

CORRESPONDENCE

Jomsky, Mark

From: Blair Miller <blairmiller1@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, November 04, 2019 3:18 PM
To: Tornek, Terry; Hampton, Tyron; McAustin, Margaret; Kennedy, John; Masuda, Gene; Gordo, Victor; Wilson, Andy; Madison, Steve
Cc: Jomsky, Mark; Mermell, Steve; Huang, William; Reyes, David
Subject: Agenda Item #11, November 4th Pasadena City Council Meeting

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Mayor and Council Members,

I support staff's suggestion and I urge the Council to consider excluding City deed-restricted affordable housing projects from the definition of over-concentration.

I am writing to give some background to this issue, based on my experience in the field of affordable housing development.

Over 40 years ago, the federal government got out of the business of building affordable housing. These "projects" they had built (as they became known) have unfortunately become the visual symbol of what most people think of when they think of "affordable housing" - Pruitt Igoe, Cabrini Green...

Unfortunately, the system that replaced it has been too successful for its own good.

The system that replaced it produces developments like Marv's Place and Summit Grove. Mission-driven organizations (usually, but not always, non-profits) compete for scarce resources in order to fulfill their mission of affordable homeownership or rental housing. Every completed development becomes a reference for all future potential funding sources. The existing portfolio must be well-designed and well-maintained, or they will not be competitive for financing. And the funding sources DO CHECK.

This has led to the fortunate situation where subsidized affordable housing is a great neighbor, but the unfortunate situation where anyone seeing these developments from the street has no idea that they are affordable housing. Does Summit Grove look like a "project"? No. Does Marv's Place? No. I'm sure at Marv's Place they have to regularly explain to people making average incomes that they can't rent a unit in that beautiful building.

There are academic studies that support the assertion that this "new" type of affordable housing, with 55 year restrictive covenants, either contributes to increased neighboring property values, or does not affect them. I'm sure Mr. Huang would be able to provide these studies.

The concept of "over-concentration" is outdated. It is based on a stereotype that is no longer true, and has not been for 40 years.

Thank you,

Blair Miller