

February 7, 2007

Re: Two Acre Wood Cohousing, Sebastopol, CA

To Whom It May Concern,

I was the architect of Two Acre Wood Cohousing in Sebastopol, CA. We had a number of neighborhood meetings to familiarize the neighbors to the concept of cohousing and to provide them an opportunity to influence the site plan. We were surprised when the Director of Planning phoned to inform us that there was a petition from over sixty neighbors objecting to the proposal before the City. Their objections related to the loss of the old fallow apple orchard on the property, a belief that the street traffic would be noticeably impacted, and perhaps there were some who were suspicious of the term "cohousing."

We of course had a number of neighbors speaking on behalf of our submitted plans, which helped considerably. Our proposal was for fourteen units for a two-acre site. The majority of the five-member council voted for our project.

Two Acre Wood has been in the neighborhood for over six years. During this time three neighbors have created openings in the fence to connect them to the community. Their children play there often, and they have joined the dinner club. A neighborhood supporter died, and his family asked if they could have the after funeral gathering in the common house. A while later another neighbor, one who did not support the community, died and her family also asked to use the common house after the funeral.

Many children in the neighborhood have gone through the haunted house the Two Acre Wood community has created for Halloween. In addition, quite a few neighbors have joined the community for various events.

Due to the success of Two Acre Wood, the City purchased two sites to be proactive in their quest for affordable housing developments that were sustainably designed and community focused. Both proposals chosen for these sites were cohousing. Cohousing is mentioned as a preferred option in the City's General Plan Housing Element and the Zoning Ordinance.

Recently, a single mother, the owner of one of the homes, was honored by the Chamber of Commerce for her work on recycling. Other members of the Two Acre Wood community have also been participating in the City's affairs.

Respectfully,



Michael Black, Community Planner/Architect