

Letters...

(Continued from page A4)

Slamming the door

Editor:

During the recent affordable housing debate in Sebastopol much was said about how upper income families were moving into expensive homes in Sebastopol while many long-time residents were stymied by high market prices. Once these "outsiders" moved in, the scenario continued, they sought to "slam the door" and restrict all new growth in order to preserve the "small town" character of the city.

As outsiders who recently moved from Sacramento to a large new home in Sebastopol, my wife and I do not feel this way. We understand there are limits to how far a small city can expand and that growth must be managed carefully. Nevertheless, we feel strongly that appropriate affordable housing is necessary for Sebastopol.

In light of this, we are greatly saddened by the City Council's rejection of the Orchard Park project and we mourn the death of affordable housing in this community.

There can be no doubt that with the high land prices, the myriad of Design Review and Planning Commission hoops to jump through, and a hostile City Council, no developer in their right mind would come anywhere near Sebastopol now.

We love living here. We did *not* wish to slam the door. Apparently, however, the door has been slammed for us.

John Katchmer
Sebastopol

'Somebody likes them'

Editor:

As a financial planner, I always have to come back to the financial cost of anything that is done in a town. The latest flap over the Orchard Park subdivision points to an unexpected potential cost connected with the City Council's decision.

Your recent reporting suggested that the State Attorney General might sue the city because Sebastopol was refusing to deal with the affordable housing issue, and that the developer might sue the city for its capricious stand on new housing. The price of all this will be the costs of a legal defense.

There is no telling exactly what such a defense might cost, but if it was \$100,000, then the city will have to make more cuts in their already meager budget.

When your house is broken into, or your house

burns down, and there is no timely response from the police or fire departments, the city will be put in the position of saying, "Sorry, we had to cut two officers and a patrol car to pay for our lawsuit defense," or "maintenance on the fire trucks was deferred and the engines were not ready to roll when you needed them."

Don't forget, that *somebody* voted Howard Levy in during the last election, so there is *some* support for the city council's decisions. Since a recall and special election for the rest of the council are too expensive, we're just going to have to grit our teeth for another two years until *maybe* we can vote Magnie, Hamilton and Roventini out of office. But don't count on their losing their next elections. Somebody likes them a lot.

Hans Beerbaum
Sebastopol

A public hearing?

Editor:

Q: When is a public hearing not a public hearing?

A: When it's held in Sebastopol by the city council. Oh, they let you get up there and blow off steam but they don't really care what you say, good or bad; their minds are already made up.

I'm referring to the latest debacle in Sebastopol about affordable housing. Never mind that the Planning Commission voted 4 to 1 in favor of it, and the Design Review Board and the Planning Director all were in favor of the project.

Never mind that the applicants spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on EIRs and met all kinds of conditions imposed on them by the council; never mind the assurances by the city engineer that there would be plenty of water and no problem with sewers; the city council still said they knew best and rejected the project.

I think the council should get rid of all commissioners and boards and run the city all by themselves; they don't listen to the very people that they appoint for advice and direction.

I can't believe the arrogance displayed by these elected servants of the people. They could care less for the well being of the city. They are only interested in serving their special interest groups that are definitely no growth, no progress, no developers, no nothing.

The city should have started this no-growth policy years ago and maybe some of these council members and special interest groups wouldn't have gotten in here.

Jack Miller
Sebastopol