

Theatre Del Mar
1124 Pacific Avenue
Santa Cruz, California 95060

**MINUTES OF A SPECIAL TOWN HALL MEETING
REGARDING WAR IN IRAQ**

FEBRUARY 18, 2003

6:30 P.M. SESSION

Mayor Reilly called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. in the Theatre Del Mar main theater.

Present: Councilmembers Fitzmaurice, Rotkin, Mathews, Primack, Porter;
Mayor Reilly; Congressman Farr.

Absent: Vice Mayor Kennedy.

Staff: Assistant City Manager M. Bernal, City Clerk L. Cook, Deputy City Clerk L. Brewer, Administrative Assistant III T. Husome, Administrative Assistant II R. Balsley, Documents Clerk C. Ricker, Office Assistant M. Ponce.

Note: There were no oral communications during this meeting. Members of the public had a right to address Council and Congressman Farr on the potential war against Iraq.

Mayor Reilly opened the meeting by stating that community interest prompted the convening of this town hall meeting and that Congressman Sam Farr had been invited and agreed to attend as our representative in Washington, D.C. She noted that, having done some research, he was the only Congressman she knew of who has agreed to come and listen to people in a town hall meeting on this issue and thanked him for his attendance. The Mayor announced that Vice Mayor Kennedy had gone to Washington D.C. with a delegation of mayors whose cities had adopted resolutions regarding Iraq, and he had become snowed in there and was, unfortunately, unable to attend the meeting. The Mayor outlined the format for the meeting and introduced Congressman Farr.

Congressmember Farr thanked the City Council for the invitation and also for the restoration of the Theatre Del Mar. He said that he attended the meeting because he, too, opposed a war with Iraq, and he wanted to offer a congressional perspective of the situation. He said that the President asked Congress to adopt a resolution authorizing him to act regarding the issue of Iraq, including authorizing the use of force; the resolution the President offered was rejected and then rewritten by the Senate and House Republicans. Two Democratic alternatives were proposed, one by Congressmember Barbara Lee which suggested a step-by-step approach toward resolving the conflict in Iraq, and another which was a compromise—that the Congress authorized the President but required him to come back to them before further action. Both those resolutions failed, and on October 10, 2002, Congress passed the version of the resolution that had been rewritten by House and Senate Republicans, of the resolution that the President had asked be adopted.

With the start of the 108th Congress, he helped with the election of Nancy Pelosi of San Francisco as House Minority Leader. He also was asked to continue as chair of the California Democratic Delegation, a delegation of which he is particularly proud. Not only is it the largest delegation in Congress (52 members of Congress, 20 of whom are Republicans, 33 of whom are Democrats, and of those 33, 17 are women, 16 are men. Therefore, it is the first delegation to have a majority of women. It is also the largest delegation of African Americans, of Hispanics, of Asians, and also of returned Peace Corps Volunteers). The delegation has been fairly unanimous in its opposition to a war with Iraq, so he believes he speaks for a lot of them as well as for himself. Congressmember Farr stated that his colleague, Congressmember Anna Eshoo, who represents part of north Santa Cruz County and part of the eastern San Lorenzo Valley, was unable to attend but sent a letter of support and said that she is with you “100 percent.”

Congressmember Farr noted that “we [Congress] passed the Congressional responsibility, unfortunately, on October 10th” with the vote to support the President regarding Iraq. He said that recently some have tried to get back that responsibility, and he gave an overview of actions being taken that were also described in three handouts he brought with him.

The first was regarding a recently introduced resolution, House Resolution 20, a bill to repeal the vote taken to authorize the use of force in Iraq. The bill has one Republican co-sponsor; the rest are Democrats. Republicans control the House of Representatives, all committees, how bills proceed and even if they can proceed. Each vote in Congress has a rule before the vote as to how the proceedings on that bill will be held, whether the bill can be amended, etc., so it is a very complicated process. Congressmember Farr doubted that the Democrats would be able to get a vote on the floor, but the effort is being made to gain more support.

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The second, he said, is the Brown/Kind letter, a letter supporting the United Nations inspectors and asking for more time for them to do their work and asking the President to respect that process and what the United Nations is trying to do.

The third is a constituent letter, a generic letter similar to ones he has been sending to people who have asked him about this issue.

Representative Farr went on to explain what goes on “behind the scenes,” that there is a coalition that meets regularly to discuss procedures, tactics to use to get some press, etc. He said that while there are as many representatives speaking out against a war with Iraq as there were speaking out against the war in Viet Nam, for the first time in 30-40 years the Democrats are not in the majority in the House of Representatives and, therefore, do not “control the microphone.” And the party that does not control the microphone does not have access to the national media. Therefore, it is harder and harder for them to get media coverage. They do keep their own network of news and what’s going on, but it does take extra effort to do so.

