



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
of the Los Altos-Mountain View Area
97 Hillview Avenue, Los Altos, CA 94022

June 14, 2015

Mayor John McAlister and Members of the City Council
City of Mountain View
500 Castro Street
Mountain View 94041

Re: City Council Meeting, June 16th, Agenda Item 6.1 – South Whisman Master Plan & Phase I Dev

Dear Mayor McAlister and Members of the City Council:

The League of Women Voters is pleased to see so many new housing units being developed in light of the serious current jobs/housing imbalance in Mountain View. However, we are very disappointed that the developer of the rental units is not offering to build below-market-rate units (BMRs) as part of the 500 Ferguson Drive project.

The Council has repeatedly stated its preference for BMRs instead of payment of rental housing impact fees (RHIF). Onsite BMRs were voluntarily provided as an alternative mitigation in all other rental projects that have gone before Council in recent years. This project is therefore an anomaly.

Following staff's recommended formula of 4.6% of the total number of units being equivalent to payment of RHIF at \$10.26 per square foot, the development would include 18 BMRs. We would hope the developer would be willing to provide these units.

We note that should this development not be approved by June 30th, the developer would have to pay \$17 per square foot in fees, or approximately \$6.5 million instead of approximately \$3.9 million. The number of BMRs equivalent to the higher fees would be 30, substantially more than the 18 BMRs. Thus, if the project is approved on the 16th, rather than in July, the developer is saving substantial fees.

Finally, we would like to remind the Council that if the 1999 BMR ordinance were in effect, the developer would have to provide 39 BMRs. We realize that the Palmer case has made the ordinance unenforceable until legislation or another court case overturns the Palmer case.

Therefore, with the above facts in mind, and knowing how Mountain View desperately needs affordable housing, we hope that the developer will decide that providing 18 BMRs is reasonable.

The LWV consistently supports policies coping with the jobs/housing imbalance as well as policies to provide decent homes for every American family. Thank you for considering our input.

Donna Yobs
Co-Chair, Housing Committee
LWV of the Los Altos/Mountain View Area

cc. Dan Rich Melinda Denis Gerry Beaudin Linda Lauzze