Clare Lin

From: Laura Aguilar
Sent: Thursday, May 19, 2022 2:15 PM
To: Clare Lin; Vincent Gonzalez
Subject: FW: Public comment for Planning Commission meeting on May 5, 2022

For PC meeting.

From: Susan Neuhausen [mailto:[redacted]]
Sent: Thursday, May 19, 2022 12:05 PM
To: Public Comment <publiccomment@cityofsierramadre.com>; PlanningCommission <PlanningCommission@cityofsierramadre.com>
Subject: Re: Public comment for Planning Commission meeting on May 5, 2022

Date:May 19, 2022
To: Planning Commissioners
From: Susan Neuhausen, [redacted] Sierra Madre, CA
RE: Drought and water for the Meadows project

As you are aware, California is in a severe drought that is the worst in 1,200 years. There is no end in sight particularly given climate change. The recent announcements from the Metropolitan Water District (MWD) and the San Gabriel Valley (SGV) MWD, which supply some of our water, are that there is no supplemental water available. Given that there has been almost no rainfall, that also means that the Raymond Groundwater Basin from which we also get water, is not being replenished, further limiting future water resources.

Sierra Madre water usage will already be under pressure when affordable housing units are added to our city. There will be additional impact from The Meadows at Bailey Canyon project, which, because of the large sizes of the houses, does NOT "assist the City in satisfying its regional housing needs allocation."

In the MOU of 2020, there is a section that outlines the respective parties' rights and obligations. It stipulates that "the Applicant must: Ensure the Project has a net zero water impact." The definition of "net zero" water use generally refers to water usage in individual buildings, but it can be applied to a tract housing development for our purposes. That definition is: "Net zero water creates a water-neutral building where the amount of alternative water used and water returned to the original water source is equal to the building's total water consumption. In other words, it's a closed-loop system where nothing is lost.

New Urban West's claim that The Meadows project will achieve "net zero impact" is an exercise in magical thinking unless they have a plan to increase and capture all rainwater and include a wastewater treatment plant. Their claim is a joke.

Second, the water calculation for the Meadows project is a gross underestimate.

- First, there is no accounting for water used during construction, so we did it for them by obtaining estimates from a developer and from a road contractor. The developer we contacted based his estimates on the amount of water he uses and, of course, the amount of water depends on the air temperature, the wind, the dryness of the soil, the depth of soil removal, etc. The developer estimated that water use per house for compaction and dust control is 100,000 gallons/house x 42 houses = 4,200,000 gallons of water. A road contractor estimated between 500,000 gallons to

750,000 gallons for the roads but said it could be higher depending on conditions. This totals almost 5 million gallons of water during construction or 15.4 AF (325,851 gallons/A foot). *That water comes from local hydrants.*

- Second, New Urban West calculated 50 years of water use for 3.5 people per house. To put that in context, the State of Arizona Groundwater Management Act requires developers "to prove an assured water supply capable of sustaining its residents for at least 100 years" which seems more appropriate. The New Urban West calculation is 19 Acre feet (AF)/year for 42 houses (0.45 AF/house) x 325,851 gallons/A foot = 6,200,000 gallons/year x 50 years = 310,000,000 gallons for 50 years and 620,000,000 gallons for 100 years. Given the size of the houses being proposed for The Meadows project, 4 people per house is more appropriate, so we're talking about approximately 709,000,000 gallons of water that will be used over the span of 100 years (2,174 AF). These calculations do not include the additional water for ADUs nor do they include the watering of the HMO acreage that they must maintain.
- Therefore, this project will use at least 2.3-fold more water (2,174 AF) than the New Urban West calculation (950 AF).

Third, two options have been presented to achieve "net zero water impact" using the grossly underestimated water usage. Part 1 of Option A to achieve "net zero" water impact proposes to buy supplemental water, and that water is not currently available nor can we expect it to ever be available. Therefore, Option A Part 1 is not a viable option. A second part of Option A proposes to pay current residents to replace lawns with drought-tolerant plants to make up for water usage at The Meadows project. The irony is that at the March 1 joint City Council and Planning Commission meeting, Mr. Frankel of New Urban West stated that drought-tolerant landscaping is only planned for the front yards and he expected that people would have lawns in their back yards. So, lawn-reduction efforts seem to be a lost cause. New Urban West's Option B is to pay to replace leaky pipes which is needed, but it also will not make up for the water use of The Meadows project and is something that the City is doing and should be doing regardless of the impact of a water-guzzling new development.

Upon close examination—or simply paying attention—"net zero water use" is nothing but a mirage. The Meadows project is not feasible given the dire state of water in the State of California and particularly in our own county.

Thank you for your attention.