

# SECURITY NATIONAL

ROB ARKLEY

February 13, 2009

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FEB 17 2009

Ms. Lynn Jacobs, Director  
California Department of Housing & Community Development  
1800 Third Street, Suite 430  
Sacramento, California 95814

HUMBOLDT COUNTY  
PLANNING DIVISION

Re: Humboldt County Housing Element update

Dear Ms. Jacobs:

As you know, the County of Humboldt has been processing its Housing Element Update since September 2007. Unfortunately, the County's processing has not complied with State-required public workshops. Under considerable pressure from a number of groups and individuals in Humboldt County to have Housing Element workshops, the Humboldt County Planning Commission held what they referred to as a Housing Element "Town Hall Style" meeting last Thursday evening, February 5, 2009.

I would encourage you to not be deceived by the title of the event. Instead of a true workshop, County Staff continued its ongoing agenda of stultifying public input. The following is a recounting of what occurred at the meeting:

- When we showed up for the workshop, we learned Kirk Girard had decided / dictated that only five issues would be allowed to be addressed. This was contrary to the noticed meeting (see attached): *"This upcoming meeting is open to discussion of all the proposed policies and background information contained within the 2009 Draft Housing Element."*
- The "Town Hall" meeting started at 7:00 p.m. instead of the advertised 6:00 p.m., which resulted in one hour of lost discussion time.
- As in prior public meetings held by the County, Planning Staff spent a considerable amount of the 2.5 hours allocated to the meeting, promoting their draft document, instead of listening to the public's comments and concerns.
- Within the constraints of the limited amount of time allocated for Q/A, some members of the public were given a few minutes at the microphone to make comments and ask questions.
- The public was instructed not to be "negative" when commenting about Staff's draft document.
- NCHB (Northern California Association of Home Builders) responded to a request to submit their questions to the Commissioners and Planning Staff prior to the meeting. They complied with that request and then were told during the meeting by the Commission Chair, they would not be provided answers to their questions.

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- When members of the public asked for the definitions of some of the terms used in the draft Housing Element document, they were told staff would not provide such definitions, and that the public should make recommendations regarding the definitions. This made it extremely difficult for the public to take a position on proposed policies since the public is unaware of what the terms in the draft document mean.

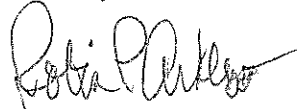
The Board of Supervisors chambers was packed with members of the public eager to have a workshop-like, interactive dialogue and/or two-way exchange with staff and members of the Commission.

However, it immediately became apparent that the "Town Hall" meeting would be a controlled atmosphere where meaningful public input was not welcomed. As a result, a number of people gave up in exasperation and left.

What a farce!

We hope that you are as awe-stricken as we are at this lack of "process" and respectfully request that you direct the County to conduct one or more genuine "workshops" in accordance with HCD's Guidelines.

Sincerely,



Robin P. Arkley II

cc: Supervisor/Chair Jimmy Smith, District 1  
Supervisor Clif Clendenen, District 2  
Supervisor Mark Lovelace, District 3  
Supervisor Bonnie Neely, District 4  
Supervisor Jill Duffy, District 5  
Bruce Emad, Planning Commissioner  
Mary Gearheart, Planning Commissioner  
Ralph Faust, Planning Commissioner  
Scott Kelly, Planning Commissioner  
Mel Krebs, Planning Commissioner  
Sef Murguia, Planning Commissioner  
Loretta A. Nickolaus, County Administrative Officer  
Kirk A. Girard, Community Development Services Director  
Michael Richardson, Senior Planner  
Kathy Hayes, Clerk of the Board  
Sharon Lodes, Planning Commission Clerk  
Cathy Creswell, Deputy Director HCD

# Housing Element "Town Hall Style"

## Planning Commission Meeting

Humboldt County 2009 Draft Housing Element Update

February 5, 2009

The Humboldt County Planning Commission will host an informal public workshop on the 2009 Draft Housing Element Update beginning at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, **February 5, 2009** in the Humboldt County Courthouse, Eureka. The workshop is intended to provide for an open dialogue between the Commissioners, planning staff and the public similar to a "town hall" meeting format.

This meeting follows three separate staff presentations to the Planning Commission on the Draft Element: 1) an overview of the Draft Element and the process was presented during the **January 8, 2009** meeting; 2) the residential land inventory was presented during the **January 22, 2009** meeting; and 3) a more detailed review of the proposed goals, policies and programs included in the Draft Element was presented at the **January 29, 2009** meeting (all of which were open to public testimony). This upcoming meeting is open to discussion of all the proposed policies and background information contained within the 2009 Draft Housing Element.

### Background on the Housing Element:

The Housing Element describes housing needs of residents of all income levels, and includes discussion of housing needs of specific groups as well, such as seniors, owner-builders, disabled persons and the homeless. The findings that emerge from analyzing the housing information direct policies and programs which are a commitment to implement new measures to meet the County's housing needs as well as to maintain the most effective programs that are presently in operation. The Housing Element contains policies that affect the kinds, locations and intensities of land uses and new development within the unincorporated areas of Humboldt County. The update is necessary to comply with State law regarding Housing Elements, and to adopt local policy options to meet the documented housing needs. If you have specific questions regarding the proposed project contact: **MICHAEL D. RICHARDSON**, Senior Planner at (707) 268-3723.

The 2009 Hearing Draft Housing Element is now available for public review and comment. Copies of the document are available on the internet for download at [www.planupdate.org](http://www.planupdate.org) and for purchase at the Humboldt County Community Development Services Department located at 3015 H Street, Eureka. The document is also available for viewing at all branches of the Humboldt County Library (the main branch is located at 1313 3rd Street, Eureka, and phone number is (707) 445-7284), Kinkos and the Community Development Services Department front counter.

The project will consider certification of a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) at a later public hearing, which will be noticed separately when it is available for review.