

2546 Rolling Hills Ct.
Alamo, CA 94507

July 9, 2024

VIA EMAIL AND HAND DELIVERY

City of Watsonville
Watsonville City Council
275 Main Street
Suite 400 (4th Floor)
Watsonville, CA 95076

Re: City of Watsonville “Community/Neighborhood Meeting” Held on June 26, 2024, at Marinovich Park and Community Center

Dear Members of the Council,

I am presenting our citizens' report regarding the City of Watsonville's “Community / Neighborhood Meeting” held on June 26, 2024, at Marinovich Park.

Despite the City's failure to properly notify impacted stakeholders, the community efforts of the neighborhood Coalition of District One's Westside for Families, Safety and Social Justice (The Coalition), led by Catalina Torres resulted in approximately 32 attendees representing industrial, commercial, and residential stakeholders. It appears that no one from Second, Walker, and Rodriguez Streets was notified by the City, despite these stakeholders being adversely affected by the homeless population in the area.

Residents shared their concerns about crime, specifically:

1. Multiple narratives about urban blight impacts generated by the Loaves & Fishes indigent feeding operation.
2. Multiple narratives about urban blight impacts due to the concentration of homeless people in the area.

3. Multiple narratives about very concerning violence and crime in the region.

Since that meeting, there have been ongoing incidents of homeless trespassing on Walker Street, and several fires set by the homeless in the industrial zone on Saturday alone.

A larger problem is becoming obvious. There is a disturbing recurring pattern of City Staff behavior here regarding District 1. For historical context, consider the Listening Session regarding Ceiba Charter School that occurred on September 29, 2022:

1. The City distributed an invitation letter to the public with Ceiba School Principal Josh Ripp's signature on letterhead bearing the City's official seal, giving the Ceiba school counterfeit municipal standing and authority.

With the Tiny Village, the City appears to have allowed the DignityMoves non-profit organization to use the City's seal on the company's website, even though the City insists there is "no application" or contract in existence, giving DignityMoves counterfeit municipal standing.

2. For the Ceiba session, the City distributed the Listening Session invitation only to a select few adjacent stakeholders, in order to reduce participation by victims of the Ceiba school impacts.

For the recent District 1 Community meeting, the City selectively distributed the notice in a manner that withheld notification to the residents closest to the Tiny Village project site, in order to reduce participation by victims of homeless person-related crime and blight.

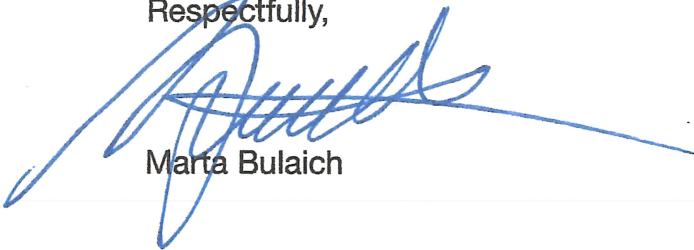
With respect to the Tiny Village, the City's ongoing lack of transparency and inability to properly notify impacted stakeholders, who are suffering from ongoing crime due to the concentration of homeless people in the area, demonstrates a complete abandonment of District 1. Community stakeholders, including established businesses and a population of hardworking Latinos that make this City run, desire a safe community with parks where their children can play. Instead, they are faced with a crime-ridden neighborhood, syringes scattered around swings, and fed repeated false statements from the City Staff regarding the City's involvement in the State grant application.

City of Watsonville
Watsonville City Council
July 9, 2024
Page 3

Further, they are accused of being NIMBYs, lacking empathy, or being ignorant. And, they were channeled into a forum that restricted them from voicing their concerns about a looming homeless project being pushed through without the requisite public notice and hearing, a project which will invariably result in increased crime and urban blight.

The people deserve far better treatment than what the City is providing.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Marta Bulaich', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Marta Bulaich

cc: Coalición del Distrito Uno Oeste para Familias, Seguridad y Justicia Social