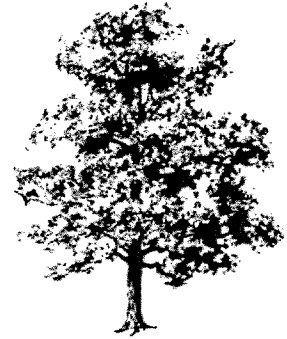




WE Watch, P.O Box 830, Solvang CA93464

January 23, 2022

TO: Santa Barbara Board of Supervisors
FROM: WE Watch, Nancy Emerson, President
RE: Decker Greenhouse Appeal



WE Watch asks you to deny the appeal of the Planning Commission’s denial of the application to grow vegetables in a 15,648 square foot industrial greenhouse abutting City of Solvang and Fredensborg Canyon Road homes.

It is not an appropriate use in this Inner Rural area abutting the Solvang city limits and its single family housing. The SYV Community Plan describes the Inner Rural Area as having changed over time in the Valley: “The subdivision of Inner-Rural AG-1 parcels is resulting in more estate ranchettes and associated hobby farms and less commercial agriculture.” (Inner-Rural Area, pg. 62) – a perfect description of this neighborhood. In this case, potential Overriding Considerations, especially B and F, should not be used to justify approving this appeal.

In previous hearings, neighbors and WE Watch addressed the appropriateness of this size structure in a neighborhood that was primarily residences rather than commercial agriculture, even though zoned AG-1-5. Also, it shared lot lines with the City of Solvang’s residential areas. Even near the dead end of Fredensborg Canyon Road, no agricultural structures approached this greenhouse’s square footage.

What we did not specifically discuss was the greenhouse’s mass and proximity to residences in Solvang and Fredensborg Canyon. The site plan and aerial photos show that the applicant placed the greenhouse as far away from his own home as possible and imposed it on his nearest neighbors’ homes. It is an unmitigable visual problem for those neighbors and allowed setbacks do not solve the problem. Also, the greenhouse’s mass exacerbates visual problems for the neighborhood as it would be visible to residents.

Finally, we appreciate the conditions placed on greenhouse lighting requiring proof of blackout curtains’ effectiveness before issuing final permits. Though the 2021 appeal claimed the SYV Community Plan Outdoor Lighting Ordinance did not apply, it and Solvang outdoor lighting ordinances made clear their intent to “minimize light pollution, glare and light trespass to preserve the nighttime sky” and protect neighbors. Also, the earlier appeal described greenhouse lighting as “temporary agricultural lighting,” which is not the case.

NOTE: Solvang residential rear setback is 25’. County (Chap.35, Land Use & Development Code 2-18, Table 2-2) is 20’ for rear and side setbacks.