

**Post 4/30/2024 Planning Commission Meeting
Public Comment 05.05.2024 THRU 05.09.2024
PDP-23-34 /555 Kelly Avenue**

Cathy Baird – 05/06/2024
Richard Holeton – 05-06/2024
Elizabeth Cortez – 05/06/2024
Brian Webster – 05/07/2024
M.F. Coastside Resident – 05/07/2024
Linda Mead – 05/07/2024
Connie Gerster – 05/07/2024
Faith in Action – Coastside – 05/07/2024
Trish Hayward – 05/07/2024
Cal HDF – 05/08/2024
Kerry Burke – 05/09/2024

From: Cathy Baird
To: Bridget Jett

Mon 5/6/2024 10:46 AM

Ms. Jett-

My email is meant for the Planning Commissioners, who don't appear to have public email addresses. I found your email address here: <https://www.half-moon-bay.ca.us/157/Planning-Commission>

Although it should have been no surprise that farmworkers have been living in barely habitable housing, it certainly has been no secret since the shooting 14 months ago. It is beyond urgent to figure out how to make sure people have a decent place to live, and you have been provided with an great opportunity to approve housing for some of the most vulnerable people in San Mateo County - senior farmworkers. **PLEASE DON'T DELAY APPROVAL ANY LONGER!**

You have a proposal from two respected organizations (MidPen and ALAS) to provide housing and onsite services, and they need to secure the funding they have found. From what I understand, the concerns are about parking and "downtown character".

Parking: How many of the projected residents actually have cars? How many do they have per household? And wouldn't the existence of onsite services make it easier for them to access the services without a car trip?

Downtown character: I live across the hill. I like to come to the coast and frequently make a stop downtown before heading to coastal access. It would warm my heart to see housing for senior farmworkers as part of the downtown landscape. It makes sense for them to be able to stay in the community where they have worked (and may still be working). There is beauty in taking care of community elders that should supercede varied opinions about architectural choices.

Please listen to your community and approve this project at your next meeting!

Cathy Baird
San Carlos

From: Richard Holeton
To:CDD Director
Cc:Bridget Jett; Jill Ekas; Joaquin Jimenez

Mon 5/6/2024 2:01 PM

Dear Planning Commission:

Please please please do the right thing and approve the farmworker housing proposal for 555 Kelly before upcoming deadlines for funding opportunities pass.

It took the 2023 mass shooting of farmworkers to finally shine a light on the shameful housing conditions for our coastside farmworker community — conditions that have existed for decades. Now here is an excellent, well-conceived project to make a start on providing solutions and set an example for more to come. A project that would be only a beginning, but that would make the whole community proud, while serving an extremely needy and deserving subset of our fellow residents.

If this project stalls out in the Planning Commission, that would be a shameful blot on Half Moon Bay and coastside history, and a sorry legacy for commission members.

Thank you for reconsidering all delays and voting on this project as soon as possible.

Best regards,

Rich
++++
Richard Holeton
Montara, CA 94037

From: Richard Holeton
To:CDD Director
Cc:Bridget Jett;Jill Ekas;Joaquin Jimenez

Mon 5/6/2024 2:23 PM

As a follow up, after reading the recent [HMB Review piece](#), what would “detract from HMB’s character and heritage” would be to continue to marginalize a significant portion of underserved local residents. Or put another way, the “heritage” is one of marginalizing that population and therefore should be *changed.* Let’s not hide behind the “complexity” of this project to nickel and dime it, for example by eliminating the ground floor “offices” including services for local farmworkers.

