



Walden District Improvement Association
Walnut Creek, CA

Mayor Loella Haskew
1666 North Main Street
Walnut Creek, CA 94596

Re: Proposed development of the former Las Juntas Swim Club by Habitat for Humanity

Dear Ms. Haskew:

The Walden District Improvement Association (Walden) is a neighborhood group that serves seven thousand residents in and to the North of Walnut Creek. Walden opposes the proposed development because it is a huge increase in density and vastly different in character from the plan that was presented to the public when the property was sold by the swim club owners to the County's Redevelopment Agency. We furthermore object to the clustering of affordable and low-income developments in the vicinity of the Pleasant Hill BART station.

The swim club members sold their rights to the property to the County's Redevelopment Agency in 2002 with the understanding that it would be developed as low density for-sale homes with 25% allocated to low income housing. In October, 2008 the Redevelopment Agency in the person of Jim Kennedy reported to Walden via the Contra Costa Centre Municipal Advisory Council (MAC) that they were then considering a development of 28 town homes, with 25% allocated to low income residents. While larger than what was originally proposed it was agreed to by the community in that it maintained the majority of market rate units and was still consistent with the M3 zoning for the site.

The current Habitat proposal would be 100% low to moderate income and, if the 52-unit option emerges, would require rezoning of the property to accommodate the doubling of density and an exception to the Measure A height limit. As a result, the top floor of the development would be in close proximity to the BART tracks where sound levels emanating from trains have been measured at ground level in excess of 100 db.

While we have no quarrel with Habit for Humanity as a developer, we do take issue with the City's decision to approve a loan to Habitat prior to the design being properly vetted. In doing so, it creates an obvious conflict of interest for the City during the subsequent design review phase of the project.

Walden furthermore takes issue with the City's proposed location of this affordable housing proposal next door to another affordable income housing constructed by the County at the corner of Las Juntas and Coggins Drive. The bulk of the funds for the City's loan to Habitat are derived from developer fees from the over 1500 apartments recently constructed within Walnut Creek proper. The result is that, since some of these developer fees may be in lieu of including an affordable increment in their projects, it appears as if the City is exporting the affordable components of these projects North near the County's existing affordable housing units.

You may expect that Walden will be closely monitoring the progress of this proposal and will be actively involved during the design review.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Peckham, President
Walden District Improvement Association

Cc: K. Mitchoff, Contra Costa County