

County of Santa Barbara- Board of Supervisors  
Fifth District Supervisor Joseph Centeno  
511 East Lakeside Parkway, Suite 141  
Santa Maria, Ca 93454

Re: Board of Supervisors Meeting January 27, 2009  
Agenda Item #9 – Hearing for General Plan Housing Element Focused  
Rezone Program

January 26, 2009

Dear Supervisor Centeno:

I am adamantly opposed to the rezoning of Key Site 16 from General Commercial to the MR-O zoning designation so that state mandated housing can be built on this Gateway Parcel into Old Town Orcutt.

State mandated high density housing was never a part of our plan for the revitalization of Old Town Orcutt and especially not in the commercial core. The “Old Town” designation is of the utmost importance to us and one that we take to heart.

I feel very strongly that placing this high density zoning on Clark Avenue is a big mistake. The reality is that the residential neighborhoods of Old Town Orcutt are made up primarily of affordable/low income housing. We do not need more; we need to clean up what we have.

Tuesday’s Board of Supervisors meeting will be a classic example of why State mandated housing does not work.

**What you will see at the meeting:**

- 1. Many local residents will show up in opposition to rezoning their areas to MR-O (20 units per acre). They do not want State mandated housing in their neighborhoods.**
- 2. Homeowner’s associations, community leaders and community groups will show up in opposition to Key Sites 3, 16, and 30 being rezoned to accommodate State mandated housing.**
- 3. Developers will be riding high, touting why their properties should be rezoned to 20 units per acre. Their numerous consultants will be**

- laying it on thick in support their client's property and how beautiful their developments will be. They will tell you why their property is the best place to put what nobody wants.**
- 4. The Supervisors will tell you that they are in a jam, a pickle, a sticky situation, that they are damned if they do and damned if they don't. They will tell you that they are fearful of lawsuits from housing advocacy groups. They will say that if they do not comply the State of California will take away money and incentives.**

The truth of the matter is that we live in a different world than we did before the housing market crashed. We have seen numerous banking institutions go belly up because they lent money to homebuyers that could not afford the payments.

Some of Uncle Sam's kinfolk, Freddie and Fannie were key conspirators in driving up the housing prices and in turn taxes, making homes unaffordable for many. Their actions help drive Cousin Arnold and his cohorts into creating the State Mandated Housing bureaucracy.

California is the 7<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world and it is in the worst financial mess of its history. California alone could pull the United States out of the current recession/depression if the State were to get its house in order.

So why is the County of Santa Barbara worrying about getting money and incentives from the State of California when the State does not have any money.

Shouldn't the County be trying to encourage the State to get rid of the State Mandated Housing Element and the bureaucracy that it created, thus saving buku tax dollars? Housing prices have plummeted and anyone with good credit and a job should be able to buy a house, within their means of course.

The housing market in California is in a mess and it will stay that way for quite some time. Housing prices in the Orcutt area have dropped by as much as 50% in some cases. Countywide foreclosures have skyrocketed and there are thousands of houses planned that will not get built for many years, if ever.

As far as the County getting sued by housing advocacy groups, there are too many houses on the market that have become affordable. They don't have a cause of action.

The County should be more fearful of being sued because of environmental issues raised by high density zoning. CEQA sets forth the statutory requirements for the state's environmental review process. CEQA requires all public agencies to inform decision-makers and the public of potential significant environmental impacts of proposed projects. The environmental review process opens projects to legal challenge.

The County of Santa Barbara should take a look at pilot projects like the San Diego Self-Certification Project which authorized local governments in San Diego County to self-certify their housing elements, without sending them to Department of Housing and Community Development, if they were approving housing in accordance with housing production goals that matched available resources.

Obama's recent Presidential election showed the world that the citizens of the United States want change. California State mandated housing is a good place to start. Our economy has made the intentions of this program obsolete, at least for the foreseeable future.

Whatever decisions you may make concerning agenda item #9 please make the decision to make the State of California aware of what this program is doing to our communities, as you will see it in the despair on your constituents faces during the January 27, 2009 Board of Supervisors meeting.

Sincerely,

Steve LeBard