

Gautho, Julia

From: Michelle Henderson <sgt1164@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 10, 2025 1:57 PM
To: City Council
Subject: Rezoning of Capitola Gardens

Hello City Council Members,

My name is Michelle Henderson, I live on the 1700 block of 46th Avenue, within direct high ear shot and eye sore of The Bluffs still under construction after 16 months, and directly across from the Capitola Gardens, which the planning commission has recommended to be approved for rezoning to **triple in number** of units.

Here we are on the anniversary of the September 11th terrorist attacks on our country, when 100s of 1st responders lost their lives. At this last planning meeting, a commissioner, stated just as it was when the community objected to The Bluffs, this housing was **essential** for “1st responders, nurses and teachers”, etc that can’t afford to live in this community that they serve. I even heard a foreman at the bluffs job site tell a passerby that they were building housing for 1st responders there.

Well, I’ve spoken to several local police officers, deputies, and central fire fighters and asked them, have **you**, or any of your colleagues that you are aware of, been offered rental housing at The Bluffs? The answer, sometimes with a “like that would **ever** happen?” chuckle, is NO.

This is no surprise to me: I’m a retired 1st responder, who for 33 years served the state of California and two counties, including Santa Cruz. I have **never**, nor have any of my colleagues, been offered an opportunity to rent an apartment in a new housing development, represented by politicians to opposing community members that it was necessary to house “1st responders, teachers and nurses”. **Especially on a day like September 11th, it is shameful that 1st responders are being used as pawns to further political agenda.**

At the last planning commission meeting, **a teacher**, who has lived a long while in these already existing apartments with her partner, a postal worker, expressed how they *will* **actually be displaced** should this rezoning and subsequent destruction of current properties to build new multi story properties be approved.

I walk my dogs in the early morning hours and observe my neighbors, who live in these existing apartments, return home from their midnight shifts. Many are wearing medical scrubs. Often they double park in the street, engines running, especially in the cold & rainy winter months, waiting for someone to leave in their car so they can finally park and go home to sleep. I've been there, its painful. Hasn't it been mentioned enough at all these commission hearings that there isn't sufficient parking for existing residents? Not everyone, especially essential workers like medical professionals, have schedules that can be accommodated by living near a bus stop.

So, actually, this housing really isn't intended for 1st responders, and it **will** displace teachers and medical professionals, *members of our community*, already housed in existing apartments now proposed for rezoning and ultimately destruction.

As for additional housing for low income residents, everyone agrees we need that. It was revealed at the 1st commission meeting about The Bluffs that local Capitola or County residents in need were not given priority at the Bluffs. Anyone with a voucher for state government subsidized housing can be given an apartment there, which I would assume would be the same for whatever low income apartments are designated for what would replace the Capitola Gardens.

The math doesn't make sense: destroy existing housing that will displace essential workers such as teachers and medical workers, then build high density housing that will just bring more people into Capitola without assisting those who are already here and in need.

Will the Capitola Police Department also triple in size to accommodate this increase in population demand? What about Central Fire? Will there be permit parking for residents only that will actually get enforced? These are serious public safety concerns and quality of life issues that need to be addressed before any rezoning can be approved.

Michelle Henderson

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