Outlook

Oct 5 City Council Meeting Agenda Item 3b. For the Public Record

From kdickinson@aol.com [redacted]
Date Mon 10/5/2026 3:15 PM
To Lindsay Lara <lindsay.lara@cityofsanrafael.org>; Distrib City Clerk <city.clerk@cityofsanrafael.org>

Could you please make the following public record statement available to member and staff of the San Rafael City Council.
Thank You

FOR THE PUBLIC RECORD
Agenda Item No. 3.b:

Title: Exclusive Negotiating Agreement Regarding Affordable Housing

Good evening, Mayor and Members of the City Council. My name is Ken Dickinson, and I live in the Rafael Meadows neighborhood.

Tonight, you are being asked to approve Eden Housing for the development of 350 Merrydale. I urge you to pause and look closely at the operational track record you are inviting into our community.

The staff report points to a 'robust community outreach' program, but let's be entirely transparent: those meetings were overwhelmingly focused on the temporary interim shelter—not a permanent, multi-story housing project. There was only a single community meeting held in June 2026 to provide updates on the interim shelter and gather *initial* feedback on the permanent affordable housing project. When our neighborhood actually had a voice in choosing a permanent developer, we overwhelmingly preferred EAH Housing—a proven, trusted local partner deeply attuned to our community's standards.

Instead, the city is leaning toward a developer with a history of friction and financial strain. On July 21, 2021, the Marin Independent Journal reported on Eden Housing and Vivalon's senior affordable housing project at 999 Third Street, where escalating costs for materials, insurance, and lending forced Eden to return and pressure the city for over $214,000 in fee waivers just to make their numbers work.

Beyond municipal finances, we must look at the human cost and the day-to-day lived reality of tenants in Eden-managed properties, as shared in genuine community accounts on platforms like Yelp. Residents on the ground consistently describe a distressing pattern: severe management neglect, chronic maintenance failures, unresolved security breakdowns, and properties that leave vulnerable residents feeling entirely unsupported and unprotected.

Affordable housing is vital, but who we partner with dictates whether a neighborhood thrives or fractures. Sidelining our community's clear preference for EAH—while ignoring clear warning signs from Eden's past local project and managed properties—is a recipe for long-term friction and community distrust.

Please vote no tonight, or table this item to allow a genuine, transparent evaluation of developer suitability and true neighborhood alignment.

Thank you.