From: Elizabeth Cortez

To:555 Kelly - Mercy/ALAS/City

Please do not approve this project. Everyone is saying that it's for the senior farmworkers, but isn't Moonridge supposed to be housing for only farmworkers as well? Look at what that's turned into. Most of the senior farmworkers that applied to live there don't even live there anymore and is now being taken over by their children that do not even work in farm working. So because there is no more room in Moonridge anymore they want to have a whole new complex built for them and right in the middle of town. More crime will happen, it would not be any safer I can promise you that. Especially with the gangs already hanging out by there. Their children are not working in farm working and their kids probably won't either but many of them are into gangs and that's not something we need more of in this town. If they need to make more room in Moonridge like they should then they need to do that and kick people out accordingly. There are many farmworkers that have a place and are getting by in life like the rest of the world. They want to talk about the farmworkers living conditions but everyone chooses the way they live. Dirty or clean. They chose dirty. They could have found their own place to live just like everyone else does as well. If they really can't well there is the shelter in town, there they will always find someone a place to live. Doing this would change half moon bay so much in bad ways. Please don't approve this and approve a check up on Moonridge and the Main Street apartments instead, so that space can open up for the however many senior farmworkers there are. Do we even have a list as to how many senior farmworkers need a place ...? Please don't approve this. For the sake of HMB. It's not fair at all for everyone else in town that actually pay what it costs to live in town because they don't want to stay living with their parents or wait till their parents move away to keep the unit. If you really want to make it into a high floor Apartment complex do it for everyone to apply for it because the price will be what the price should be and if you can afford it you can afford it, if you can't than you can't. But that would look so bad there at that location, do it somewhere else not right in the middle of town. Also "poor living conditions" is not the reason why that guy shot all those people. He did it because he wanted to and pretty sure he was on drugs. You can go ahead and say that bad living conditions make people become drug addicts but that's not true. People make themselves become drug addicts, than they choose to make it interfere with their lives, with the way they live, the way they think, everything. Why would you choose to house drug addicts? Housing them doesn't help them it just gives them a place to do drugs. I have seen what it does to people and I do not feel bad for them because no one else is choosing how they are living but themselves. I've seen many people get housed for choosing to stay in the streets because they love the drug so much so they get free housing because they are "homeless" and now in their new Apartment they are still doing drugs and it looks disgusting in their apartment because they do not care how they live at all, so why should we? They can continue to say it isn't

fair..but it also isn't fair to the working class also struggling . Especially the ones that do not have family to live with and the ones that are actually trying. It would be great if it were actually just for the seniors but then they move their family in..and kids start bringing in their husbands or their wives than they start making babies and what point do you stop and say ok that many people can't live there and you can't have more family living there and they actually listen. I doubt it. They want to say they are depressed with 10 people to a home well no one told them to have more family and to put more family in their home. You don't need to house more people you need people that if they can't afford to live in town any more than they need to look into moving out just like everybody else does. It costs them nothing to ask for housing, to ask for help, they will do it all day, but it's up to you to say no.

From: Brian Webster
To: CDD Director
Cc: jjmenez; Deborah Penrose; Robert Brownstone; +10 others

Tue 5/7/2024 7:38 AM

Dear Director McHarris -

I just read the May 6th SF Chronicle story - Farmworker Housing Proposal Hits Wall.

I am shocked at how narrow minded the commissioners are to delay this project.

Please tell Commissioner Rick Hernandez that that his callous and narrow minded delay of approval for this project is informing people in a negative way about the character of Half Moon Bay.

Please tell Commission Chair Margaret Gossett that senior farmworkers should have a building that is taller, with a larger resource center to represent the central role they play in giving their working lives to help feed California families.

What kind of perverted priorities do the Planning Commissioners have?

This project should be a big outstanding showcase of the positive moral and civic character of Half Moon Bay and not a story of narrow minded backward thinking.

Please inform the Commissioners that people are increasingly aware of their inaction on this very important housing project. It should be approved as soon as possible.

Sincerely,
Brian Webster
San Francisco
BrianWebster.com
BetterWorldAdvisors.net

Dear members of the planning commission,

I am writing this letter because I am concerned about the proposed project for 555 Kelly Avenue. I am opposed to the project and strongly feel there are many flaws to the plan.

The response by the commission during the last meeting seemed to be in congruence with what I'm gathering from my community. I truly appreciate the hard work the commission members put forth. I am a 30 year old resident of Half Moon Bay. I went to Hatch, Cunha and Half Moon Bay High and now am a happy resident of the community. I've grown to love our small town even though it has changed throughout my childhood. From its beautiful beaches to the peaceful hills, our town offers tranquility from the hustle and bustle of the bay area. I cherish our historic downtown, and enjoy the views of nature that surround it. The proposed project at 555 Kelly will drastically change this.

There are many flaws to the proposed plan, but I'd like to emphasize a few major points that I feel are most important. Some of which are decisions to be made by the planning commission while others are for our local leadership to consider.

