

February 23, 2009

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HUMBOLDT COUNTY
PLANNING COMMISSION

Dear Members of the Humboldt County Planning Commission,

I want to thank you for your thoughtful questions and responses to the public testimony at last Thursday's planning commission meeting. I may not be at this Thursday meeting because of work, in light of that, I am forwarding some information on IZ (work force housing). We need to move forward with solutions to our housing crisis. The solutions, incentives, can work if, and only if they are made mandatory. Voluntary incentives don't work!

THE PROBLEM

As a resident and worker in Humboldt County, I am concerned about the lack of affordable housing for moderate and lower income residents, which includes office workers, young families, seniors and those on fixed incomes. Further, wages are not keeping up with rising housing costs and as a result fewer residents can afford to buy/rent a home or must spend beyond 30% of their income on housing. In the last seven years, the median home sales price increased by more than 150%, while the median income only went up 22%. The median (2004) home price was \$327,500 compared to \$131,000 in 2000.

A wide range of local workers, including firefighters, police officers, teachers, nurses, clerks for the County and retail workers cannot afford a median priced home and/or are paying significantly more than 30% of their income for housing. Many of our children cannot afford to live in the very community in which they grew up. Student graduate from HSU and are just starting a career, have a job, but can't find safe and healthy housing. Grandparents are unable to live near their grandchildren.

THE SOLUTION

I respectfully urge you to help rectify this imbalance between the cost of available housing and the incomes of local residents. Inclusionary housing is an effective tool for ensuring that housing is built that is affordable to a diverse workforce, young families, seniors, and other residents with modest incomes. I request that the County Planning Commission support an inclusionary housing program in Humboldt County.

How else can we make affordable housing possible? There are tools in addition to IZ. These tools most often used are housing trust funds, in-lieu fees, jobs housing linkage fees, overlay zones, development transfer, some sort of redevelopment agency, higher density allowance incentives and "Fast Track" for IZ and low very low projects through all involved agencies. These, again, must be mandatory not optional.

The builder/developer claim they and the home owner will bear the burden for the IZ notion and further they call it social engineering. The Non Profit Housing Association of Northern California and the Home Builders of Northern California and come together and created a document Common Ground - Joint Principles on Inclusionary Zoning. This document talks of pooling and credit transfers, in-lieu fees, funding, zoning, program administration. See reference below (note 1). There are costs, but there can be savings as well, if the GP is done as other jurisdictions have done.

Program administration, is a real obstacle for builders. Builders build building and the associated paper work of IZ is not what they do best. The solution could be a county planner whose sole purpose is to help the developers/builders through the funding and after construction administration of a project. An alternate would be a non-profit corporation acting as a link between the builder/developer, the funding, the county and after construction administration. Headwaters fund, the builders or (?) could provide seed money for such a non-profit

All of these housing issues come about because the housing industry has not taken and will not take action on their own. Their perception is our housing crisis will all work out for the low, very low, special needs and workforce (farm workers) housing, if enough high end housing is build. They also point out less regulation will

work. If less regulation or high cost housing worked we would not need regulations implementing and make mandatory the IZ land use policies and associated tools. This is only solution left.

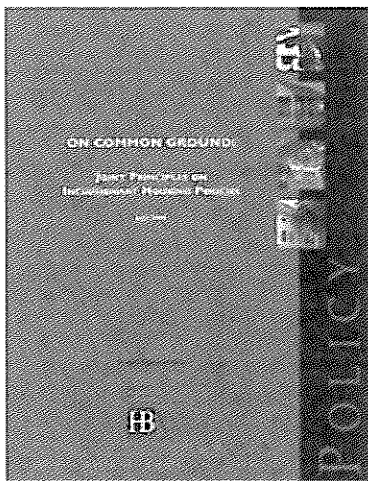
Over 120 jurisdictions in the state have instituted IZ and it has worked with no adverse impacts in the community or builders. They have with stood legal assault on IZ particularly concerning the notion of "taking". In fact, it has helped the communities as a whole by creating housing for all. Making a commitment to mixed-income and type housing can allow for social integration and reduce the phenomenon of "ghettoization" that earlier income-segregated housing projects created. We will become economically and socially balanced community.

Thank you for your time.
Bill Spencer

If any commissioner would like more information on solving the housing crisis feel free to contact me @ wrspencer@sbcglobal.net or 707.825.0720

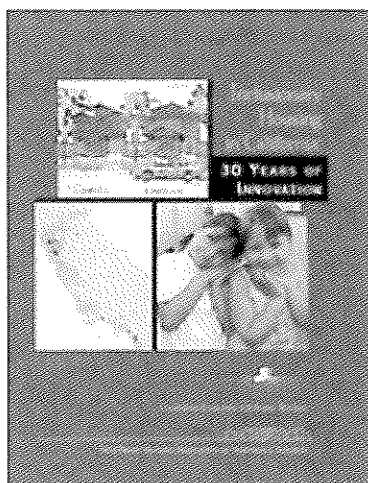
Good sources for information:

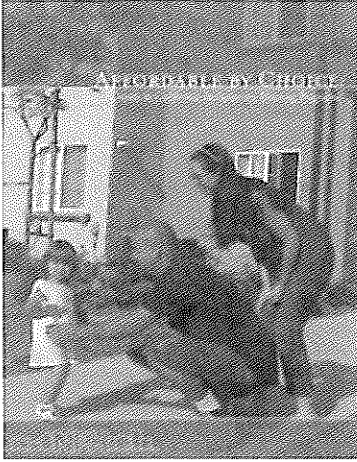
On Common Ground: Joint Principles on Inclusionary Housing Policies. Joint document by Homebuilders of Northern California and the Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California. NPH and HBANC, July 2005.



<http://www.calruralhousing.org/> and go to Inclusionary Housing under the Programs Section, California Housing Law Project and go to facts and issues. There you'll find • [2006 Land Use Laws](#) (PDF) • [Anti-Nimby Tools Fact Sheet](#) (revised 2006) (PDF)

1. **At The Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California web page you'll find:** Affordable By Choice: Trends in California Inclusionary Housing Program NPH commissioned a study of housing produced through inclusionary housing programs from January 1999 through June 2006 along with the California Coalition for Rural Housing (CCRH), the Sacramento Housing Alliance (SHA) and the San Diego Housing Federation (SDHF).





Inclusionary Housing in California: 30 Years of Innova

tion from NPH and California Coalition for Rural Housing. July 2003. Inclusionary Zoning Coalition - Myths and facts about Inclusionary Zoning. Los Angeles. Good sources.