

Santa Clara City Council Meeting March 7, 2006

While you are getting my handouts, I wanted to acknowledge the ethical behavior of Councilmember McLeod. She has the integrity to identify a potential conflict of interest due to her domestic partner's relationship with the BAREC project and she recused herself from all official meetings regarding BAREC. Thank you for your honesty.

At one of the meetings held by the Santa Clara City Staff (I believe it was the October 3, 2005 EIR Scoping Meeting), it was said that the SummerHill Homes housing proposal would build "like houses." I have taken a picture of every house that borders the former BAREC site, 42 houses in total. You will see, only four of them (that's less than 10%) have anything above one story, mostly above garage add-ons. There is only one house that would be considered a real two story house and it is only about 70% the size of what is being proposed in the new development. If you look at the overall neighborhood, you will see over 90% of the houses are single story, not even with garage add-ons. I have also taken pictures of SummerHill Homes' new development (WoodGlen) by Westgate/El Paseo Mall in San Jose, houses that are actually smaller than what is being proposed for BAREC. Just look at the pictures and judge for yourself. There is nothing similar about these houses. There are three attachments for you to look at.

At the City Council meeting on April 26, 2005, some of the Council members made statements. I want to address some of them:

Councilmember Moore: You stated that the lease for Longs over on Winchester and Stevens Creek, which you shop at, would be up soon and a "Super Safeway" would be put in place. Well, Longs just renewed their lease for another five years.

Councilmember Caserta: You stated: "Where's the money to do this?" If the money were there and City funding was not an issue, would you be in favor of it? If so, say so. We have a plan to accommodate your financial needs.

Mayor Mahan: You stated: "The reality is, the property is going to be developed... and there's nothing we can do to stop it. We can't withhold zoning arbitrarily, unless you want to subject this City to a lawsuit that will bankrupt it...and, it's just not going to happen, and I'm sorry to say, that's just the reality of it." You further stated to the San Jose Mercury News on January 29, 2006, that "We have to be reasonable in allowing rezoning; we can't withhold entitlements unreasonably, especially when we can't offer a good alternative." This tells the community that if a "good alternative" exists, you would be in favor of it. We have one; one that is financially stable and will not negatively impact tax payers. Come talk to the SaveBAREC group before you leave your current post as Mayor

and run for Santa Clara County Supervisor, District 4...a district that BAREC is square in the middle of. We can make this a win-win for everyone.

Councilmember Mathews: You told us about your generations as a native Santa Clara...how your great, great, great grandfather fought in the Civil War. You said: "The history that I'm going to make is going to be made today...to get this site developed..." Well, let's get this site developed, but in the right way. Let's look beyond the current pressures of today. Let's think about what your great, great, great grandchildren would want.

Let's take this opportunity to make a difference for generations to come. Take the BAREC property and showcase it. Turn it into a Center of Excellence for all to see and learn from. Show leadership for California and the nation on how land use in urban areas should be balanced. Show how urban agriculture can help deliver on the vision of sustainable living. As an agricultural asset, it benefits the community more so than any kind of housing development. Look beyond your political terms and see how this open space can balance the over crowded shopping areas around it (Valley Fair and Santana Row) that exist today. Do not overwhelm the area with more housing. This is state land, not privately owned. This is land of the people. "We the people" own this land and have the right to dictate its future. We are a government Of the People, By the People, and For the People. The People want this land to be an agricultural asset....just ask them. I have. I have over 4,000 signatures of support for keeping this land agriculturally zoned and agriculturally used, people from all over the city, state, and county.

Take this opportunity to show leadership. These meetings are uni-directional...we say something, then you say something. Please engage the audience during this meeting and ask us (me) questions so it is not just a bunch of one sided arguments.

Thank you for your time.

Kirk Vartan

A quote from a long time resident of Santa Clara:

"I enjoyed the tomato tasting of BAREC (the AG Center). I was so sad to hear it would no longer serve the public. Please preserve it!"
M. Houston