

From: Brad Sears [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, November 17, 2020 12:26 PM
To: Lindsay Lara <Lindsay.Lara@cityofsanrafael.org>
Subject: Fwd: Thoughts on Streamlining for tonights Planning Commission, excerpt from Marin Post article 11/23

Oops, that was Mission and Lincoln in the third paragraph and my contact #'s in case it is required are [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] Brad Sears

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Brad Sears [REDACTED]
Date: Tue, Nov 17, 2020 at 10:06 AM
Subject: Thoughts on Streamlining for tonights Planning Commission, excerpt from Marin Post article 11/23
To: Brad Sears [REDACTED], Lindsay Lara <lindsay.lara@cityofsanrafael.org>

LOOK WHAT'S COMING TO TOWN.. ITS SMART

PLANNING!!

San Rafael's proposed "Streamlining" is forced urbanization of your neighborhood by depleting public engagement and lowering or eliminating reasonable affordable unit requirements for new multi unit construction. Combined with a windfall of State mandates, Streamlining effectively terminates residential neighborhood zoning within 1/4 mile of a bus route, busses that are largely empty.

"Streamlining" is the latest SMART planning tool!

Numerous unbuilt projects wait that rely on deregulation as an incentive to make them extra profitable. An example is the weed filled lots at 1628 5th Ave and the corner of 5th and Lincoln. In the West End Village two projects are on the market after receiving heat from neighbors and now await retroactive plums with Streamlining. When the mega apartment complex on the corner of 3rd and Lincoln was approved the Planning Commission stated that the applicants financial proposal is, like all similar intensive applications, secret. And that was the good old days. Why is the planning department bending over backwards to approve these bloated housing ventures? The city is trying to grow its way out of a pension hole by creating new tax revenue rather than becoming efficient and recognising that everything has changed, except developers greed and self interest. Besides, who doesn't love deregulation?

Zoning is a carrot and stick balance with speculators and residents' best interests, not now. Voters sent one council member, John Gamblin into retirement last November. Mr Gamblin, a member of the city council for 6 years was appointed in 2014 and served without ever having met an opponent. Parroting the developers mantra "We need more housing" did not help his prospects when he finally met his match. Once codified, this Republican styled deregulatory scheme masquerading as progressive pro housing is abusive and undemocratic. This systematic arrangement sacrifices public engagement and responsive politics. The amendment is pure brinkmanship on the part of the development lobby and perfect timing considering officials do not have to face their constituents face to face. Fear and isolation is their insulation.

Naturally real estate developers avoid taxes, promote income inequality, build family dynasties and push deregulation. Streamlining incentivises gentrification not affordability. Using pre-Covid demographic and no urban exodus stats to sell Streamlining- is crafty too. State initiatives that failed in committee attacking suburbia are possible where less publicised local amendments are more likely to slide through. The local Chamber of Commerce gleefully assists this fraudulently named high density scam that eliminates local control and counters their own workforce housing priorities is providing the grease!

The California Association of Realtors lobby supplied their "cut and paste" solution to this fraudulently named amendment that effectively eliminates residential zoning in San Rafael where the majority of housing is vulnerable. Their stated policy threatens elected officials and candidates that question their tactics. CAR is serious, spending 35 million losing Proposition 19. Streamlining measures failed in the state legislature so CAR is using San Rafael as their guinea pig.

<https://marinpost.org/blog/2020/9/13/california-association-of-realtors-operation-local-growth>

The San Rafael planning department and city council need not fret, they love the idea that developers can pay an in lieu fee (\$609,000) per unit and skip the scruffy residents in affordable units. Sustainability and affordable housing advocates should see through the exaggerated "housing crisis" rhetoric and insist that developers meet the previous affordability ratio, which was cut in half.

Remember the flowery IJ editorials about how necessary the Design Review process is? That nuisance disappears along with the democratic process, accountability from elected officials, on street parking, privacy and property values, abetted by the IJ's neglect and disregard for free and open access to archived articles and public comment. This is a developers dream come true and will make San Rafael neighborhoods a target.

<https://www.marinij.com/2019/01/09/editorial-marin-needs-its-design-review-boards/>

Streamlining is the gift that keeps on giving long after The Mayor catches SMART to the end of the line. This is the most important regulatory issue before a new Planning Commission and a new city council. Trickle down voodoo development economics meets political lackeys in this forced social engineering experiment that benefits only the already wealthy.

"You never let a serious crisis go to waste. And what I mean by that: it's an opportunity to do things you think you could not do before"

Rahm Emanuel

**** This article will appear in next weeks online edition of the Marin Post ****



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November 16, 2020

San Rafael City Council
1400 Fifth Ave., Rm. 209
San Rafael, CA 94901

Dear Commissioners:

Marin Environmental Housing Collaborative (MEHC) is a consortium of advocates building support for projects and policies that advance affordable housing as well as environmental integrity and social justice.

MEHC in general supports modifications to the various existing San Rafael regulations that have hampered the development of affordable housing and we appreciate the considerable thought and research that has gone into this effort.

The inclusionary housing ordinance has been one of the most effective tools for securing affordable housing and addressing housing segregation. The inclusionary program has been the source of most of the affordable housing built in San Rafael over the past 10 years. It may be necessary to amend the ordinance to improve its effectiveness, but changes should be made carefully and with transparency.

We recommend that the city choose a 15% onsite requirement for projects of more than 15 units. According to the staff report presented to the City Council on September 8, this option should be economically feasible for all but some smaller low-rise projects. This option provides the most affordability, including a requirement of housing units for very low-income households. As of the last RHNA progress report, San Rafael had met only 2% of its RHNA requirements for very low-income units — just five units out of a required 240. *This level of affordability is entirely missing from the 10% option suggested in the November 17 Planning Commission staff report.*

In addition, the 15% equivalent scenario from the September 8 staff report provides an option for more sale units affordable to moderate-income households, another area of unfulfilled need according to the last RHNA progress report (just 7%, or 12 out of 181 required units.)

MEHC would support a 10% onsite requirement for projects smaller than 15 units to ensure the viability of those projects.

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We are pleased to see provisions for annual reporting and periodic program review to assess the impact of the proposed changes and assess whether these changes are achieving the goal of producing more affordable housing. However, we would like to see a breakdown of the inclusionary units developed through the existing program (as differentiated from those developed in 100% affordable housing projects) as a baseline.

Respectfully,



David Levin
Co-Chair



Sami Mericle
Co-Chair