

Midcoast Community Council

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An elected Municipal Advisory Council of the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors
Serving 12,000 Coastal Residents

May 6, 2002

San Mateo County Planning Commission
County Office Building
455 county Center
Redwood City, CA 94063

Dear Planning Commissioners,

The MidCoast Community Council again heard testimony regarding the El Granada Manufactured Home Community at our meeting of April 24. Several homeowners from the community were present and they gave an update on recent mediation attempts and issues of concern which have yet to be resolved. Attorney Ed McDonald, representing Kingsley Management, was also in attendance and was given the opportunity to comment and answer questions.

In our letter to you of February 7 regarding this matter, the Council made six recommendations. We have since revised many of these points and have added a series of other items for your consideration.

1. The Council remains supportive of the enactment of the rent control ordinance submitted by Supervisor Gordon and the designation of the park as an affordable housing site, complete with the necessary rezoning. Because the site is all ready developed, however the designation of the percentages of affordable units will be more challenging than on those sites where development has yet to occur. Designating only 50% of the units as affordable will require some sort of a selection process, and the criteria for making such a determination remains unclear. As the Staff Report notes, the "amortization" method will offer little assistance to current home owners and more than 50% of the homeowners may already qualify for low income housing. **Our concern is that the units remain affordable in perpetuity and designating the entire park as affordable would seem to more adequately serve that purpose.**

In addition, the Council recommends that no existing units be replaced with houses of increased square footage until the affordability issue is resolved. In addition to the failure of larger homes to conform with many of the set back and lot coverage requirements (see #4 below), larger homes have higher selling prices, increasing the cost of home ownership within the community.

2. Assisting the Homeowner's Association in its attempts to purchase the property is the alternative preferred by the Association and the Council strongly supports this proposal. There are numerous issues, aside from the rental fee, that are not being addressed by the

management of the park. Ownership of the park by those who live there will eliminate these problems and allow the Homeowners Association to develop policies and management procedures which are far more responsive to the needs and desires of this community.

To assist in this endeavor, the Council recommends that the Planning Commission request the funding necessary to obtain an appraisal of the value of the park. In addition, funding for and completion of a demographic survey of the residents, determining individual eligibility for low income state or federal loans, would help this process move forward. Page 3 of the Staff Report states that "The County has not surveyed the income levels of park residents to determine how many are already of low or moderate income...It would be helpful to have more information about how much the EGMHC residents are paying for their mortgages."

3. It is the opinion of both the Homeowner's Association and the Kingsley Management representatives that the mediation process, thus far, has not been successful. At the one session that did occur, very few of the identified issues were discussed and homeowners felt that they were not given an opportunity to freely express their concerns. A mandatory mediation confidentiality agreement imposed by Kingsley Management further eroded any feeling of trust or cooperation between the parties. At this point, mediation alone does not seem to provide a viable remedy.

4. The use permit on the property remains one of the most convoluted yet potentially helpful components in this situation. Since it was issued in 1963, the use permit for the operation of the park has never been renewed. In the subsequent 39 years, the configuration of the park has been altered, seven residences have been added that were not on the original plan and the lot lines have been changed. In addition, there are many lots containing structures which do not conform to the existing regulations and until very recently, there seemed to be no concerted enforcement efforts on the part of the County. Illegal setbacks and encroachments are not the exception, they are the rule. Homes are being moved onto lots without the required County approvals. The requirement for awnings on the exterior of the homes causes many to violate lot coverage maximums.

After the County required that the owner re-survey the property, it approved the revised survey map before the new lot markers had been put in place. Following placement of the markers, it has been discovered by many residents that their homes are straddling lot lines and that parts of their historic back and side yards belong to the neighboring lots. The Council's Planning and Zoning Committee has not been forwarded plans for the placement of new homes or the revised survey map of the property for review and comment. It is not clear why the Building Division is handling these issues rather than Planning. What is the process by which these approvals are being granted?

Attaching conditions to the renewal of the use permit can address issues relating to the flexible scheduling of office hours, accessibility to public spaces within the park, upgrades to amenities within the park, timely response to homeowner inquiries and complaints, consistent delivery of rent statements with detailed utility use information, necessary infrastructure upgrades and maintenance, water availability and quality, rules regarding fences and awnings and the general improvement of the communication between the homeowners and the management.

5. The Housing Task Force for the Housing Element of the County General Plan has been selected and we find it most unfortunate that there is no formal participation from any of the County's elected advisory groups. We continue to believe that the direct inclusion of members of low income communities is invaluable to this process. The MidCoast Community Council and members of the El Granada Manufactured Home Community fully intend to participate by all means available to us in the affordable housing segment of the Local Coastal Plan and Housing Element revisions.

6. In your deliberations on this matter, we ask that you note that several provisions of the current Local Coastal Plan directly cover the issues at hand. Policies 3.11, 3.13, 3.24, 3.26 and 3.27 cover protection of the park as an affordable housing site, maintaining community character in affordable housing sites and County responsibility in facilitating and securing financing opportunities for affordable housing.

The MidCoast Community again stresses the need for the affordability of this community to be secured as soon as possible. A rent increase of \$39.00 has now gone into effect and homeowners have no assurance that the current charge will not be increased in the future. With the availability of affordable housing so severely lacking throughout the County, park residents have few other housing options. Our community cannot afford to lose the valuable members of our workforce who contribute to our local economy and willingly accept the responsibilities of home ownership.

We ask that you seriously consider our recommendations and recognize the importance of maintaining affordable housing in this and every community within San Mateo County.

Sincerely,



Chuck Kozak
Chair, MidCoast Community Council

cc: Supervisor Rich Gordon
Senior Planner Mark Duinno
EGMHC Homeowners Association Secretary Lisa Ketcham