

Evaluation Committee Forming to Review Evergreen Senior Homes Initiative

Many San Jose voters recently received a brochure supporting the Evergreen Senior Homes Initiative (Initiative), with major funding by Ponderosa Homes. Proponents are gathering signatures for a measure that allows for the creation of up to 910 residential units for active, independent seniors age 55 or older with at least 20% designated for affordable housing with a preference given to veterans.

Former Evergreen council member Pat Sausedo – now employed by the Building Industry Association – notes that the Initiative turns unused industrial land into a senior community while enabling existing homes to be added to the re-sale market. Mayor Liccardo states, “This is about billionaires building a gated community for millionaires and calling it affordable housing.” He further maintains that it upends San Jose's careful land use planning process.

The controversial Initiative was discussed by your League Board during its October meeting. Members voted to form an Evaluation Committee lead by Roma Dawson. Pat Reardon will co-chair. The Committee's first task will be to compare the Initiative to existing LWV policies at local, regional, state and national levels. Interested LWV members are invited to participate. Email Roma, romadawson@yahoo.com by November 15.

The City Council voted to proceed with a “9212 Report” on October 17 (Item 4.1). State election code requires an impartial report on fiscal impacts, consistency with General and Specific Plans especially the Housing Element, funding for various types of infrastructure, economic and environmental impacts. The Council meeting Video is available at sanjoseca.gov, Agendas & Minutes. A 300-page document submitted by proponents seeks to change the City's land use plan – GP Envision 2040 and the Evergreen Specific Plan. Envision 2040 was adopted after some 50+ meetings, input from 5,000+ community participants with a 40-member task force that met for almost 4 years.

The Initiative creates a “Senior Housing Overlay” for a 200 acre parcel on Aborn Road owned by Silicon Valley developer Carl Berg. However, it would authorize the City to evaluate other vacant employment lands in areas such as Coyote Valley, Edenvale and North San Jose. Berg plans to sell his land to Ponderosa Homes. If approved, City Council would be prohibited from using its standard rezoning procedures that ensure community engagement for 10 years. Any changes would have to go back to the voters for approval.

Proponents say the parcel currently zoned for industrial uses hasn't been used in 30 years and industry may never come. Mayor Liccardo says he approached Mr. Berg recently about a serious buyer hoping to build a science office park. The Evaluation Committee will compile information on the pros and cons of the Initiative and report back to the Board.

<http://sjmayor.org/billionairescheme>

www.evergreenseniorhomes.com

<http://www.spur.org/publications/spur-report/2017-08-24/room-more>