Representative Farr continued, saying that what is going on in the United States currently is a historical shift of power. In our system, the power of the government is derived from the governed, and at times the government needs to be reminded that this power “rests solidly with the people,” and if there is not public support for issues, they do not go the way those in office might wish. He sees a “rising up and seizing back” by the people occurring and noted that demonstrations such as those in Santa Cruz and throughout the world on Saturday, February 15 “are something really phenomenal.” He hopes that these people all over the world expressing themselves will bring us closer to a better understanding of our mutual interests and mutual concerns so that we can build a mutually supportive world. He said that Santa Cruz, being the first city in the nation to adopt a resolution regarding Iraq (for which he thanked the Council), as well as the demonstration and this town hall meeting, are sending important signals. He said that he knows of no other House of Representative member who has been invited to such a town hall meeting as this, and he very much appreciated the invitation and being able to be there. He ended his comments by saying, “that I believe, as goes Santa Cruz, so goes the nation. Thank you.”

The Mayor announced that the Monterey Bay Poets Against the War would be holding a reading on Tuesday, March 4th at the Rio Theatre and that poems could be sent to poemsagainsthewar.org for consideration.

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SPEAKING FROM THE FLOOR:

Rick Moran, Past President of the Bill Motto VFW 5888 Post, spoke to past actions of the post against war and read the post's resolution opposing war against Iraq. Mr. Moran stated that as veterans they were committed to ending the cycle of violence and war and dedicated to a policy to "wage peace."

Richard Anderson, Past Post Commander of the Bill Motto VFW 5888 Post, thanked the Council for making the town hall meeting possible and commented that the nation is on "high alert" and is supposed to report people connected to terrorism. Mr. Anderson stated that he strongly believes that the major threat to national security is the executive branch of our government.

Dan Collins, representing Aptos High School Teachers, asked the teachers to stand and be recognized, and read part of a letter he wrote that 52 Aptos High School teachers signed opposing war with Iraq, quoting others' statements on the issue and on aggression and peace.

An unidentified speaker expressed appreciation to Congressman Farr for his attendance and urged him to carry their message to Washington.

Pat commented that a number of the wealthiest in our country seem to have lost their ethics and humanity and asked what has been done to rein in their powers, and also questioned when will there be fully publicly funded elections.

An unidentified speaker asked what steps are being taken in the House of Representatives to impeach President Bush.

An unidentified speaker also asked about impeachment, saying the climate of Washington goes against the populace and civil liberties, and that a lot of the issues were about oil supplies.

Joe said that President Bush should have not been elected, considered him evil, and that people's land should not be taken or destroyed in order to keep an oil supply.

Jeff Major thanked Congressman Farr and said that for many reasons he did not trust what his government was telling him and he was embarrassed by how his government was acting in regard to foreign policy and what it was proposing. Mr. Major spoke in opposition to action in Iraq and the impact on that nation, its citizens, and in support of offering humanitarian support rather than military aggression.

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SPEAKING FROM THE FLOOR (continued):

Amber asked about the separation of church and state, and wanted to know what was being done in Congress to address the motivation behind President Bush's political actions, saying that she felt he was working toward bringing on Armageddon in order to bring the second coming of Christ. Amber further stated that she believes that current situation is another version of the Crusades.

Becky Johnson expressed concern about soldiers returning from the Gulf War with Gulf War Syndrome and also citizens' exposure in areas of Yugoslavia bombed in 1999m, who are also suffering chronic ailments. Ms. Johnson asked Congressman Farr what his stand was on the use of depleted uranium, and if he would call for a moratorium on the use of depleted uranium in order to protect our troops and Iraqi civilians.

Jennifer Hayward commented on lack of media attention for the Democratic platform, saying that media coverage of recent protests have been good and demonstrate the discontent with President Bush's policies. Ms. Hayward stated the she heard about Bush administration's plans regarding nuclear weaponry but not the Democrat's platform on nuclear reduction, and that she believes that the press has been more critical of the administration's policies than the Democratic Party has been. She called upon the Democratic Party to distance itself from the Bush administration and put forth alternatives to the current foreign policy.

Tony Lavote said that we don't want war but asked how to deal with Saddam Hussein and his possible links to Al Quaida.

Susan Kipping commented on the water supply situation in Felton and said that the German conglomerate that took over their water supply also has a nuclear waste facility in the United States and is selling uranium and plutonium; since it now owns now own Felton's water, it is planning on draining the aquifer. Ms. Kipping urged Council's assistance on this matter.

An unidentified speaker said that she summoned the courage to speak for the first time into a microphone because she heard the President that morning say that he is not listening to the protests that took place throughout the world and that he is still willing to go forward and, she believes, lead us into another holocaust. She spoke in support of having another meeting after this one to discuss finding a solution.

