**TO:** Kym Dicome

Albuquerque City Planning Dept.

Design Review Board Chair

PO Box 1293, Albuquerque, NM 87103

and current DRB members

**FROM:** Dan Regan

KHNA President & District 4 Coalition Zoning & Development Chair

**DATE:** 7/11/19

**SUBJECT:** Comments on

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| **Project number: Property description:**  | PR-2019-002496Lots 1 through 4, Block 4, North Albuquerque Acres, Tract 3,Unit 3, located at the Southeast corner of Alameda Boulevard SEand Barstow Street NE, addressed as 8400, 8450, and 8474Alameda Blvd NE. |

which will be heard at DRB Meeting, July 17, 2019.

The following comments are respectfully submitted for the DRB’s awareness and consideration of the Site Plan application in the project noted above.

At both the Pre-Application Neighborhood Meeting and the Post-Application Meeting, the Applicant, in response to residents’ questions, had to say in essence: we didn’t bring all of our plans with us, so we can’t show you, on the actual plans, how we are handling the particular issue you are raising, but we can assure you that we have complied with all city requirements, even if our plans may not actually show how we’ve handled the issue you raise. Observation: This is hardly **full disclosure in a public setting**. The follow up offer by the applicant to provide the full plans, or that section under question, removes the answer to the question from public scrutiny and places it into an individualistic realm, after the fact of the public meeting.

As the DRB members can see in the Facilitator’s Report from the 7/8/19 Post-Application Neighborhood Meeting………..for a second such meeting,

*“Agreement among all meeting participants was not reached on any concerns at the meeting.
Agent stated that the project team would consider the concerns expressed as they continue to
adjust the project plan.“*

Some of the major concerns of the immediate neighborhood folks (Density, Parking, Traffic, Suitable Fit and Aesthetics) were all discussed at the Pre-Application Neighborhood Meeting and were no more satisfactorily responded to by the Applicant in the second go-round than the first. AND, this is one more example of the fact that Neighborhood/Community Voice, within the confines of the IDO, carries no absolute weight or power to effect outcomes in disputed issues. To any reasonable adult capable of critical thought and connecting dots, it is evident that the IDO’s creation in its current state was influenced heavily by the development industry (NAIOP, Consensus Planning, etc.) of the city. Neighborhood input was severely hampered by the lack of professional urban planning, legal and technical writing resources available to them and the total lack of paid positions among the neighborhoods. The BIAS that resulted in the IDO in favor of the developers in the city is fully in play in this situation. The results in this Project is that major influencers of how the IDO was constructed, have met the regs of what they influenced and that’s all they have to do to gain City approval for their project REGARDLESS of any impacts to the surrounding neighborhood and residents.

The fact that City Planning completely wiped out the prior Vineyard Sector Development Plan in creating the IDO meant that the current developer/agent could come in with the current design & get it approved.

With regard to the issue of sufficient **parking**, the City says that 139 slots are required for the 93 apartments; the project contains 150 slots. The Applicant’s Agent admitted that, if both he and the City are wrong in their guesstimates that these numbers are sufficient, their ONLY option is to put a price on the parking (monetize the slots) because neither Barstow nor Alameda allow On Street parking. Most neighborhood residents find it less than credulous that tenants who will be paying a minimum of $1600 a month in a purportedly upscale, luxury development will have only one vehicle if two or more folks rent a unit. There ain’t lotz of latitude or solutions to this issue because the maximum possible rental units have been crammed into this plan.

With regard to **population density**, this project is surrounded (except for the east side) by single family homes valued between the mid $300Ks to a high of $663K according to Zillow. A rough guesstimate from the Summary supplied for the 7/8/19 meeting was that there could be between 90 and 300 residents in this apartment complex……on slightly more than 3 acres. The disparity between these numbers is large and most unseemly if one is trying to fit into the surrounding area. It has been mentioned that property values could be negatively impacted especially for the folks on the north & south of this project. If this project causes a 5% loss in nearby property values, that could mean a range of $17K to 34K loss to an individual property owner. If the loss is in the 10% range, then the range goes to a $34K to $66K financial hit. For an individual home owner these numbers are neither insubstantial nor insignificant. BUT as written, the IDO via the DRB can approve the project because it meets the regulations created by the City and the development folks and respects the private property rights of the developers while paying little to no attention to the property rights of the individual home owners as to the value of their investment and their rights to the quiet and undisturbed use of their property.

If one reads the entire Summaries of both of the Neighborhood Meetings, it is clear that there is not much about this project as currently presented, beyond the marketing lingo that will be used, that could qualify the project as neighborhood compatible, elegant, luxurious or, even, upscale. The latest drawings depict a spiffy barracks/dormitory look with garish colors that don’t match any surrounding buildings. The only discernable driver for the number of units being packed in is monetary profit. Beauty, enhancement of the surroundings, harmony and compatibility be damned. I think it is reasonable for the question to be asked: WHAT KIND OF CITY ARE WE BECOMING???

And, I understand fully that the DRB members have their technical & departmental “lanes” that they must stay within and that it is a matter of ‘checking off the boxes’ on specs & forms created without much discernable neighborhood or residential community input………………….because that’s the way the IDO was created.

I simply find this just one more example of the City Planning Department’s and the City Council’s way of ignoring neighborhood input and facilitating the commercial development of ticky-tacky housing that has the capacity to damage an already heavily trafficked & congested area that up to now contains mostly single family homes………….cuz that’s what’s allowed by the IDO.