

Brianda Negrete

Public Comment -

#3



From: Executive Director <execdirector@montecitoassociation.org>
Sent: Tuesday, February 14, 2023 11:19 AM
To: sbcob
Subject: Comment on item #3 on 2/14/23 meeting

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Greetings,

I apologize with my tardiness on this comment. I logged in, hoping to comment there, but was informed public comment was closed for this item.

I wish to commend Director Plowman for navigating a morass thrust upon the county by the state. The Montecito Association participated heavily in legislative sessions in 2021 and 2022, trying to stave off what is happening now: state RHNA mandates to build housing beyond anything ever seen before. Threats from the Attorney General Bonta if you don't file on time.

I attended the workshops last fall and submitted comments. I regret the public seems to believe these actions are some plan the county cooked up in a back room and thrust upon unwitting residents. Nothing is farther from the truth. It's a state mandate. The argument that needs to be made is with the state, but woe to any community that tries to brave that on their own. A class-action by multitudes of communities failed already in court. It's a really hard situation, and you have my sympathies.

We met with the League of Women Voters last year, in anticipation of this RHNA mandate, to try to identify places in Montecito where housing could be built. We looked at Manning Park, churches, and second / third story commercial as potential sites for new housing. None of these turned out to be viable, and unless you somehow legally compel homeowners to develop their properties, there simply aren't other options. While Montecitoans are building ADUs at a higher rate than the county overall, this alone isn't going to close the housing gap.

The Biden administration in 2021 estimated the country needed an additional 1.5 million units to ease the housing crisis. Governor Newsom said in 2018 California needed 3.5 million units. I don't know why their numbers don't match, but someone's math is off. Additionally, when we allow our housing to be diverted into tourism or to sit vacant, building more doesn't mean you get a 1-for-1 increase in housing units. I have suggested before a vacancy tax aimed at vacation rentals / timeshares / second homes occupied less than 1/2 a year. Other communities have instituted these, and San Francisco is looking at it too. If we could disincentivize vacant units and vacation rentals, we might find more housing returned to the market where people could actually live.

Again, my regards to Director Plowman and Planning, who are attempting the impossible in conforming to state mandates.

Kind regards,

--

Sharon Byrne

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