SPEAKING FROM THE FLOOR (continued):

Ron Schneider stated that the way to stop Saddam Hussein is with inspections rather than a first strike and that we need to go around the world making friends, not enemies. Mr. Schneider commented on the culture of fear that the administration has supported and called for cutting the military budget significantly, and thanked Congressman Farr for attending and asked what we can do to help him speak out.

Tom Harvey stated that he has been collecting petitions and attended a march in Washington, D.C. on January 18. Mr. Harvey stated that he had approximately 600 signatures of those who think it's wiser to fund renewable energy, the creation of jobs and education systems than go to war right now. Mr. Harvey requested that Congressman Farr carry the petitions to President Bush.

Brad Neely, President of the Local Chapter 13 of Californians for Disability Rights, commented on the hypocrisy of claiming the need for preemptive action to stop Iraq from developing weapons of mass destruction when the United States has the largest inventory of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons in the world, which he considered morally and ethically wrong. Mr. Neely stated that he believes the U.S. should lead by example and disarm before demanding the same of other nations, and that he supports dealing with the UN process and the world court for resolving issues, including the aggressive actions of the United States under the Bush administration. Mr. Neely also spoke in support of disarming all countries.

Darrell Darling, Chair of the Democratic Party for the County of Santa Cruz, stated that the Central Committee has voted unanimously to oppose the war in Iraq, and that the Democratic Party for the State of California has taken the same stance. Mr. Darling further stated that historically they have worked very hard to put into place institutions such as the League of Nations and the United Nations that are designed to bring nations and people together to determine ways of resolving conflict as an alternative to war, and that he considered it to be a time of moral crisis globally, and constitutional crisis nationally, in that this is the first president in a civilized nation to even suggest a first strike and war as a first alternative and nuclear war as any kind of possibility as a means of defending ourselves. Mr. Darling thanked Congressman Farr for his leadership and urged him and all others to lead a call not only to protest but to work toward a popular government opposed to war.

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SPEAKING FROM THE FLOOR (continued):

Jody Holden stated that she participated in both the Santa Cruz and San Francisco marches and that many across the planet also participated. Ms. Holden also stated that the NPR reported that Bush said that he is not going to listen to the protestors. Mr. Holden suggested that if everyone did not use our cars for one day it would send a very strong message, and she asked Congressman Farr if he thought that was feasible.

Louie LaFortune, representing the Santa Cruz Peace Coalition, expressed appreciation for the town hall meeting and also to the many people who participated in the marches and rallies over the weekend. Mr. LaFortune stated that over ten million people throughout the world made a statement for peace and he considered the greatest power that of the people. Mr. LaFortune also applauded the City and County's stances on Iraq and Congressman Farr's efforts, especially for cosponsoring the DeFazio/Paul Bill, which would rescind the authorization for the use of force against Iraq. Mr. LaFortune called upon the City and County to declare Santa Cruz a sanctuary for war resisters, and asked that all members of Congress join the lawsuit brought by John Congers and five other members of Congress seeking an injunction against the Bush administration. Mr. LaFortune presented information regarding the lawsuit.

Pat McVey questioned all parents and grandparents, about what we are leaving for our children, and spoke of problems of education, health care and the environment. Ms. McVey urged that we think of our children and act accordingly.

Jeffrey Gale stated that while the latest edition of the *San Jose Mercury News* had no front page coverage of terrorism, the war in Iraq, or protests, there was a full-page ad stating that in the year 2001 more than half of the oil imported by California refineries came from Iraq, which produces 20 percent of the oil in the world. Mr. Gale urged everyone to contact editor of the *San Jose Mercury News* to object to the lack of coverage, cancel subscriptions and boycott the paper.

Cordelia Clancy, owner of Concrete Jungle Self-Defense, stated that she helped train the security advisor for General Meyers, of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Pentagon's top general. She was actually supposed to be there again over the weekend, but she declined in order to be able to participate in the local protest, which she made clear to them, so she figures her contract will not be renewed. Ms. Clancy offered a printout with the email addresses for the ambassadors of the United Nations Security Council, who stated that they are very interested in what the American people think of this issue.

SPEAKING FROM THE FLOOR (continued):

Jennifer Barr stated that there's a lot of talk about important external efforts, but she also felt an important component historically in successful peace movements is adding our own internal peace power, saying that inner peace is an important power and that it's important to keep that positive impact going.

Tammy Lynn Blake stated that if war is declared, there is going to be an international work stoppage, with everyone walking out and calling in sick the next day. Ms. Blake further stated that the British were more keen on this than Americans, but the idea is gaining in popularity, and if a work stoppage doesn't work, she suggested impeaching Bush. But, we can't stop people like Bush unless we stop corporate welfare, because most of the people in the White House came from large corporations.

Steve Hildebrand stated that there's a gross abuse of power going on unparalleled in our history and he can't believe that Congress has not held Bush accountable to the Constitution of the United States. Mr. Hildebrand considered Bush saying he's not listening to the people protesting across the world to be audacious, and that he supports John Conyer's injunction and encouraged Congressman Farr to sign on as well.

