

Letters to the Editor

Time for teen center

protect?

Editor:

Teens, parents, educators, it's time to *act!* Meetings are being held on an ongoing basis at Analy High School to make the teen center a reality in Sebastopol, but we need your help!

We need to find the movers and shakers in this community that care enough to make our dream come true. We must prepare and plan for the construction of a building that will house what *you* want to see there.

There will be a meeting for all those interested specifically in *programs* to be offered now and later on, as well as *special events* to help raise money and awareness. This meeting will be held at the Analy High School cafeteria on March 3, at 7 p.m.

Be there if you care! If you attended the last meeting and were on the programming committee, please come!

Pam LaCoe
Sebastopol

Resignation explained

(ED. NOTE: The following open letter to Sebastopol Planning Commission Chairman David Leff was submitted to the *Times & News* for publication.)

Dear David:

The Gardeners, who won national acclaim in their approach to low cost housing, presented us with a rare opportunity to provide truly affordable housing in a mixed residential neighborhood without the restrictions of government subsidies. This effort would have made a genuine impact on the low and affordable home market we most desperately need. The action on the part of the City Council appears to be a stubborn attempt to maintain the type of elitist housing we currently endure and does not promote the best interests of our community. They have turned their backs on the very same progressive voters who elected them.

During the review process for this project, all elements of the original and revised environmental impact report documents were meticulously studied by the Planning Commission and Design Review Board. After much review by both groups mitigation measures were incorporated which made this project acceptable to the widest populace. Throughout the proceedings the general tone of the public was of overwhelming support and acceptance of this project. The developer spent thousands of dollars and hundreds of man-hours in meetings with the city and various commissions. The project and annexation which was so thoughtfully recommended by the Planning Director and this commission was truly one which embodied all of the aspects and contemporary thought one would expect for such a graceful addition to our city.

The council's apparent ambivalence towards the housing needs of our town's workers, third and fourth generation Sebastopol families who cannot afford the high priced housing and seniors who may prefer not to live in retirement cubicles, turns the affordable housing clock back several years and raises serious doubts as to the need for a Planning Commission or Design Review Board at all.

I cannot in good conscience continue in the role of planning commissioner as to do so would assume that there were a more noble project to consider. I am therefore tendering my resignation.

In our styrofoam, nuclear, rape free city shouldn't we show as much concern for the housing needs of people in the shadow of the trees we so steadfastly

Mark Sell
Sebastopol

Supports council

Editor:

I had to respond to the rejection of a housing unit on the north edge of town by the city council. I'm completely in support of their decision for the following reasons:

All developers want their development to be the exception to reasons why it shouldn't be. In their eyes, there's never a place to draw the line. They always behave as though any development that offers *additional housing* is a sanctified endeavor to which all other considerations should be subordinated and sacrificed.

They don't seem to look on development as an ongoing, cumulative process that exerts ongoing cumulative pressures on the environment, and, in effect, constantly chips away at the natural forces that bind all parts of the environment together. It's ridiculous and wrong to look at "development" in a vacuum, to separate it from its impact on earth, air, water, large and small ecosystems, to try to justify it in every instance with the profit-making platitude: "But we need *more affordable housing!*" Far more important than "affordable housing" is a sustainable present, a liveable future. This viewpoint must take priority over every other so-called human necessity!

I'm proud and grateful that there are caring and forward-thinking people in Sebastopol willing to try to create the kind of community which critics are so quick to mock. I support the decision of the City Council to back off from the Gardner project. I also would like to point out to Ken Foley, the council's sole promoter of it, that there is every reason to believe that the position of our *elected* council reflects the sentiments of a majority of the residents of Sebastopol and not so much that of the newly-resigned Planning Commissioners who came out in its favor.

Karen Eberhardt
Sebastopol

Council vote questioned

Editor:

I was interested to see your article "City May Look to the Past in Planning its Future," stating the desire for a "neo-traditional design" of older neighborhood type homes, pedestrian use, narrower streets and rear garages. Why then, after months of meetings and many plan revisions, did the City Council vote down the Orchard Park project, a well-designed plan that utilized all of these features? More importantly, the developers were proposing moderate to low income homes, supported by affordable financing that would have made this very desirable project a dream come true to many Sebastopol residents who cannot afford to buy a home here. Strong local support was evident at both the Planning Commission and the City Council meetings.

Why did the City Council slam this project when the Planning Commission and the Design Review Board so clearly supported it? Wouldn't be "not in my backyard" politics, now would it?

Chris DeMarche
Sebastopol

(Please turn to Letters, page A5)