

From: [Gallina, Charlene](#)
To: [PlanningCommissionClerk](#)
Subject: FW: Public comment re Oak Knoll Hotel project
Date: Tuesday, March 3, 2020 3:37:12 PM

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From: John Dunbar
Sent: Tuesday, March 3, 2020 2:49 PM
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Subject: Public comment re Oak Knoll Hotel project

Chair Whitmer, Commissioners and staff,

I plan to speak during public comment at your meeting tomorrow, March 4, regarding the Oak Knoll Hotel project, but I wanted to share my thoughts ahead of that meeting for your consideration.

First, to clarify a misrepresentation made by Brian Russell of the applicant's team, neither I nor the Town of Yountville oppose the overall project. We are not afraid of the competition, nor did I appreciate the characterization of Yountville as "Hotel-land", as he said during the Jan. 22 meeting.

This project is beautifully designed, includes several environmentally-sustainable elements and will be a significant improvement of the dilapidated, abandoned property.

My interest is to address what I see as a lack of a fair and reasonable housing requirement associated with this project. This Commission asked the applicant to address this issue during that meeting on Jan. 22 and it was also a subject of inquiry at a prior commission meeting when the item was discussed.

I understand Napa County has its own rules regarding land entitlements and housing requirements for property development that differ in some ways from the municipalities. However, I believe we have a shared responsibility and should operate under a consistent requirement to provide affordable, workforce housing with all significant development and redevelopment projects throughout the County.

All of us, including the unincorporated County, have State-mandated housing obligations that are expected to increase significantly as we prepare for the next Regional Housing Needs Assessment cycle later this year. The County has joined with the cities of American Canyon and Napa, as well as the Town of Yountville, to form a sub-RHNA committee to evaluate how we might share our housing obligations equitably.

The County has extremely limited properties on which housing construction is viable. As you consider the renovation of the restaurant operation and retail space, along with the rare development of a hotel and spa in the unincorporated County, I ask you to consider whether or not the applicant's offer of a small in lieu payment and employee "Train from Within" local-hiring program satisfies that housing obligation. The \$330,000 falls short of the average cost of a single housing unit, which is about \$500,000. Stating the project won't have an impact on housing needs because they will only employ people who already live locally makes little sense, would only pass on their housing impact to other employers, and will be challenging at best to enforce.

The recent 1% increase in transient occupancy tax voted on by five of the six jurisdictions should not be seen as satisfying that obligation either. That funding only adds to a much broader effort to package

resources that will allow us to positively impact our ongoing housing crisis.

I'm happy to share examples or answer questions about how, in the Town of Yountville, we have required housing units as part of new and renovations of our hotel and restaurant properties.

Thanks for your consideration.

John