

**D-43**

Testimony for Roberts Appeal



Friends Of The Dunes At Cannon Beach <friendsofdunes@gmail.com>

To: Planning Group; Jeffrey Adams

Cc: Katie Hillenhagen; Charlie Plybon; Brianna Goodwin; Cameron La Follette; Jeff Harrison



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October 29, 2020

Dear Planning Commissioners,

We, The Friends of the Dunes at Cannon Beach and The Surfrider Foundation, oppose the Roberts' appeal of their building permit conditions. Though there are many troubling concerns around the development of this lot we are especially affronted by the Roberts' refusal to comply with Cannon Beach's Oceanfront Setback Rules.

How ironic that Governor Oswald's inspiration for Oregon's historic Beach Bill was the very spot of the Roberts' proposed house. In 1911, with the beginning of development of this land, great minds were working to build a framework to protect this unique stretch of shoreline for the enjoyment of all who are lucky enough to walk our beaches. The view from the beach is still a paramount consideration for development of beachfront homes.

Cannon Beach joined with citizens to purchase the land we know as "Inspiration Point," which is located next to the Oswald West Cabin and the Roberts' property. That purchase demonstrated the City's commitment to preserving the historic, scenic beauty of this special stretch of shoreline.

Today, Cannon Beach is called on once again to protect this treasured land. The Roberts' proposed house and the necessary road/driveway/garage are completely at odds with preserving the historic, scenic beauty of "Inspiration Point." Instead beachgoers would be left looking at what looks like the underside of a highway on-ramp.

We understand that the Roberts' lot is a challenging one to build on -- it is small, difficult to access, and unstable. (The last structure there slid off its foundation.) This was all known, or should have been, when the Roberts purchased this property. The answer to the Roberts' homebuilding challenges cannot be, however, to compel the City to not apply its own Oceanfront Setback Rules -- even under threat of litigation. The Roberts purchased their oceanfront lot in 2001 when these rules were in place. Now that they're ready to build, they must follow the Oceanfront Setback Rules like all other oceanfront homeowners.

The Roberts claim that applying the Oceanfront Setback Rules would zero out the value of their property. The same set of rules applied to any return on investment calculation are the same today as when they purchased the property. The City has not changed the setback regulations, the Roberts, however, are seeking exemption from these long-held rules that everyone else has had to abide by. Anyone could squeeze more profit out of a lot if a City's planning rules were ignored.

We urge you to uphold the City's Oceanfront Setback Rules. These rules must be applied consistently and even-handedly to all developments. In 1915, Governor Oswald wrote in referring to our public beaches: "No selfish interest should be permitted, through politics or otherwise, to destroy or even impair this great birthright of our people."

The torch that Governor Oswald lit over a century ago is now in your hands today, hold it high and keep the flame strong.

Sincerely,  
Dianna Turner and Jeff Harrison  
The Friends of the Dunes at Cannon Beach

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The Friends of the Dunes at Cannon Beach is a grassroots group working to protect coastal scenic beauty, biodiversity, and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike.