



Information Item

Date: May 31, 2011

To: Mayor and City Council
From: Andy Agle, Director of Housing and Economic Development
Subject: Mountain View Mobile Home Park Resident Comments

Introduction

The City owns and operates the Mountain View Mobile Home Park (the Park). The Housing Division is currently in the process of replacing City-owned travel trailers and mobile homes with new affordable, sustainable manufactured homes. This report provides information in response to comments made during the public comment portion of the May 10, 2011, City Council meeting.

Discussion

Following are the comments made at the City Council meeting and the Housing Division's response, after consultation with the City Attorney's Office:

- Comment: There are only 5 feet 2-½ inches between the existing home on space E-3 and the new home being installed on space E-2, which is illegal for a pre-1961 park. In addition, wood on the ramp and porch of the adjacent, new home is combustible. Response: The new home on space E-2 is more than 6 feet from the home on space E-3. Installation of the new home has been inspected by Building & Safety personnel, who have confirmed proper spacing of the unit. Building & Safety has issued a correction notice regarding the combustible material on the ramp. Final approval of the installation is pending resolution of the matter.

- Comment: The Health & Safety Code does not allow mobile home park lot lines to be altered without written authorization of the registered owner of the mobile home. Residents were not notified, nor did they provide written authorization, for alteration of the lot lines. Response: On August 16, 2006, the Planning Commission approved a Development Review Permit which established the lot lines. The Planning Commission took its action at a public hearing that was noticed by a mailing to all Park residents and owners and tenants of properties within a 500-foot radius of the Park, as well as by a sign posted on the property. The requirement for written authorization by mobile home owners did not apply to the Park when the lot lines were established in 2006.
- Comment: The City's new homes are too close to existing homes. As a result, existing residents, if they choose to purchase new homes, cannot get the same size homes they have now or the same size as the homes being installed by the City. Response: All 20 new homes purchased by the City are being installed in compliance with the requirements of Title 25 and the approved lot lines. The maximum size of any new manufactured home purchased by the City is dictated by the size of the space where the home will be installed and the required minimum setbacks. Similarly, when any resident purchases a new home, the allowed maximum size of the home will be defined by the size of the resident's space.

In several instances, the placement of new City-owned homes has exceeded the minimum setback requirements in order to meet the minimum unit separation requirements, because an existing, adjacent home does not meet the minimum required setback from the lot line. The situation occurs because the existing homes were installed prior to the establishment of lot lines. If a resident wants to replace a home that does not currently meet the minimum setback requirement, the replacement home will be required to meet the setback requirement. Therefore, the location and size of the replacement home may not necessarily be the same as the existing home.

If two homes adjacent to one another both meet the minimum setback of three feet from the lot line, the minimum unit separation of six feet is also achieved. Since all of the 20 new homes being installed by the City comply with the minimum setback of three feet from the lot line, and any future homes will be required to do the same, the minimum unit separation of six feet will be achieved. As a result, the locations of the 20 new, City-owned homes will have no effect on the locations of any future new homes, and will not diminish the maximum allowable unit size for the space.

- Comment: New units were just dropped off and were not adjusted to the space. Response: The new manufactured homes are delivered to the site and placed on the space as close to the final location as possible by the transporter. However, this does not represent the installation of the home. Adjustments are subsequently made by the installer to finalize the location of the home, as appropriate. Occupancy of the new manufactured home cannot occur until Building & Safety has inspected and approved the installation.
- Comment: The resident of E-6 was sent a notice ordering her to take down her fence, which was there before she moved in. She is concerned about her children's safety in the absence of a fence. Response: When Building and Safety personnel inspected the installation of a new home on space E-7, they issued a correction notice because the fence on space E-6 encroaches onto space E-7. City staff met with the resident of E-6 and explained that the current location of her fence does not comply with Title 25. In response to her concern about her children's safety, City staff offered two possible solutions that would result in a completely fenced yard or patio, in compliance with Title 25, at no cost to the resident. The resident did not accept either option. As a result, a 14-day notice was issued to the resident to remove those portions of the fence that extend beyond the lot line of space E-6 and onto space E-7. Final approval of the installation of the new home on space E-7 is pending resolution of the matter.

- Comment: The City does not listen to or help the residents. As the City owns the park, the City Attorney's Office cannot provide assistance. There is no one to turn to for help. Response: Housing staff has been holding monthly meetings with Park residents for almost two years, and has been regularly participating in meetings at the Park for over ten years. Regular meetings provide an opportunity to listen to and address concerns. The Consumer Fair Housing Unit of the City Attorney's Office refers residents to Legal Aid for assistance with legal issues. Legal Aid has assisted several park residents. In addition, the City has contracted with a property management agent. The property management agent staffs an on-site office at the Park five days a week during normal business hours and maintains a 24-hour service request line.
- Comment: New homes are not meeting Environmental Assessment requirements and are putting existing tenants at risk. Response: Although the speaker did not identify specific concerns, the new manufactured homes are required to be installed in compliance with the Park's Environmental Assessment.
- Comment: Many residents have signed a petition to save a Stone Pine tree in the Park. Response: Housing staff is working with the Public Landscape Division to evaluate the feasibility of relocating the tree. Once a determination on the feasibility has been made, additional information will be provided to City Council.
- Comment: The City wants to own every coach in the Park, and will not make deals with those residents who wish to own new coaches. Response: On December 14, 2010, the City Council approved a financing program to assist residents who wish to purchase or rent new manufactured homes. The Program is voluntary and includes three options that will assist residents (a deferred payment loan; lease-to-own; and renting from the City). The three options are intended to provide flexibility for all households in the Park that wish to replace their existing homes with new manufactured homes. The financing program will be implemented in October 2011.

- Comment/Complaint: The new homes are too expensive. Response: There is no requirement for residents of the Park to purchase a new home. If a resident wants to purchase a new home, there is no requirement to purchase the same homes that the City purchased. Residents can purchase an alternative home as long as they go through all of the applicable approval processes (including but not limited to park management, design and permit approvals). As noted in the response above, residents may take advantage of the City's financing program to purchase or rent a new unit.
- Comment: Residents have not been told when they can get new units. Response: City staff meets monthly at the Park with the residents and has explained that residents may purchase new homes now as long as they go through all of the applicable approval processes. However, if a resident wants to utilize the City's Financing Program to purchase a new home, they will need to wait for the program to be launched. Staff intends to launch the program in October 2011, following the installation of the City-owned units.

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