1. **This is a costly project.** During the last meeting, the cost of the project went from \$33 million to \$43 million for a 40 unit building. That is over \$1 million per unit. Not to mention, I'm sure there will be continued operating costs. If I were a senior farm worker, I would feel a bit exploited if I were provided a studio, 1 bedroom or even a 2 bedroom apartment versus a traditional home for that same price.
2. **The building does not fit in.** The proposed height of five stories will change the look of the town, eliminate views of the hills, and will place further development even taller. Furthermore, four stories is too high. Like everyone else, buildings should be capped at 3 stories. Not to mention, the design of the building is just plain ugly and has no place next to the most historic building in Half Moon Bay: the church. One would think that for \$43 million, we might get a little more than a few squares, some juliet balconies and the cheapest paint colors offered.
3. **This project does not solve the problem.** The amount of senior farm workers in the area far exceeds the 40 units that will be made available. Surely, there is a better location than a property with a 1300 square foot house to tackle this problem. To me, it seems the location better serves as an office for ALAS than actually helping the farm worker population. ALAS has an office that is a block

away. Given office space has become increasingly obsolete, why do they need an entire floor for more?

4. **An oversight system needs to be in place.** This will ensure the qualified individual and their immediate families are the only individuals residing in the unit. Once their children are adults, they need to move out. Subletting should not be allowed, and this should be actively enforced (unlike how moonridge or the low income housing on S. Main are managed). Considering the city will be the landlord in this situation, there should be a clause or some sort of legally binding agreement that ensures proper rule enforcement. The quoted audit frequency is simply not enough and we have the technology to do better.

Interestingly, our community is very accepting when it comes to farmworker and low income housing. Other communities might not be so open to such concepts. And so, if the community is on board with senior farmworker housing but feels the location and the details are not appropriate, why is the applicant so insistent on this particular location and project? Why are they so demanding, unprofessional and downright rude while asking for approval (we see how they communicate during the meetings) ?

Further questions I have for the applicant:

How will sustainability be incorporated? A 40 unit building should have solar panels, electric appliances, water capture technology, compost space, etc.

Why do you not have answers to important, standard details when presenting? "I don't know" or "I'm unaware" indicates the applicant is ill prepared for such an important meeting. Will this lack of preparedness be continued if the proposal is approved?

Why are there so many speakers from outside our community? Individuals who are board members, employees, etc. for other nonprofits from San Mateo or other towns really have no place in our town meetings.

No one believes the traffic study concluding this will not have an impact. How will ALAS' office impact traffic, and where will visitors and employees be parking? (This is not a question so much as it is a point).

Before a decision is made, I want to know exactly how much ALAS is planning on paying in rent, because prime commercial space is not cheap. Who will be

receiving this rental income? Will they be subletting this space? (2700 sq ft is a big office).

Who will be paying for the operating costs? Will taxpayers (local or state) take on this burden?

Did your nonprofit receive any donations from investment banks, venture capitalists, or from large corporations? Will these entities be receiving returns or rental income from the office or residential units?

Was there a bidding process for the project? \$33 million for the project seems high (especially since it is bare bones in design). Who is the company and do they have any relation to those that donated?

Furthermore, do we even have set criteria? How long does one need to be a farmworker to qualify?

Why is the age set at 55? The applicant painted a picture of a tired old farm worker, with arthritis and decreased mobility yet 55 is rather young. Why not use the retirement age set forth by Social Security?

Density is a huge concern, criteria standards should properly identify need.

In conclusion, there are many issues with this project. From what I gather, Half Moon Bay residents seem to be in favor of farmworker housing but not at this location and in this manner. I personally feel that long term low income housing should not be a necessity in our society and we should do better as a community to promote self sustainability. But this is a current issue, and we need a project that actually serves this marginalized population. The proposed project almost appears to be further exploiting the population it claims to be helping, and wasting an estimated \$43 million (probably more) that could truly make a difference for our hard working community members living day to day.

I very much appreciate your time and efforts. I'd be honored if my points were considered important enough to share, however I would like to remain anonymous as this issue seems to be very heated.