Fred Hirsch, member of Plumbers and Fitters Local 393 Union, stated that the 2000 members have no argument with the working families of Iraq, who will be the first victims of war, and he opposes going it alone with a preemptive strike against Iraq or any other nation. Mr. Hirsch cautioned about the Patriot Act II, which he stated would give statutes worse than those developed in Hitler's Germany, and that we could become like the good Germans who allowed the holocaust to happen, only this time there is access to nuclear weaponry as well.

Steven Parker stated that there are many reasons to be opposed to this war and that he believes that a powerful tactic would be to call President Bush on his own military record, wherein he technically deserted for almost a year.

Hatun Brown stated that she, a Syrian born across the border from Iraq, has been silent since 9/11. Ms. Brown further stated that she was a minority there, being a Christian, but she never thought she'd be in a minority in this great country. Ms. Brown challenged everyone to live in her homeland for one week under that kind of dictatorship and treatment. Ms. Brown also stated that she lost her grandmother, and does not know if her brother is dead or alive, because he spoke out. Ms. Brown further stated that she has lived through this, and three wars, and while no one wants war we're dealing with uncivilized dictatorships who do not understand anything but power and strength, and that her town in Syria, outside of Damascus, is now gone. Ms. Brown urged Republicans and Democrats to unite, because it's the only thing that Iraq will understand.

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SPEAKING FROM THE FLOOR (continued):

Celia Scott stated that we can all feel sympathy for the tragedies in Iraq, Syria and throughout the world and that was why they were gathered together, because we don't want more tragedy or for our country to become an uncivilized dictatorship. Ms. Scott also stated that she thought it was incredulous that the President would call the millions of protestors around the world "focus groups" and feels the Democratic Party needs to do much more because we are faced with an unprecedented crisis. Ms. Scott expressed objections to four of the Democratic presidential candidates' support for the President's stance on war with Iraq, and mentioned a letter she wrote speaking out against the first-strike use of nuclear weapons, which the United States has not ruled out, and that the Pentagon has an attack plan called "Shock and Awe," the main purpose being to create a Hiroshima-like effect (Pentagon's language) with a massive barrage in the first three-four days of the war with more missiles than in the entire Gulf War to terrorize the Iraqi population into submission. Ms. Scott further stated that she could not believe that her government has put together and conceived such a heinous and immoral action, and urged Congressman Farr to speak out against this action and do whatever he can to tell President Bush that the people do not support his tactics.

Reagan Brachier, member of Labor for Peace and Justice and Civil Liberties, announced an event Saturday, February 22, 1:30-3:30 p.m., at the Vet's Hall called "The Voices of Labor Forum: What's the Cost of War for Working Families?"

Steve Rocher, member of Machinists Union Local 2130, stated that President Bush has accumulated dishonest people around him and should be removed from office for malfeasance, considering it treasonable.

Robert Norse spoke on behalf of Homeless United for Friendship and Freedom, stating that he supported this town hall meeting. Mr. Norse further stated that if a local movement against Iraq is to be formed, he believes we must reject the politicians who were elected on a platform of progressive principles and then abandon them out of concerns for political gain and fear of police businesses, and that if we demand equal rights in Washington, D.C., we must also demand them here in Santa Cruz. Mr. Norse also commented on dissatisfaction with various votes Congressman Farr has made, and suggested that he lead a delegation to Iraq, apologize to the local community and call for regular meetings with the public. Mr. Norse urged the recall of "compromised" officials including the City Council, Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors and Congressional Representatives, stating that it was important to proceed without them to get to the real issues such as housing, police corruption, civil rights, etc. Mr. Norse further called for the declaration of Santa Cruz as a sanctuary for those who resist the war and stated that the community could do that on its own and not count on elected officials who he believed support the war on the poor.

SPEAKING FROM THE FLOOR (continued):

Fernando Velazco stated that his father is a veteran of World War II and the Korean War, and that he had not seen a dictator like this since World War II. Mr. Velazco further stated that he supports the soldiers but not their leaders and wondered what happened with the War Powers Act.

Jake Williams, representing the Youth Coalition of Santa Cruz, stated that they had organized their own anti-war rally. Mr. Williams further stated that he's been to a lot of rallies but doesn't feel that it's having an impact and asked what else youth can do to have an impact on this issue.

