

April 2, 1974
745 South E Street
Oxnard 93030

Dear Jane,

I am writing to you because you are the most familiar council person to me that I know. Your presence on the city council makes it much easier to write a letter about what concerns me than it would be otherwise, as the first step is hard to take when one hardly knows the council. At least that is my position.

Two things amidst the hodgepodge of suggestions that I may cast forward are predominant: one is the Driffle Project area which my family home borders, and the other is the Sacred Palm of Oxnard which, of course you are familiar with if your eyes happen to glance upwards down the city streets of old Oxnard.

I expect that as a longtime concerned citizen of the Plain you are aware of the unwieldiness and disunity of what most flippantly refer to as the "community" of Oxnard. Not that it is to be managed or curbed, but I suggest that a community can be guided in the direction of, or goals of "rhythm" and "desirability". You probably could suggest a few adjectives of your own.

Perhaps because I have in the last years lived more away from Oxnard than here in it, I am actually unaware of the sense of community that exists. I admit to my own sense of community built upon familiarity and what has pleased me over the years as my own tastes have changed, but there are still so many areas that do lack community in my eyes.

Occasionally all does seem to come together, as on a night of the Ventura Symphony or the landscaping of a parking median. But there are so many more moments that are lost where the energy of the "coming home at five I'm abfully tired" working person could be restored and increased.

At this point in my days I think often in visual terms for Oxnard. Maybe the visual, take the long rows of palms in the center Oxnard area, scratch only the surface of the situation, but there are moments when the surface becomes all there really is for me, the most real, and I am very satisfied. One of these moments is when I climb up in the painted metal platforms and conveyors and lima bean receiving machines at the Oxnard Frozen Foods plant, where I now work, and see beyond all the aluminum siding and asphalt of the industrial area to the sky and

the palm trees down C street. My world is increased multifold then to include much more than the facts of my personal income at the plant. It has always been said by many ~~that~~ ^{heart} looking up to a church spire gives one a sense of proportion and one's ~~hand~~ a thump. I have not found any church spires of recent construction in Oxnard to admire, but I do receive the above from the palm (and I would enlarge this to include the eucalyptus).

What I am seeking under the heading of unity is "definition" as well as rhythm and desirability. I feel the rows of palms planted 70 or 80 years ago (?) add to the definition. In Oxnard it is hard often to even see the natural ~~boundaries~~ ^{area} of our city: the triangular mountains and the sea, much less the farm ~~land~~ which one might call the "floor". Would not symmetrical patterns of the tree from the beach and south oxnard to Camarillo, or at least to some point on the east side of Oxnard help our visual mentality?

From what I understand, having talked to Joe Pina, of the Parks Dept. and my neighbor for many years, the palms is unlike other large trees in its root structure. It will tolerate the small five feet planting strip that is given now down most thoroughfares. Its trimming, twenty dollars annually (?) or perhaps less frequently, for each tree seems to be the main reason why Parks Supt. Ambrose will not give the ok on them. He has the parks budget in mind. Other large trees, the pines for instance, are favoured by me as well, but at this time they do not have the planting space along the roads, though trimming would not be as necessary, I understand.

The Driffle Project area will no doubt be used for something someday. I am all in favour for its use in a unified manner with architecture that offers more visually than the majority of buildings in Oxnard. Will it be a crowded ^{and} area? Will there be even garden areas for the people who will be living there ~~or~~ will the buildings jut upon the surrounding streets or have some continuous or ~~f~~ alternating sections of landscaping?

How tall will the buildings go? Many questions which should go to the Planning Commision but they are another step away for me. Perhaps funds for the project are not to come at all. If the area is to be divided into many participating users, let them actually participate. And I hope that the Baptist church that borders on D and 7th streets does not set the tone for the area. Cement blocks ascending to a peaked roof ought to be confined to the supply yard if they are to take such unreflecting positions. As it stands now the buildings of the ~~th~~ church front the streets but if this area has a chance for more faces

than offered by the street, than I would like to see them developed.

Bruce Ingraham and I walked over to the old Park site on C street and Seventh one recent and windy night. Why the white lion was right here, one day, emphatically pointing to where the mythical creature once lay down. I wondered then who owns the land, the parking lot and the corner area with the many trees beside the phone company? Is it the phone company or city, and are there any plans for the site?

Enough enough. One can gather that I was saving my feelings for awhile. I hope that these ideas on my visual terms will add to what seems to be a growing concern for the public interest of this community. I hope to hear from you or the planning commission about the drift site. And I hope that some day soon the sacred palm may make its way down the streets of greater Oxnard, perhaps even to define whole areas of "open space" about Oxnard.

One last question. As frequently as I visit Jim Browning at the beach, so do we moan something about the west farm lands that I drive through on the way there. From what I understand the open space boundary is gonzales road and north to the river, perhaps beyond. We wonder if the possibility for open space exists south of gonzales to fifth and even further south where the tracts have not made their way. If the farm lands were to remain, can you picture as well a very wide border out fifth to the sea that is landscaped and bike and horse trailed? I feel the area is valuable as open space for the public of this community.

Thank you for your ear. If there are others who would benefit by reading of this letter, perhaps you can share my ideas with them.

James Ryan