Garden Lanterns, varieties; Japanese pottery; Japanese cooking classes. Perhaps you know people who are knowledgeable to lead these classes.

Effort should be made to raise revenue by increasing membership in the Hakone Foundation, that offers free admission to the Garden. The Saratoga Historical Foundation increases membership by holding programs on Local History to the public, and then promoting membership at the program. Similarly, Hakone could hold cultural meetings for the public and charge a fee and promote membership in the Foundation.



From: [Vaughn Marian](#)
To: [Mainini Cabute](#)
Subject: Fwd: Hakone Master Plan/Initial Study Mitigated Negative Declaration
Date: Wednesday, April 06, 2016 7:19:19 AM

- >
- > Mainini and City Staff,
- >
- > I find the Section on Noise(L) full of errors and omissions.
- >
- > 1. The table used is obsolete. The existing table according to the city web sight is 7-30.040 and the numbers for Maximum Lmax are 5 decibels lower for both Open Space Parks in the Evening and Nighttime. DD&A made assumptions on incorrect numbers.
- > 2. DD&A appears to believe Hakone is in compliance the the Municipal Code. April 3rd 2016 at approximately 7:30 we could hear through closed doors and with our television on, the DJ loud and clear and all the yelling associated. Hakone couldn't possibly be in compliance although according to their event staff, the decibel level at Hakone was 48.6! It has been now 6 seasons that we have had noise problems with Hakone and still do.
- > 3. " No noise measurements were taken as part of this IS evaluation: however, implementation of the Master Plan will not increase the maximum number of people allowed on the site for wedding and other events. Noise levels, therefore, will not increase over the current ambient levels." Isn't the whole reason to build a new event center the noise that Hakone generates now? The report would lead one to believe there is no noise problem.
- > 4. A new event center is planned in order to have five more weddings per year? "These events are planned to increase slightly, from 35-40 per year." How could this number even make sense financially?
- > 5. "Noise sensitive receptors in the project area consist of single family residential uses to the east and southeast". Our neighborhood is north and northwest! Convenient omission by DD&A? Did anyone share the 6 seasons of noise our neighborhood has endured with DD&A?
- > 6. "In compliance with the Municipal Code, operations at Hakone Estate & Garden shall not cause, produce or allow to be produced any noise that exceed these noise standard at any point outside its property boundary, as set forth in Section 2.5 Project Description." 2.5 doesn't even address the noise issue.
- >
- > Other problems with the study:
 - > 1. As Mainini and I have discussed, I want "unanimously" deleted from the 2nd page of the cover letter. Never would I have voted for a large event center to be built. I believe I was't alone with this opinion. I was at this meeting in April and was very surprised when the large new event center was back on the table. The public on February 10th overwhelmingly did not want a large event center built. At the smaller meeting at Hakone on February 11th, Dennis Meyer stated the large event center was off the table. Paul Sorenson also made this statement to Gary Gordon and Peggy Lynne the same day. Did public input mean anything?
 - > 2. Does anyone in the city ask the hard questions such as can the existing Hakone Board even handle such a project? It appears to me the Hakone Board has had an abysmal record when it comes to finances, accounting, budgeting etc
 - > 3. Assumptions have been made that Hakone will have 75,000 visitors and 35 employees. Is this even remotely realistic?
 - > 4. Chapter 1. project information lists Zoning Designation:R-1-40,000. What does this mean exactly? One definition I find is "suburban/rural density setting free from commercial and industrial development." A large venue for parties is a commercial enterprise!

Please, do a complete sound study with correct data before any action is taken on the master plan,
Dorothy Marian

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From: [Dorothy Marian](#)
To: [Mainini Cabute](#)
Subject: Re: Hakone Master Plan and Environmental Document
Date: Tuesday, April 05, 2016 6:15:46 PM

Mainini,

Thank you for your candor. I will prepare a written response.

Sincerely,
Dorothy Marian

On Apr 5, 2016 5:27 PM, Mainini Cabute <mcabute@saratoga.ca.us> wrote:

Hi Dorothy,

Thank you for taking the time to express your concerns with me this afternoon regarding the Hakone Master Plan and CEQA documents. Below are the items you mentioned to me that I stated I would follow up for you with my director, John Cherbone. I will get back to you with a status once I receive direction and information.

- 1) City staff to monitor events at Fire Gate to evaluate sound level at events.
- 2) Cost that City paid to pay for environmental review.
- 3) Scope of work for the wall that the City will contract to prevent noise from overflowing to the neighbors.
- 4) Change the word "unanimous" in paragraph 6 of the public notice letter to accurately reflect your opposed position of having the event center as part of the plan.

As we discussed in our conversation, it would be best if you prepared a written response expressing your concern that page 53 of the environmental document does not mention homes that are north and northwest of Hakone. We can submit your concerns to our environmental consultant and have her review, respond and include your comments into the final draft of the document.

Sincerely,

Mainini