Steve Argue spoke on behalf of the Peace and Freedom Party, announcing that the party had registered the 76,000 voters needed in order to get back on the ballot in California, and that while schools are being closed down Congressman Farr voted for over \$400 billion for funding the military. Mr. Argue commented on the lack of health care and housing and felt those more important to fund, and that Congressman Farr has supported a corrupt government in Colombia that has a significant history of civil rights violations and called for that support to end. Mr. Argue also called for an end to the sanctions against Iraq because of the impact on Iraqi citizens, especially children. Mr. Argue also commented on radiation poisoning from the Gulf War and cautioned that will continue to happen. Mr. Argue announced his candidacy as a Peace and Freedom Party in the next congressional election and that he'd be running against Congressman Farr, and mentioned some of the key issues upon which his campaign would focus.

Bobbie Schaller, board member of the Women's Democratic Committee, stated that they have been sending half-pound bags of rice to President Bush and asking him to send it to the people of Iraq. She said the same thing had been done during World War II. Ms. Schaller urged others to participate in this activity.

Augustina Santanya stated that there's a group of mothers who stand every Friday at 4:45 p.m. at the corner of Porter and Soquel. Ms. Santanya stated that they have notified the *Santa Cruz County Sentinel* of their activities, that she knows there are other groups doing the same thing, yet she has seen no coverage in the *Santa Cruz Sentinel*. Ms. Santanya further stated that she has attended marches both in Santa Cruz and San Francisco and believes it's important for the world to know that people do stand in opposition and also called for President Bush's impeachment.

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SPEAKING FROM THE FLOOR (continued):

Pat Kittle stated that he is generally in accord with what was being said and that he also wanted to address the other species who will be impacted by war and also the species here. Mr. Kittle suggested that the country stop involving itself in disputes over other countries' borders and instead protect the country's own borders because he believes we are already overpopulated.

Joey Elizabeth expressed that she was moved by the woman from Syria who spoke and thanked her for speaking, and that she believes it is important that both with the peace movement and our government in general, that our actions are speaking to the people of the world. She stated that she is against war and against Saddam Hussein, but supported a foreign policy that empowered poor people. Ms. Elizabeth also commented on the war currently going on in Afghanistan and stated that we have not given the money committed to rebuilding their country.

Madison Fitzgerald stated that on her father's grave it says, "The kids are right.'— Berkeley 1968" and that he would want people to know that their main weapon is to vote. Ms. Fitzgerald also stated that the country's priority should be focused on housing, jobs and education, and that a study by the American Association of Museums shows that for every dollar spent on the arts, thirty dollars is returned to the community. Ms. Fitzgerald urged military spending be cut and arts funding increased.

Hail Aquarian commented that e pluribus unum means one for all and all for one, not that a minority has the right to intimidate the majority of people. Mr. Aquarian also stated that he felt we live in a corporate democracy and equated that to corporate fascism. He believes the only hope is for a national strike that would stop the wheels of commerce and industry, having heard it had been done successfully in Europe. Mr. Aquarian further stated that World Health Organization reports that 33,000 children under the age of five die every day from poverty-related causes, and that he considers that lack of action equates to complicity.

SPEAKING FROM THE FLOOR (continued):

Laura Finn spoke on behalf of California Peace Action, which she said is the oldest and largest social justice and peace group in the country, and stated that they speak to constituents on a regular basis. Ms. Finn further stated that constituents have seen Congressman Farr support other positive issues, but that while the Bush administration has a clear message regarding its stance, she has not seen a strong, unified opposition, and that the anti-war voices need to be heard. She called upon Congressman Farr to take a further step to promoting basic democratic values and human rights. Ms. Finn requested that Congressman Farr sign onto California Peace Action's pledge for a new American foreign policy that would include supporting human rights and democracy, end the proliferation of nuclear weapons and promote international cooperation. Ms. Finn further stated that U.S. military aid and arms sales to oppressive governments have created a negative attitude toward the U.S, and that we need to stop oppression by ending military aid programs and supporting human rights. Ms. Finn urged our nation to take a leadership role, and informed everyone that the California Peace Action is mobilizing the public, who understands that the Bush policies threaten to create a less safe world.

Fred Piper stated that he has appreciated Congressman Farr's work throughout his career, and that he was talking to people who were gathering items to send for humanitarian aid to Afghanistan, and he was afraid that for the second time we are failing in our responsibility to Afghanistan by not keeping our promises of food and medicine reaching the people who need it. Mr. Piper urged attention be paid to this matter, and requested that the City Council consider adopting a resolution stating that we should keep to our promises in Afghanistan so that we can feel proud of how we acted after moving the Taliban out.

Bonnie Stone stated that she was concerned and terrified and wondered what it must be like for the people of Iraq right now and what it's like for them to be innocent victims. She stated that she's beginning to feel like an innocent perpetrator because the cries for peace are not being listened to. Ms. Stone also stated that she's attended marches, emailed appropriate parties in the U.N., yet she feels it falls on deaf ears since Bush says he is not paying attention to those who oppose the war.

Marilyn Marshall said she's wearing a pendant designed by a child during the Viet Nam War, which says "War is not healthy for children and other living things."

