

PUBLIC COMMENT – CITY COUNCIL MEETING – JANUARY 20, 2026

Mayor and Council Members, my name is Ken Dickinson. I live in San Rafael Meadows.

I want to thank the City Manager's Office for hosting the January 14 community meeting at Venetia Valley School regarding the proposed project at 350 Merrydale Road. It was a productive and constructive meeting.

I especially appreciate the public commitment to keep the ad hoc neighborhood residents group connected to the project on a monthly basis. That commitment allows residents to stay informed, offer input, receive updates, and maintain some level of ongoing oversight as the project moves forward.

However, this is still not the formal Neighborhood Advisory Committee that many residents requested—an idea supported by two Marin Independent Journal editorials, a column by Dick Spotswood, numerous letters to the editor, and referenced ^{indirectly} in the Mayor's recent Op-Ed in the Marin IJ.

In that Op-Ed, the Mayor noted that San Rafael can learn from successful projects elsewhere in Marin, including Corte Madera's Casa Buena. A key element of that project's success was a neighborhood advisory group that worked directly with town and county leadership to ensure community needs were met, later evolving into ongoing support.

I believe this Council has an opportunity to make a policy decision to formalize a similar advisory committee for the Merrydale project. The City Manager's Office has already shown the value of regular community involvement. Formalizing it would strengthen trust, improve outcomes, and align this project with best practices the City has publicly endorsed.

Thank you for your time and consideration.