M. F.

From: Linda Mead

To:555 Kelly - Mercy/ALAS/City

Tue 5/7/2024 11:45 AM

Good Morning HMB:

I have lived in Half Moon Bay since 1987; I love the vibe, the community spirit, and the people. While I am all for low-income housing, senior housing, and farm-worker housing, our quaint little community draws tourists who love the beach-y western old-town-themed Main Street. As such, HMB should never have properties over two stories. Once you allow it, more high rise buildings will follow (We already have a three-story being completed on Main Street.). That's esthetically a big NO-NO.

Isn't there some other solution? Two low-rise facilities instead of one high-rise? Have all possibilities been negated?

Sadly,

Linda Mead

From: Connie Gerster
To:555 Kelly - Mercy/ALAS/City

Tue 5/7/2024 1:01 PM

My husband and I support this project. Yes, it's a large building but to us that just means more people are able to have a home. If we don't build up, more open spaces will need to be covered with two story buildings. Not only is that much more expensive, it will certainly change the character of HMB more than one building.

To the people who say 'but it will change the character of HMB', we say it has to change because the current system isn't working of all of us.

Thank you,
Connie and Paul Gerster

May 7, 2024

Dear Members of the Half Moon Bay Planning Commission:

Coastside Faith in Action is a committee of Faith in Action Bay Area comprised entirely of members living on the Coastside, from Pacifica to Pescadero. Several of our members live in Half Moon Bay. We are fully in support of the 40 units, proposed for 555 Kelly Avenue, of affordable housing for very-low-income and extremely-low-income senior farmworkers. We also support the Farmworker Resource Center planned for the building's ground floor. In the words of one of our members, we want to "see this building as a symbol of this community caring, a monument to our caring, deeply caring for this usually invisible population."

Thank you for encouraging participation of the community in deliberating this project. By one count, at the April 23 meeting 38 members of the community spoke in favor of the proposal, as opposed to 7 against. And on April 30, 24 spoke in favor whereas 4 were opposed. A review of correspondence addressed to the Planning Commission revealed that support outnumbered objection by a 3:1 margin.

At the public meetings you have emphasized how you support farmworker housing but need to listen to the community. Based on the magnitude of support communicated either verbally or in writing, we question who you define as community. Is it only those privileged enough to own homes? Is it only those with a history of power or influence in Half Moon Bay? Is it only those who obscure their generic objection to low-income housing by redirecting focus to minute details? Or is community all who live on the Coastside, including those who historically have been unseen, those who have been marginalized? We believe that all members of a community are important, that all members of a community deserve a safe, affordable, dignified place to live and to congregate. We urge that the 40 units of housing and resource center at 555 Kelly be approved without further delay.

Sincerely,

Linda Goldstein, Half Moon Bay
Ellen Hage, Pacifica
Vaughn Harrison, El Granada
Noreen Cooper-Heavlin, El Granada
William Heavlin, El Granada
Rabbi Moshe Heyn, Half Moon Bay
Pastor Sue Holland, Half Moon Bay
Suzanne Moore, Pacifica
Shauna Pickett-Gordon, Pacifica
Joanne Rokosky, El Granada
Gloria Stofan, Pacifica
Pastor Lisa Warner-Carey, Half Moon Bay

From: Trish Hayward <trish@catstrat.com>
To:555 Kelly - Mercy/ALAS/City

Tue 5/7/2024 2:26 PM

As a newer resident of Half Moon Bay, I'd like to thank the Planning Commission for thoughtful deliberation on the 555 Kelly housing proposal.

I support efforts to house local farm workers AND want to maintain the small town feel of our community.

Therefore, I recommend that the town approve the project with conditions. Those conditions should include height restriction and underground parking requirements (or contributions to a new town-built multi story paid parking structure in the vicinity). These are the same restrictions that would be required for other applicants.

Approving a tall building with limited parking will create precedence for more tall buildings with limited parking. The town must keep its small town charm to attract tourists. Surrounding downtown with tall buildings and streets jammed with residents cars will further reduce visits to Main Street from the beach going public.