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SPEAKING FROM THE FLOOR (continued):

Ed Oberwiser, editor of the *Green Press* and a boardmember of the Monterey Bay Toxics Project, urged Congressman Farr to introduce articles of impeachment against President Bush because he believes that Jeb Bush illegally purged tens of thousands of votes, and because President Bush failed his oath of office to protect and defend the Constitution by introducing the U.S. Patriot Act. Mr. Oberwiser urged Congressman Farr to look into a situation at Fort Ord where he said that a toxic waste dump is located 400 feet from student housing.

Ellen Edith stated that she's living with cancer and has been irradiated. Ms. Edith further stated that she condemns her government for using weapons of mass destruction in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and now in Iraq, and for exposing all those men, women and children to cancer in all of those countries.

Micah Posner, speaking on behalf of People Power, spoke to the dependence of oil, saying that the ancient Romans used slaves to run its empire, and we use oil, that is what subsidizes our consumption and establishes our global dominance. Mr. Posner further stated that the government subdues any nation that does not allow our corporations to extract their resources, and that Bush is not invading Iraq because of Saddam Hussein being a despot but, rather, because Iraq is the only major oil producer that does not let the U.S.-based oil corporations control its oil fields. Mr. Posner stated that Americans use 30 times the oil of the average world citizen and more than half of that is used for cars, and that he believes we can stop the war by sending a clear message of no war in our names, no blood for oil, no blood for empire, or an even more effective, direct way is to reduce our consumption of oil until it is in line with other industrialized nations. Mr. Posner stated that more than half of the trips in Santa Cruz are less than five miles; a third are less than one mile, and he urged people to use alternative transportation as a way to demonstrate that we are world citizens rather than imperialists and to express our disapproval of violence for empire, and he further urged attention to local transportation issues and having those issues reflect our community values. Mr. Posner believes that the widening of Highway 1 would support continued dependency on oil and is tantamount to collusion with the Bush administration, and called upon Congressman Farr to publicly oppose the widening of Highway 1, and he asked audience to stand up if they stand against war for oil and against widening Highway 1.

SPEAKING FROM THE FLOOR (continued):

Nathan Britton stated that most are aware that in the 1980s the U.S. provided both the raw materials for weapons of mass destruction and also the intelligence support for their use to Iraq. Mr. Britton stated that if we are going to have a real debate about security in the U.S. we need to ask why we're preparing to invade a country whose capacity for destruction we have actively fostered, and that he believes it's long overdue that we have a mainstream movement that defines what national security should be for our country. Mr. Britton stated that Congressman Farr has voiced his opposition to a war in Iraq, and that this would set a precedent for a doctrine of a pre-emptive strike, and he asked if Congressman Farr would establish a precedent of a different sort by putting forth a position wherein a foreign policy is rooted in democratic values and a respect for international law. Mr. Britton urged Congressman Farr to sign a pledge for a new foreign policy.

Chris Spinnerelli stated that he's concerned that some are losing sight of what regime should be in focus right now, and that he does not think that President Bush is evil or a madman because he's not the one killing, raping, and using biological weapons against his own people.

The Mayor then thanked all participants and asked Congressman Farr to comment again.

Congressman Farr thanked attendees for coming and for their patience with one another, and stated that the array of issues raised is encouraging and enlightening, and that Mrs. Brown brought it all home to us when speaking of her experience in Syria and that we have to look at that perspective. Congressman Farr further stated that he hoped that as we go forth that we focus on the way one gets democracy to work, that we are still in a country of the rule of the majority, and when that rule is something you don't like, you can get mad at it, but the best way is to work through a process of petitioning the government. Congressman Farr spoke regarding the efforts of the House of Representatives, who are regular people such as ourselves, from all walks of life, that represent 650,000 people each, and that they do what he does—go home every weekend and talk to their constituents. Congressman Farr further stated that there is not one view of the situation and what should be done, but that what congressional representatives can do is make their districts more sensitive to the fact that you can't go to Washington and vote on foreign policy without knowing the consequences of that policy here at home, and that what he found so impressive tonight was not only that the City Council's resolution was the first in the nation, and that it is a small city, but also that a majority of cities in America followed suit, and also what citizens did here to petition their local government to take action, and the effect it had.

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Congressmember Farr also praised the Aptos Teachers, saying that there's a national teacher's association movement, and if teachers across the nation take action, we'll see change. Congressmember Farr addressed the expense of the war in Iraq, stating that the last time we went to the Middle East in 1991 the cost was approximately \$56 billion, about \$6 billion of it from the U.S., the rest borne by the other countries involved, and that this time we would be going at it alone and not have that financial, as well as political, support from other nations. Congressmember Farr further stated that those funds could be used to solve health-care problems, improve education and develop alternative sources of energy and more fuel-efficient vehicles, and that the energy policy of our nation has long been debated, and that the Bush administration is very pro-oil, wanting drilling in Alaska, although the effort is being made to block that in Congress, but he doesn't know if there are enough votes to do so. Congressmember Farr also stated that they tried to raise the standards so that Detroit would have to build cars that got better mileage, and that we should all participate in this by being consumers and act according to our values, and that this is important because governments are one of the largest buyers of consumer goods, so when we lobby them to act/purchase appropriately it can make a difference, and that little by little change occurs, usually reaching Washington last.

