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Santa Maria American Legion Post 56  
Office of the Past Commander

Veterans Memorial Building  
501 North Pine Street, Santa Maria CA

June 1, 2016

To: Board of Supervisors, County of Santa Barbara

Re: real property located at 220 S. First Street, Orcutt, California

Dear Supervisors,

I am writing on support of the proposed transfer of real property from the Life Steps Foundation (LSF) to the Good Samaritan Services Incorporated (GSSI). The intended purpose of this property is to house five (5) low income veterans in a clean and sober living house. The house will be supervised by a live in house manager.

President Obama along with the Secretaries of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and United States Department of Labor (DOL) set an ambitious goal to end veteran homelessness by the end of 2015. Sadly that has not happened. One reason it has not happened is the lack of affordable housing for these men and women. The VA estimates that one (1) in four (4) veterans are homeless in America. The American Legion has also pledged to eliminate veteran homelessness as soon as possible.

Communities as a whole have stated it's a shame that yesterday's heroes are today's homeless. Yes, many of these heroes suffer from mental health and substance abuse addictions. Had it not been for agencies like GSSI to provide adequate counseling, many more veterans would be suffering on our streets, under the bridges, and on the bus benches. Even though the community as a whole speaks out about the treatment of veterans, many have the attitude of "not in my backyard".

By transferring the property from LSF to GSSI, the County of Santa Barbara will be giving five (5) veterans a chance to get back on their feet and become productive citizens in our community. Many homeless shelters have a philosophy of "housing first". This often leads many participants to fail because they do not possess the skills to make it on their own. The philosophy of GSSI is "housing ready", meaning the shelter staff give the participant the tools to possess for when they do go on their own, they will succeed.

Therefore, I encourage you to move forward with the transfer of real property located at 220 S. First Street, Orcutt, California from LSF to GSSI.

Thank you

Frank Campo

Past Commander