Trish Hayward
Half Moon Bay



May 8, 2024

**Half Moon Bay Planning Commission
501 Main St.
Half Moon Bay, CA 94019**

Re: Proposed Farmworker Housing at 555 Kelly Avenue

By email: Cddirector@hmbcity.com, BJett@hmbcity.com

**CC: MChidester@hmbcity.com, engberg@smwlaw.com, JBlair@hmbcity.com,
mnoce@hmbcity.com**

Dear Half Moon Bay Planning Commission,

The California Housing Defense Fund (“CalHDF”) submits this letter to remind the Commission of its obligation to abide by all relevant state housing laws when evaluating the proposed 40-unit, 100% affordable farmworker housing project project at 555 Kelly Avenue. The Housing Accountability Act (Gov. Code, § 65589.5; the “HAA”) requires approval of zoning and general plan compliant housing development projects unless findings can be made regarding specific, objective, written health and safety hazards. (*Id.*, at subd. (d)(2).) The HAA also bars cities from imposing conditions on the approval of such projects that would reduce the project’s density unless, again, such written findings are made. (*Id.*, at subd. (j).)

As outlined in the staff report, the proposed development complies with local land use rules, including the City’s zoning code and General Plan. The HAA’s protections therefore apply, and the City must not reject the project, except based on health and safety standards, as outlined above. Furthermore, the Commission also may not deny the project due to subjective development review standards, such as aesthetics, as the HAA only permits consideration of objective standards. (*Ibid.*)

For instance, such issues as whether the design “describes and informs our character as a community” or whether the design expresses “a gateway to a small town,” which media reports [indicate](#) the Commissioners are using as criteria for evaluating the project, are not valid criteria for denial of the project.

If the Commission imposes design changes that have a substantial adverse impact on the viability of the project, and such design changes are the subject of litigation, then the burden of proof will be on the city to show that the design changes were necessary for the protection of public health and safety. (*Id.*, at subd. (i).)

CalHDF also writes to emphasize that the Density Bonus Law (Gov. Code, § 65915; the “DBL”) offers the proposed development certain protections. The Commission must respect these protections. In addition to granting the increase in residential units allowed by the DBL, the Commission must not deny the project the proposed waivers and concessions with respect to height and parking unless it makes written findings as required by Gov. Code, § 65915, subd. (e)(1) that the waivers would have a specific, adverse impact upon health or safety, and that there is no feasible method to satisfactorily mitigate or avoid the specific adverse impact. Increased density, concessions, and waivers that a project is entitled to under the DBL do not render the project noncompliant with the zoning code or general plan, for purposes of the HAA. (Gov. Code, § 65589.5, subd. (j)(3).) Of note, the DBL specifically allows for a reduction in required accessory parking in addition to the allowable waivers and concessions. (Gov. Code, § 65915, subd. (p).)

Regarding the height of the project, the Commission may not deny the increased height requested pursuant to the DBL without making the aforementioned findings, which the Commission may not do, as the preponderance of evidence in the record does not support such a finding. Regarding the coastal development permit, city staff have [exhaustively demonstrated](#) the project’s consistency with coastal policies.

In terms of height and character,, it is worth noting that this is the same city that permitted the development of the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, which is of equivalent height as the proposed project. Rooms in the hotel typically cost close to \$1,000 a night and a round of golf at the accessory golf courses costs approximately \$200. Given the equivalent height of the hotel, it is therefore worth asking, in terms of the “character” of the community, whether the Commission considers it necessary to delete a farmworker resource center in order to reduce the height of the building. Surely, in light of the [deplorable living conditions](#) that farmworkers endure in the city, the Commission would not demand that a modestly sized resource center be removed from the project to satisfy subjective concerns around height.

Additionally, the project is exempt from environmental review under § 15332 (In-Fill Development Projects) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines as the project is consistent with the applicable general plan designation and all applicable general plan policies as well as with the applicable zoning designation and regulations; the proposed development occurs within city limits on a project site of no more than five acres substantially surrounded by urban uses; the project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species; approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality; and the site can be

adequately served by all required utilities and public services. And recent caselaw from the California Court of Appeal has affirmed that local governments err, and may be sued, when they improperly refuse to grant a project a CEQA exemption or streamlined CEQA review to which it is entitled. (*Hilltop Group, Inc. v. County of San Diego* (2024) 99 Cal.App.5th 890, 911.)