Congressmember Farr stated regarding the impeachment process that was addressed by speakers, that the process begins in the House Judiciary Committee with a hearing, and that the committee did have a hearing regarding President Clinton because the Republicans were in control, and passed articles of impeachment to the floor, which was also passed because of the Republican majority. He does not think that the House Judiciary Committee has any interest in holding a hearing regarding President Bush, and without that, you cannot have an impeachment process.

Representative Farr stated that he was very supportive of ending sanctions against Iraq. The subcommittee he sits on voted to lift the sanctions on food and medicines to all nations, including Cuba, and he led the debate on the floor on that issue. Congressmember Farr further stated that the sanctions against Iraq are multilateral sanctions rather than unilateral sanctions from our country alone; therefore, they are still in effect. Members of Congress have voted to lift those where we have unilateral sanctions and to instruct our representatives in the U.N. to vote to lift sanctions when they are multilateral.

Congressmember Farr spoke to the issue of depleted uranium, and stated that this is a serious problem, and that our government has refused to recognize the problem. He stated that Congress has been asked to appropriate money for studies, such as was done with the Gulf War Syndrome and the use of Agent Orange during the Viet Nam War, and that Jim McDermott, a doctor who is also a representative from Seattle, and has been to Iraq, came back and reported to Congress on the seriousness of the infection of depleted uranium and what it has done for the children in Iraq and the lack of medicine available for them. He and Representative McDermott have tried to get money appropriated so they can get some recognition, saying that you cannot get the government to solve a problem until it recognizes that there is a problem, and that they will continue to work on that issue.

Regarding the ABM and Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, Congressmember Farr stated those are issues he strongly supports, and that the Bush administration has been repealing the treaties that the United States has signed and refuses to sign other treaties, particularly concerning global warming. He stated that we are "backtracking" on a lot of that and that it will be a long fight in Congress this year, that he doesn't think there will be a lot of positive things from the point of view of this meeting's attendees, but that the Democrats can try to keep them from doing serious damage, including going to war in Iraq.

Congressmember Farr stated that he did want to comment on something brought up by Fernando Velazco, and that we in the U.S. have an all-volunteer military and that those in Congress do support their service to their country, although they don't always agree with the civilian command of the military, but that they do try to support quality of life for men and women in the military and honor the people that represent us.

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Regarding the issue of the connection with Al Quaida, Congressman Farr stated that there have been many intelligence briefings, closed door sessions with the various agencies that are involved in gathering intelligence, and in not one of those hearings has anyone indicated that the U.S. is under direct threat from Iraq. Now, neighboring countries, yes; how much of a threat is debated; their capability is debated. No one disputes that they have materials for weapons of mass destruction and that some of those materials are in some kind of weapon form, but there is always a big debate on how effective those weapons are, how far they can be transported and the efficiency of the transport. What is known is that if, indeed, war comes, the surrounding countries are the ones most immediately threatened. Congressman Farr also stated that this raises an issue because if you look back to 1991, when we responded to the Gulf War, with those nations and with the surrounding Middle Eastern nations being allies to the U.S., why, if they are the most threatened countries, are they not supportive of going to war; it says something that there's not yet a world opinion that what the Bush administration is trying to put forth is being accepted. He stated that many in Congress try to keep putting the emphasis on the inspectors because while the inspectors are there, staff will not have the ability to be able to put together weapons of mass destruction, and that the last time inspectors were there, they were there for five years. He further stated that perhaps 85% of the material that was in Iraq was destroyed. So, the question is what could they have done with the remaining 15% during the period that the inspectors have not been there. Now that they're back in, if given more time since they've only been there a few months, he thinks we can keep the emphasis on the prevention of war rather than going to war, and that we need to continue on that road. Congressman Farr stated that while no one is announcing when we would actually go to war, he estimates we have at least a month before all of the equipment arrives in the Middle East. He does not encourage civil disobedience, because we really need to build a majority in this country, but that what we could do is talk to the people we love and care about, since they're not just in Santa Cruz County, and get them to speak out as well and encourage their local governments, teachers' association, unions, etc., and their own members of Congress to petition the government as well as doing so individually. This is how we can change the attitude of this country —through grassroots movements of lobbying our elected officials.

