


From: 
To: [Neysa Hinton](#)
Cc: [Diana Rich](#); [Sandra Maurer](#); [Jill McLewis](#); [Stephen Zollman](#); [Mary Gourley](#)
Subject: Re: Let's Create an Equitable RSO for Mobile Home Parks!
Date: Wednesday, August 30, 2023 4:58:04 PM

I apologize for resending this, but there seems to be no record of it in my sent folder!

Dear Mayor Hinton and Council Members,

I don't think anyone nurtures a dream or goal of living in a mobile home park. We end up here for many reasons, but mostly for financial ones. As you know home ownership and rents are prohibitively expensive in this beautiful community, but living in a mobile home park is not without a few challenges. We pay rent just to have a space to live in a house that we own and maintain. Our rent covers ONLY the minuscule plot of earth that our home rests on and the use of a clubhouse. We pay for maintaining the streets, the driveways, property taxes, water, gas & electricity, sewer and all utilities. Homeowners insurance is considerably more expensive than for a conventional house on it's own parcel. The rent that I currently pay for this privilege is more than double my mortgage on my previous home, which was a real house on it's own plot of land. In spite of that, when my safety was threatened by a neighbor, I had to move and this mobile home park seemed like the only affordable option for staying in my beloved community.

It is neither frivolous nor an exaggeration to state that rising rent puts us at risk for homelessness. In fact, the fastest growing demographic of the unsheltered are the seniors, with experts predicting that the number of homeless seniors will triple in the next five years. According the Cal Matters, "High rents drive up homelessness." I believe this is a real risk for some of us.

An equitable rent stabilization ordinance will benefit us directly and it is a powerful tool in creating housing equity across ALL demographics. It is an absolute necessity to update our current mobile home park RSO to reflect the current challenges of increasingly inequitable conditions. What kind of society allows its elders to be treated like a cash cow or source of wealth for people who are accumulating profit and assets? What kind of society allows its elders to be put at grave risk by the prioritizing of business interests and profit over people?

Perhaps you will consider freezing rents increases until a fair

rewriting of the RSO has been accomplished. As you probably know, Sonoma County is considering this as they enter this process for the mobile home parks under their jurisdiction. It will be too late for me, as I just received a hefty annual rent increase beginning in September.

I am certain that the adjustments we are requesting will not impoverish or impact the park owners' ability to continue to maintain our park. If that is true, I would really like to see some proof, as that would definitely be an undesirable outcome. One of my fellow advocates has done some interesting math calculations that indicate that fulfilling our request would most likely cause a VERY small difference in the owners' monthly income, a figure of somewhere around \$600-\$700, barely enough for anyone to even notice.

I have a request that our original petitioned draft ordinance language and terms, which were altered during two undisclosed meetings between the city manager and park owners to suit their needs, be restored before September 5th. I asked Larry M. to do this and he refused and brushed my concerns aside. Doesn't he represent the needs and reasonable requests of citizens of Sebastopol? I would like to see us enter the next phase of negotiations with the draft RSO that was written on our behalf and that accurately reflects our needs in the current situation. We are the original petitioners. We are citizens of Sebastopol. We deserve the respect to be represented fairly, not by something that was done without our consent or approval in secret meetings!

In the long run, it is much cheaper to keep us housed, healthy and as financially stable as possible than to have us needing care on the streets or hospital. Poverty is real. Poverty is here in Fircrest Mobile Home Park. Poverty is an edge that we are all too familiar with. Some of my neighbors work. Some work 3 jobs and they are over 70 years old. I work a little and I am 77. My partner works full time. But as we approach the fixed income phase of our lives, when our expenses increase and our incomes don't, (which is actually where the majority of us are right now), where can we go? We have many residents with serious health and disability issues that make them ineligible for Burbank housing. We even have a lovely centenarian here. There are 138 units of affordable senior housing at Burbank Housing, and a closed waiting list. There is this mobile home park. Where else is there for us? I sense a real social, economic, mental health crisis coming our way due to lack of affordable housing for seniors. Everything in our power needs to be done to prevent this, if that's even possible. As a group, we are truly vulnerable for all of the above reasons, not to even mention the geriatric

difficulties of aging.

In closing I ask that you approve our request for an amendment in our rent increase to allow space rent increases to no more than 50% of the Bay Area CPI up to a maximum of 4% and to retain the Vacancy Control we have had since 1994. In reality, it will cost the park owners very little to create this benefit for 100 vulnerable members of your community. An almost negligible concession on their part will be very meaningful to us.

I am writing as an individual stakeholder, not representing any committee or governmental body of the Fircrest Mobile Home Park

Thank you for all that you do to keep Sebastopol the vibrant and wonderful community that it is. I love living here. For that I am so very grateful.

Karin Lease



Sebastopol

Ps...if this email arrives with the sender name of "user", I sincerely apologize.

The reason is that I have a new, cheap laptop and I haven't found the way to change that setting yet. So if you see that, sorry!