

Zach Tusinger

From: Claudia Aceves
Sent: Thursday, February 20, 2020 8:23 AM
To: Zach Tusinger
Subject: FW: Aurora Park Cottages

From: Paul Ingalls [mailto:crapgame@sonic.net]
Sent: Monday, February 17, 2020 7:35 AM
To: Planning & Building
Cc: Steve Patel; Pam Ingalls
Subject: Aurora Park Cottages

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Dear members of the Calistoga Planning Commission,

As a former resident of the Brannan Ridge Estates, I want to take the opportunity to provide a contrary view to the letters you've received opposing expansion of Aurora Park Cottages. While I doubt you'll be swayed by histrionic, unfounded and hyperbolic claims that the proposed project will result in wholesale property devaluations and other catastrophic impacts, the speciousness of many of the assertions your previously heard demands rebuttal.

My wife, Pam, and I owned property in the Estates subdivision and lived on that property for 14 years. Because we were full-time residents, not occasional visitors, we were in an excellent position – unique in that neighborhood – to make an accurate assessment of how the Cottages impacted nearby properties. During our residency, the Patels' management of the Cottages was universally exemplary and the location of their business, down a winding driveway and entirely out of sight of nearby residences, completely nullified any impact on neighborhood homes. Because of the locations of the various properties in Brannan Ridge Estates, the existence of any additional units at the Cottages will be entirely undetectable from neighboring houses. The only experiential change for nearby property owners will be during those brief moments when they drive by the Cottages during their several-times-a-year visits from San Francisco, Las Vegas and elsewhere.

I hesitate to specifically address the host of unfounded objections raised by the two neighbors in their letters on this subject. Surely, as Calistoga residents yourselves, you already recognize the fundamental absurdity of claims about "drunken guests partying outside" and "cars coming and going at all hours of the day and night." As for claims of previous vandalism, it's nothing more than conjecture that the damage was associated with the Cottages, and the type of clientele attracted by that business certainly makes one question the assertion.

Likewise, complaints about threats to the leach field, driveway and drainage system resulting from construction are entirely speculative, and surely any permitting for construction at the site will require that if such damage takes place, it will be repaired at the Patels' expense. While it's true that torrential rains and resulting mudslides have caused damage to the neighborhood drainage system in the past, the contention that the wash-out of gravel at the Cottages has impacted the neighbors stands reality on its head. If anything, mud washing down from properties above has impacted the Cottages, not the reverse. Moreover, when these events have taken place, the Patels have repaired the portion of the system running by the Cottages at their own expense.

One of our town's emerging civic challenges is the increasing number of absentee property owners whose concerns about Calistoga begin and end at their property lines. While those interests should certainly receive consideration, when government starts to prioritize petty grievances like the unpleasantness of dealing with a surly workman or having to view a building under construction, it has lost sight of its role in promoting compromise and the common good. The Patels are citizens of outstanding integrity. They live here, they're involved in civic affairs, they help their neighbors and they contribute to the community. Surely, it's not unreasonable for government to expect that others, in the interest of community, will temper their senses of entitlement and thereby recognize in some small way all the Patels do to make Calistoga a better place to live.

Sincerely,

Paul Ingalls
Calistoga