Congressmember Farr stated that one thing that was not brought up during public comment but he believes is very important is to not have the tax cut the Bush administration is putting forth that will just benefit the rich. Last year, they passed a serious piece of legislation called "Leave No Child Behind" where they were making the federal government commit to K-12 education; there's not much federal money devoted to K-12 education; most is state or local money, with only 8% being federal funds, and that if we put more money into K-12 education, it would really help. He stated that we made a long commitment of promises but never funded it, so instead of "Leave No Child Behind," with a tax policy of cutting out \$1.3 trillion of revenue, and increasing military buildup and costs it does not look promising. He also noted that military budget for Iraq has not yet come before Congress; they don't pre-pay, they come in afterwards in a supplemental bill. He believes that the American public needs to talk about what we need to put that money into; the issues that will make our communities stronger and healthier, and that homeland defense begins with personal security, which is a community issue; the ideal would be a community where people look out for one another and don't need to lock their doors, live in fear, to be able to grow up in East Salinas and not worry about youth violence. Congressmember Farr stated that gang violence, etc., are the types of terrorist activities that happen in our country each day, and we have not made the commitment to stop terrorism at home that's been here for a long time.

Congressmember Farr further stated that he appreciated someone bringing up the issue of aid to Afghanistan, and that is a follow-through issue, and he'd be happy to meet with the group that's been collecting items and see what he could do to assist them in getting the aid to the people intended. He stated that there are all kinds of things that they can do through his office, and that his staff is in attendance to follow up on the issues raised, and all those who have sent petitions, written questions, will get their answers back in writing and will have the chance to hear from his office.

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Lastly, Congressman Farr commented on “what’s next?” He stated that we have to be more actively involved in getting our media to pay attention. It’s one thing to ask him to do something more demonstrative, but he said that, frankly, they’ve had press conferences after press conferences; you’d think they would cover them, but they don’t. The press may cover them in Washington, D.C. but the local media won’t pick it up. He said that is a difficulty, said that what has happened throughout the U.S. and particularly in this region, ten years ago, when he was first elected, all the local newspapers were locally owned. Now all are owned by international groups. He also stated that they don’t cover the stories that locally owned newspapers covered; it’s a one size fits all approach, so they take one story from Washington, D.C. rather than the stories of all the different members of Congress and their separate districts. He said when you try to get into those stories, they say, we don’t have time to run that story, they’ll just take it off the wire service, and he understands that people here are frustrated because he does not know how much media coverage the town hall meeting would get. He also said that this is the first happening in the U.S., and was then interrupted by a member of the public calling out that a radio station was there. He continued saying that was good, and that when people do see media coverage or see media at an event, to thank them for being there and reporting, and call the editor and thank him or her and urge them to continue such coverage. He said that we are the consumers of this media and therefore have influence. He said that his wife is constantly calling KSBW (local NBC affiliate), and that she was furious that they did not have a reporter at the anti-war rally in Santa Cruz on the previous Saturday. He said that those are the kind of things we need to do to get the word out and bring attention to these issues. Congressman Farr was then informed that the *Santa Cruz County Sentinel*, *Good Times*, and *San Jose Mercury News* all had reporters there; he said he appreciated that and asked that they receive a big round of applause. He also thanked *Free Radio Santa Cruz*.

Congressman Farr stated that Congress will be back in session the following week and will work to bring awareness to this issue. He commented that many of the Democrats who have declared their candidacy for the next presidential election supported President Bush’s efforts. He said the Iowa caucuses would be the beginning of the main campaign cycle and that Dennis Kucinich, who is opposed to the war, will bring these issues to the Presidential forum during his campaign. Said it will be interesting to see how the people respond to the information that will be brought forth during the campaign.

Congressmember Farr ended his comments by saying that in the final analysis, if indeed we are going to be a compassionate country that will deal with the needs of the people in this country and are very compassionate dealing with the needs of people in need around the world, we've got to become a much better government that really is of, by, and for the people. He then thanked everyone very much.

The Mayor then said that if anyone thought of something later that they did not express this evening, they could call Congressman Farr's office with their comments.

Action

Councilmember Rotkin moved, seconded by Mayor Reilly, to direct the City Clerk to send copies of the audio tape of the comments everyone had made to President Bush, Congressman Farr, and all local media outlets, and to bring back to City Council some recommendations concerning the House Joint Resolution 20 to repeal the authorization of force in Iraq, and the Brown/Kind letter to support the U.N. inspectors or any other relevant motions that they might be able to have. The motion carried unanimously (Vice Mayor Kennedy absent).

ADJOURNMENT at 9:34 p.m. the City Council adjourned to the next regularly scheduled Council meeting on Tuesday, February 25, 2003, for a closed litigation session at 1:30 p.m. in the Council Support Room, followed by 3:00 and 7:00 p.m. open sessions in Council Chambers.

Respectfully submitted

Anna Brooks
Administrative Assistant II

Approved

Leslie Cook
City Clerk

Approved

Emily Reilly
Mayor