



March 20, 2022

Mayor Enander and Members of the City Council  
City of Los Altos  
1 N. San Antonio Road  
Los Altos, CA 94022

Re: Council Meeting, March 22, Agenda #4-Story Pole Exception Request for 330 Distel Circle

Dear Mayor Enander and Members of the City Council:

The League of Women Voters urges the City to grant a story pole exception for the all-affordable EAH housing development at 330 Distel Circle. Earlier, we expressed our strong support for this worthwhile and much-needed housing. We have also urged the City to remove its story pole requirements as we believe they are dangerous and costly when balanced against their value. Other methods for communicating to the public the height and mass of buildings should be adopted. The large billboards currently displayed at the gas station at the corner of Los Altos Avenue and El Camino Real depict the size of that proposed development, including its relationship to neighboring buildings, much better—in our opinion, than do the story poles.

The 330 Distel Circle development is especially suited to a story pole exception. Most importantly, the main purpose of the story poles is to provide transparency to the public about what is planned to be built on the site. There has never been such robust public outreach about a proposed project as EAH, the City and the County have worked together to provide here. And the resulting public conversation has shown strong support for the development as it is currently designed, along with support for expediting the approval process, according to the Staff report. Safety issues have occurred in the past with numerous failures of Los Altos story poles, and in this situation, the story poles would seriously impair the ongoing work of the nonprofit Midpeninsula Open Space District. Finally, the cost of over \$84,000 is money better spent towards affordable housing.

We hope the City will waive the story pole requirement for all the reasons stated above, just as the City waived park fees as a contribution towards making this project feasible. A final note, we are pleased to learn that City Staff have worked so closely with EAH to expedite the entitlement process for this housing.

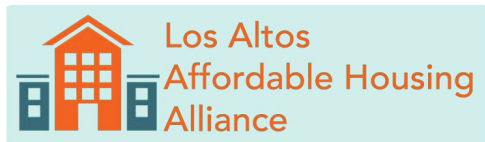
(Please send comments related to this letter to Sue Russell at [REDACTED].)

Karin Bricker, President LWV of Los Altos Mountain View

cc: Gabriel Engeland  
Jon Maginot

Laura Simpson  
Andrea Chelemengos

Radha Hayagreev



March 22, 2022

Dear Mayor Enander and Members of the Council,

The proposed development at 330 Distel Circle will provide our community with much needed affordable housing. We absolutely urge the Council to approve the Story Pole exception for this project for four reasons.

- 1) Developments can request exceptions if the story poles could cause a public safety concern while an active business is running and installation would impair the use of an existing structure. Both of these apply here.
- 2) The story poles are incredibly expensive (upwards of \$90k) and would slow down the process of building. As taxpayers, we believe that our money is best spent elsewhere, particularly since there is already strong community support for the proposed design.
- 3) One reason to erect story poles is to communicate the project to the public. However EAH has conducted robust community outreach about this project already. The community has had much time to comment on the design, and EAH has revised the design incorporating that input.
- 4) Story poles will add time to the project timeline. Expediting the project timeline houses new neighbors sooner, and shows the commitment of our Council to add affordable homes to our city.

EAH has worked very hard to create a design that neighbors and residents support, and we know that the City has also worked diligently with the County to make this project happen. Story poles are unnecessary for this project, and we support an exception to the Story Pole requirement.

Respectfully,

LAAHA Steering Committee

**Los Altos Affordable Housing Alliance**

*Committed to educating and inspiring the Los Altos community to build housing that is affordable for those who live and work in Los Altos*  
<https://losaltosaffordablehousing.org/>