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April 23rd, 2012

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
105 East Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara, California

Dear Board of Supervisors,

Thank you for consideration of our project and our appellant's appeal. We would like to submit a brief narrative of communications and efforts we have made to satisfy the appellant's concerns.

Our work with the appellant on this project began in late 2010 as he voiced concern over our proposed occupancy of 24 at the time. In the spring of 2011 he committed to supporting our project if we agreed to include a cap of 18 residents in our project proposal to the Planning Commission, which we then included and is now a permanent part of the project.

At the first scheduled Planning Commission hearing on August 17, 2011 the appellant raised the issue of parking for the first time and we requested a continuance to work with the appellant to address his concerns. Between then and the December 7th Planning Commission hearing we worked to address the appellant's concern regarding our parking. We offered a deed restriction, parking permit programs, and restrictive covenants in our members' leases all of which were rejected without the appellant offering any alternative. Instead he demanded termination of the project and threatened to "appeal the project all the way to the Coastal Commission" if we moved forward.

We elected to move forward with the project as the appellant was unwilling to negotiate and we attained a staff recommendation to approve the project and an affirmative 4-0 vote (with one absence) by the Planning Commission at the December 7th hearing. Despite the fact that the appellant stated "I love the co-op, my only problem is with the parking," when he filed his appeal it included items he never raised with us previously or subsequently including "number of bedrooms – development in the side-rear-front setback – meeting room within the proposed student housing – off-site parking – additional items may follow."

When we had our County Counsel-mediated discussion with the appellant he offered to "drop the appeal" if the parking study of the San Clemente parking lot (required by the Coastal Commission) demonstrated less than 95% occupancy in all categories (staff, guest, tenant, etc). The report demonstrated this with a significant margin – no category exceeded 67% occupancy. When we requested through County Counsel that the appellant follow through with his commitment to drop his appeal he refused and requested an additional revision to our parking agreement with UCSB. We complied, including the provisions that he requested, but he still refused to withdraw his appeal.

Two projects – Icon and Loop – were recently approved by the planning commission that have the same parking arrangements as our project, however the appellant did not appeal those projects.

This project was awarded a \$175,000 CDBG grant through the county that needs to be committed by July and allocated by September and further delays place this funding at serious risk.

We have worked throughout this process to address any concerns our community has had with this project. Throughout this process we have always been open to meeting with the appellant although the appellant has regularly refused our requests to communicate and reach a reasonable agreement. At this point in the process we believe that it is impossible for us to meet the appellant's concerns as they change every time we meet the appellant's request..

Thank you very much for your consideration,



Jeffrey Bessmer
Executive Director
Santa Barbara Student Housing Co-operative