



July 11, 2019

**2019-20
VENA Executive
Board**

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Kym Dicome
Development Review Board Chair
P.O. Box 1293
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Re: Project #PR-2019-002496 for Southeast Corner of Alameda Blvd. NE & Barstow Street NE

Dear Chairwoman Dicome,

It has been brought to the attention of our Vineyard Estates Neighborhood Association that an application by Consensus Planning for a site plan on behalf of Philip Lindborg for development of 93 apartments on the southeast corner of Barstow Street NE and Alameda Blvd. NE is set for a Development Review Board hearing on July 17, 2019. It is our understanding that the property zoning is MX-L under the current IDO and this application is a permissive use of the property.

The Vineyard Estates Neighborhood Association opposes placement of a 93-unit, 3-story apartment complex on this property location due to its lack of alignment with our surrounding residential neighborhood and poorly thought out design relative to surrounding neighborhood demographics. The original zoning of SU-2/C-1 under the Vineyard Sector Plan stated "SU-2/C1 (neighborhood commercial) zoning is proposed at the southeast corner of Alameda and Barstow to provide neighborhood retail services that provide the day-to-day needs of nearby neighborhoods" (Vineyard Sector Plan, p. 4.7). The spirit of the neighborhood plan was to create infill of valuable businesses and/or retail and "ensure compatibility of higher density land uses within the lot configurations and ownership pattern of these areas" (La Cueva Sector Plan, p. 26) to support our neighborhood.

While we welcome building and new construction within our Vineyard Estates neighborhood and surrounding areas, the plan for 93, 1-2 bedroom apartments with a stated target of single, young professionals, over ten miles from the downtown corridor is quite different than the family-centered and surrounding single family homes located steps away from top-rated public schools. Broadstone Heights apartment complex (Barstow St. NE & Holly NE), Arterra apartments (Wyoming NE & Holly NE), and Markana apartments (Alameda & San Pedro) all already offer a saturation of apartments to our local neighborhood. The volume of 93 apartments on such a small plot of land (approximately 3.4 acres) leaves little room for this complex to be "high-end" for either the tenants or neighborhood. There is no real definition of high and low density in terms of apartments, but when



larger complexes have less apartments, it can be concluded that this complex would be qualified as “high-density.”

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Two facilitated meetings have been held and a number of points have been brought up by the directly affected neighbors and surrounding neighborhood which have not been or inadequately addressed by the developer:

- 1) **Inadequate parking:** Neighbors are very concerned where the overflow of parking will end up if and when tenants have more than one car or a visitor. Alameda and Barstow offer no legal parking however side streets could fill in with parking creating jaywalking and disruption. Additionally, the parking lot is not secured with a gate comparable to other nearby apartment complexes.
- 2) **Encroachment of rear wall of southward located properties:** Homeowners directly affected by this development (to the south) have concerns over the location and height of the carport in relation to their rear wall height and may be looking into the carport as their “view.” Also, landscaping trees may uproot the rear privacy wall or grow into the homeowners yard uninvited, while also destroying the home owner’s property values by having their yard enveloped by both the carport and 3-story apartment complex.
- 3) **Traffic concerns:** Our neighborhood has two large schools (800 + and 1750+ students each) located very nearby (0.2 miles), in addition to a grade school charter school (directly to east) that each add stress to the traffic flow along Barstow as well as the student-pedestrian traffic migrating daily to and from home. Adding 93-plus young professional auto commuters into the already stressed intersection of Alameda and Barstow has created sincere concern for the location of entrance/exits, increased left and right turning time, as well as those autos that may “cut the corner” of Alameda and Barstow to get through the intersection faster or avoid a long line of traffic. While a traffic study was apparently “not needed” due to the size of this project, the current neighbors and neighborhood know to avoid Barstow and Alameda area due to heavy traffic. The neighbors have asked twice for a traffic study during school hours, to assess what volume of traffic travels through this area/intersection.
- 4) **Urban Design Style:** The design style of a 3-story, flat roof, brightly colored building (red, brown, orange, green per color-rendering Jeebs & Zuzu, Inc. provided documents) does not blend in with the surrounding earth tone homes (many of which have covenants clarifying appropriate paint color choices of which these colors would not be allowed) and gabled roofs of Tierra Morena (south-affected neighborhood), Pico la Cueva Place (north-affected neighborhood), and Tierra Montana Place NE (west-affected neighborhood). Use of black chain-link fencing as the security surround also does not fit with the tasteful design required by the surrounding neighborhoods’ covenants of stuccoed walls or wrought-iron gates/fencing to



contain yards and pools. Additionally, there appears to be an inadequate amount of landscaped “green/open space” relative to the size of the property and amount of black asphalt parking surrounding the buildings.

- 5) ***Dumpster and Garbage Location:*** While it is noted that the developer has tried to accommodate garbage and recycling locations to help reduce smell, noise, and nuisance, there will still be a problem to the Tierra Morena neighbors due to the proximity of these dumpsters to their rear properties. Garbage trucks feet from the south property owner’s rear walls, as well as sour odors radiating from week old garbage make it difficult to see how this accommodation solves this problem for the very near neighbors.
- 6) ***Development Plan Availability and Design:*** During the first of the two facilitated meetings, only an artist rendering and vision “Barstow and Alameda Fact Sheet” was provided to the neighborhood. The second facilitated, post-application (filed 6/17/19), meeting provided more formal architect plans and documents, but failed to give satisfactory answers/solutions to many of the questions neighbors asked of the project team at the first meeting and really created more questions on a very short timeline. There was only a preliminary drainage plan to evaluate, the landscaping choices and plan was questioned extensively (neighbors remain unsure of the plant locations and choices), and carport design and appearance was not provided with visual clarity and structure. These documents have still not been provided for neighborhood assessment and evaluation and leave the close neighbors gravely concerned for their property’s future appearance, integrity, views, and value.

While Vineyard Estates Neighborhood Association understands that a multi-family complex is an allowable use of this land as zoned under the current IDO as MX-L, VENA hopes that the Development Review Board will consider the above thoughts and comments and consider that if allowed, the size of this project be reduced, re-thought, and design modified to better blend with our neighborhood and become a desirable development, not one hated by the neighborhood as has been currently determined through both of the facilitated meetings.

Respectfully,

Elizabeth S. Meek
President, Vineyard Estates Neighborhood Association

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