

**Item No. 3**  
**Supplemental Material**  
For  
**City of Sacramento  
Planning Commission  
Agenda Packet**

**For the Meeting of:** October 9, 2008

- Additional Material  
 Revised Material

**Contact Information:** Elise Gumm, 808-1927

**Project-Name:** Glenrose Townhome

**Subject:** Additional comment letter from the appellant

**From:** "Catherine Munsee" <CMunsee@thegregorygroup.com>  
**To:** "Elise Gumm" <EGumm@cityofsacramento.org>  
**CC:** <funyun501@juno.com>, "Mara" <maracenters@jps.net>, <Marilyn.B.Aldridge@...>  
**Date:** 10/07/2008 4:09 PM  
**Subject:** Glenrose Townhomes (PO6-002)

Hello Elise:

We met with the applicant, Matt, last Friday. We all appreciated his desire to meet and I think we all came away with a better understanding of what kinds of outcomes he is looking for as a developer and what we, as a community, are hoping for in our neighborhood. The biggest sticking point comes with the fact that not all of the intentions that Matt outlined for his project are in the application so it is difficult for us to evaluate in terms of the real impact on that corner of our community. We do have a much better understanding of what he envisions for that corner and it sounds quite positive. As you know, however, it is difficult to evaluate a project when the intangibles are not available in the application itself.

We do appreciate that Matt invested in a third party to mediate our discussion and to find a way to enhance communication. We all felt very positively about that. We also felt that Matt was receptive to our concerns and ideas and demonstrated a genuine desire to accommodate our goals as a community. He articulated many shared values. There are some discrepancies in the report that planning is sending to the Commission, however. For example no one brought up the option of reverting to for-sale units at the meeting on Friday and we were not aware of that as an option from planning. Certainly, we would prefer the project, should it be approved, to be a for-sale versus a for-rent community and we clearly articulated our preference to the applicant on Friday. Additionally, it will be important for the Planning Commission to know the occupancy rate of the homes immediately surrounding the proposed project and the relevance of the "letters of support" included in the application packet. As you are aware, we did visit the addresses of the people who purportedly signed an affidavit supporting the project and found many inaccuracies, vacant homes, and there is real concern regarding the conflict of interest position that current tenants find themselves in (which I mentioned to you in an earlier conversation).

It is a shame that this interchange occurred at the end of the process, just before the planning commission hearing, and not at the beginning. There are members of our community who still feel as though the proposed density, although allowable under current zoning regulations, is inappropriate in our neighborhood. Had we been given the opportunity to sit with Matt prior to his investment in architectural and engineering fees, perhaps we could have come to agreement regarding the type of project that would best fit in with the current land use plan (and future plan given the general plan update) in our neighborhood. I want to clearly state that we welcome the opportunity to meet with developers at the very beginning stages of their projects so that resources are not

wasted and conflict can be better managed toward a positive outcome.

To sum up, current residents remain concerned about:

The addition of 20-80 vehicles in that very small space

The impact of high-density development on existing drainage issues

The introduction of additional for-rent, as opposed to for-sale housing in a neighborhood that is already challenged and the ratio of for-rent versus for-sale homes that exist in our neighborhood as compared to other neighborhoods in the City of Sacramento

Directly responding to the planning department's recommendations to the Commission:

As noted on pages 6-7, the proposed project is more appropriate to an urban setting. The current conditions of the neighborhood are semi-rural. The project is not a good fit with existing land-use patterns and the proposed general plan update will not change that. This goes to the central concern that neighbors have regarding this project.

\*\*\*A more appropriate project for our particular neighborhood would consist of the single-story, cottage-type homes that the city has pre-approved, situated on small-lots.

In response to the General Plan Update Vision and Guiding Principles: Our neighborhood does have quite a bit of underutilized land in awkward configurations, which creates challenges for developers, planners and community members. To promote diversity in our neighborhood, however, the planning department should be soliciting/promoting upscale, exclusive projects that bring in an element currently missing from our community and the neighborhood economy. Ben Ali does have multi-family housing options, rental units that are single-family detached homes, trailer-home opportunities, and owner-occupied single-family detached homes. We are already meeting the city's goals with the healthy mix of housing opportunities available in Ben Ali. We will be providing the Commission with statistics that demonstrate the proportion of for-rent versus for-sale units in our neighborhood versus other communities within the City of Sacramento as a way to suggest that equity is an important element in this dialogue. We imagine that the emphasis on diversity indicates an understanding that creating ghettos of single-type communities is a less viable way to plan cities and so there

is value in making sure sections of our city are not faced with a disproportional percentage of rental units versus ownership units.

Additionally, the report submitted by planning omits conditions in our neighborhood which would argue against the approval of this type of development: namely, the two unfinished duplexes, the status of the infamous Fianza Estates and the real-life consequences of that planning decision, and the number of homes that are currently vacant due to the economic conditions nation-wide.

Again, I want to reiterate our gratitude that the applicant created time to meet with the members of the Ben Ali Community Board. His vision for a safe, well-run for-rent community is not completely anathema to the vision that the neighborhood has for itself or that the City articulates in its infill strategy and General Plan update vision. The question comes down to whether this specific project is the right project for our neighborhood at this time with these existing conditions. We are suggesting that a more appropriate project would be one which reflects current land use practices (which are different from the zoning codes), current design elements and which reinforces the positive aspects of our established neighborhood.

Please do not hesitate to contact me prior to the meeting on the 9th if you have any questions or if I might be able to clarify any of what I am hoping to communicate here.

Sincerely,

Catherine Munsee

Ben Ali Community Association

(916) 719-7035