

November 15, 2022

Dear City of Ojai Planning Commissioners,

Once again, I am writing to express my opposition to the project as it currently is proposed. When we purchase our home 7 years ago, we were told by the previous owner that the adjacent lot owned by the Gables could never be developed on. The previous owner had participated in these hearings for years prior and had assured us that due to the City does not grant zoning changes, lot line adjustments or subdivision of lots. I'm very confused as to how the City can even consider allowing a Zone Change for Higher Density housing! If this Zone Change is granted, it will establish a new dangerous precedent for all of the properties within the Ojai City limits. If this development is allowed to proceed, the increase density will deteriorate the value of our property and all of the surrounding neighborhood. The increase in traffic on our already crowded streets, the noise created by the traffic and more residents in the area will certainly devalue the surrounding properties. I am appalled by the fact that the City is even allowing to hear this proposed Gables project. I would like to see the following:

1. I would like to see the merger of the three parcels whether or not the latest project is approved. The property has an existing CUP that requires as a condition of its previous 2001 approval that the lots in question be merged into a single parcel.

Nothing has changed since the last hearing, only the applicant's tactics are new. 2001 CUP Condition 25 stated. "Prior to the issuance of a Grading Permit or Building Permit, the applicant shall obtain approval of a Lot Line Adjustment to combine three parcels referred to as Assessor Parcel Nos. 022-0-23-020; 022-0-023-050; and 022-0-012-210."

The failure of the applicant and the City staff in completing the parcel merger does not waive the requirement, nor make it a bargaining chip in the current approval process. It is unthinkable that this project is on the agenda once again when the City Planning Department has not addressed the parcel merger previously required.

2. Development should not be allowed on this portion of the Gables campus. In 2001, 26 senior housing units were approved on the main Gables of Ojai site (701 N. Montgomery Street); the neighbors and the Planning Commission were told as part of the approval process that the Olive St. area of the new merged parcels would be undeveloped with the exception of a small parking lot along Grand Avenue.

3. In the event that the Planning Commission is inclined to allow development of the unimproved land despite the agreement reached with the City in 2001, then the proposed project is too dense. The proposed density is not in keeping with the density of the surrounding housing units that are present now nor the R-O zone on which the proposed development is currently zoned. There are no multi-family, high density, or VMU work/live dwellings adjacent to the parcels where these units are proposed.

4. The project's architectural design is not in keeping with the design of the Gables or the surrounding neighborhood. This project is supposed to be an expansion of the Gables senior housing community. Certainly, modifications can be made to the design so it looks more like the Gables and fits in with the neighborhood without compromising the new units' solar or environmental footprint.

5. The project will add traffic to the City overall and will increase traffic on surrounding neighborhood streets. The traffic analysis completed previously was prepared for an assisted living facility which assumes a much different trip generation. Single family senior housing includes people that still work at 55 and 20% of the units are not even required to have a resident who meets the age qualification. The project will add more trips than the 2001 project. The staff report doesn't even mention traffic.

6. As a condition of granting the various density bonuses, variances and zoning changes, the project should be conditioned, through a deed restriction, that this housing will stay a senior community. Although HUD requires senior housing developments to ensure 80% occupancy of the units by at least one 55-year or older occupant, and the verification of senior age requirements of all residents every two years, there is absolutely no guarantee or requirement in the law that the housing be for seniors in the future. My experience with the City of Ojai does not give me confidence that the City will even attempt to verify occupant age when the proposed units are initially rented, let alone remember to verify this requirement every two years.

7. The project should be conditioned to ensure that these units do not become individually owned condos in the future and remain senior housing.

8. Water availability for this new development should be addressed, particularly when the City of Ventura is actively litigating to grab Ojai's water supply. Please require the current owner to comply with the terms of the CUP before future development proposals for this property are considered. This appears on its face as just another attempt by the private equity development firm who currently owns the Gables to profit at the community's expense.

Thank you,

Lawren and Kristopher Moller
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