

# Friends of Mill Valley \* Newsletter

Contact: Susan Kirsch (415) 383-3999 ext #2

May 7, 2007 Volume 1, Issue 2

## OF SPECIAL INTEREST

**Next Town Hall Meeting**  
**Thursday June 7<sup>th</sup>**  
**7:00 PM**  
Little School Meeting Room - 285 Miller Ave.

*Come and share your views*



## Friends of Mill Valley

**Let's Get It Right!**

### STEERING COMMITTEE

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David LaDuke  
Burton Miller  
Cindy Miracle  
Caroline Robinson  
Bob Silvestri  
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## A Call to Action – What every resident should know about proposed growth and development in Mill Valley

The City of Mill Valley is on the verge of adopting far reaching policy changes, effecting land use and residential property. These changes will impact everyone and result in increased traffic, increased development, and sharply increased residential property fees.

The City Council has directed the City Planning Department to proceed

without sufficient public input. Broad-based public participation is needed now.

A number of large scaled development proposals for Miller Avenue, Blithedale Avenue and other locations are now before the City Planning Commission. These developments have the potential to negatively impact our quality of life.

**Friends of Mill Valley** is working to add the public's voice to the City's legislative process. We urge you to get involved.

**Attend our Town Hall meetings.**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of every month**

**Make Your Voice Heard!**

## The Situation Now

An increasing number of Mill Valley residents feel left out of the City's decision making process. They feel that the City's growth goals are out of step with the small town character, quality of life and core values that made them choose Mill Valley as their home.

Many residents feel they have to repeatedly mount "fire drill" protests against full blown, poorly conceived development plans that

are sprung upon them at the last minute.

Currently, there is no reasonable process that allows residents to have meaningful input into new development plans, early on. Having only three minutes to speak at Planning Commission meetings that run late into a weekday evening does not constitute a "reasonable process."

Methods of soliciting com-

munity input have failed to keep up with the complex nature of the City's planning objectives.

The City Council has stated its belief that a silent majority approves of their actions so there's no need to respond to critical points of view.

We disagree. We urge you to voice your opinions to your elected representatives.

## Background Information On Affordable Housing



*The Miller Avenue Precise Plan will have far reaching consequences for every Mill Valley resident for years to come.*

The City is currently pursuing plans to maximize residential and mixed use commercial growth to meet what it has characterized as its "mandate" to build affordable housing. But the facts surrounding this "mandate" have never been made clear.

What we know for certain is this:

The State of California has established housing goals based upon a statistical exercise using population figures and projected growth

estimates. The State then delegates the distribution of housing units needed to the regional Councils of Government ("COGs"). The Bay Area COG is the Association of Bay Area Governments ("ABAG").

The State's allocation of needed housing units does not take into account where population is actually growing, nor is it based on the actual capacity of each jurisdiction to provide the units requested.

The State's number generat-

ing process doesn't consider the specific community circumstances or needs, and doesn't allow for community input.

**The Problem:** A community may find itself with an ABAG recommended housing "quota" that bears no relationship to local needs or its capacity to bear increased development.

We believe this is the case in the City of Mill Valley. We believe City officials need to address this issue.

## Comments & Solutions

Affordable housing goals can only be accomplished if there is broad based community participation and support. It is unrealistic to think that the zoning bonuses to private developers and increased fees for all Mill Valley residents, proposed by the City, is a viable solution.

The City proposes to impose onerous "in-lieu" fees (as high as \$125,000 per new single family home of 5,000 sq. feet) to create a new "Housing Trust" (essentially a new tax without a public vote) with no safeguards in place to monitor this new program's costs, execution or effectiveness.

A contentious development process that pits private developers against neighborhood interests is of no value to anyone.

New methods must be employed that allow for community input, early on, to insure that new development proposals are evaluated in relation to traffic issues, the quality of life of impacted neighborhoods, the effects on local businesses, and the need to preserve the character and scale of our community.

Some proposed solutions include:

(A) Holding regularly scheduled Town Hall Meetings at convenient times so that all residents have an

opportunity to voice concerns about the actions of their City government.

(B) Using the Internet more effectively to communicate with Mill Valley residents: (1) conducting online opinion polls on issues; (2) managing a Mill Valley City Blog where residents and elected officials can have a forum for ongoing debate; and (3) publishing an online newsletter to alert residents to upcoming issues.

(C) Creating a new development review process that includes a Citizen's Review Board. Public outreach and input must be a mandatory part of the review process for every major development in the City.

### Friends of Mill Valley

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