CalHDF would like to emphasize that the Commission needs to make a determination on this application and to stop continuing the hearing to future meeting dates. (See Gov. Code, § 65905.5, subd. (a) [“Notwithstanding any other law, if a proposed housing development project complies with the applicable, objective general plan and zoning standards ... a city ... shall not conduct more than five hearings ... in connection with the approval of that housing development project.”].) If the Commission means to disapprove the project, despite lacking a legal basis to do so, then it should do so in a timely manner so that the applicant may appeal the decision to the Council. If the Commission means to approve the project, then it should do so quickly so as to allow the project to move forward.

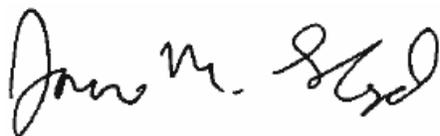
As you are well aware, California remains in the throes of a statewide crisis-level housing shortage. New housing such as this is a public benefit; it will bring increased tax revenue, new customers to local businesses, and it will reduce displacement of existing residents into homelessness. While no one project will solve the statewide housing crisis, the proposed development is a step in the right direction. CalHDF urges the Commission to approve it, consistent with its obligations under state law.

CalHDF is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation whose mission includes advocating for increased access to housing for Californians at all income levels, including low-income households. You may learn more about CalHDF at www.calhdf.org.

Sincerely,



Dylan Casey
CalHDF Executive Director



James M. Lloyd
CalHDF Director of Planning and Investigations

To: Half Moon Bay Planning Commission

May 9, 2024

From: Kerry Burke

Subject: 555 Kelly Project

HMBLUP Stress Test

The Planning Commission deliberate assessment of this project is commendable given the political and public interest in this project. A \$ 43 + Million dollar investment is worth getting right in this critical public service location on a main transportation route in our town. This is a situation comes down to Political pressures vs. Policy discipline. Numerous points have been made regarding this project and this letter expresses a few that are of concern.

Public Service Policies

Water and Sewer connections

A significant concern is adequate public services to serve this project and others
LUP – Table 3.5 (page 3-1)

Public Services – affordable projects are **Second Tier priority connections**. The LUP indicates that 202 connections were available as of 2020 for the entire CCWD service area, not just Half Moon Bay. How many connections are currently available for affordable housing projects?

880 Stone Pine – approved permits (47 units)
555 Kelly – pending permit approval (40 units proposed)
Yap / MidPen? (approximately 50 units proposed)
Cabrillo Unified School District?
Others - ?

Coastside Fire Protection District

Can the proposed 5 story building be serviced by CFPD?
What threat does a 5 story building pose to adjacent buildings?

Workforce Housing Overlay

it is critical to understand implementation and ramifications as the City proceeds with this and other pending or future projects.

Assurance of Project Management

The “aspirational condition” mentioned at the last public meeting for critical client management does not engender confidence that the proposed units over time will house the target population.

Long Range Planning –

Consider a Joint City Council, Planning Commission & Parks and Recreation meeting to discuss a Master Plan of Shoreline Station/TACC

Could a portion of Shoreline Station be converted to Senior Farm Worker housing?

State Mandates vs Local consequences

So much effort has been made in the preparation and approval of our Land Use Plan. It is difficult to have outside interests mandate densities, heights and parking exceptions that can undermine the thoughtful plans and regulations that were studied and discussed for years by our community, Planning Commission and Council. It seems essential to take the time to consider all the ramifications from any significant project regardless of the need where other options can be explored. Buildings last for 100 years.

The Coastside has gifts of the nature but also the burdens of being an attractive destination. 555 Kelly is on a noted Beach Connection Route in the Land Use Plan and is in a very congested area of our town already providing multiple public services. Beyond the very focused traffic study for this project, common knowledge of this prime public activity center should be considered for public safety concerns.

Mercy Housing Management services square footage

Applicant needs to answer specifically the minimum square footage of management area that is required by funding law/agreements. There may be alternatives to reduce the mass of the building while supplying needed services nearby. ALAS could rent space in Shoreline Station.

880 Stone Pine and other locations

This project was approved with an Emergency Permit and has received funding without the benefit of the typical public review and input.

880 Stone has designated 19 units for displaced workers. Can the remaining 28 units be designated for senior / retired farm worker housing?

Can the City consider alternative / multiple locations to ensure the best outcome for the creation of housing? We all want to provide the needed housing for our senior farm workers and it seems that there are more than one way to provide it.