

From: Arthur George [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, October 11, 2022 1:10 PM
To: Kari Svanstrom; Planning Technician
Cc: Diana Rich; Una Glass; Lawrence McLaughlin
Subject: Public Comment re Horizon Shine; Planning Commission 10-11-22
Attachments: [Sebastopol Planning Commission 10 11 22 re Horizon Shine Renewed Authorization.docx](#)

Dear Ms. Svanstrom: Attached is written Public Comment on behalf of West County Homeless Advocates (WCHA) re: tonight's hearing on Horizon Shine and 845 Gravenstein Highway North. Please convey these comments to the Commissioners.

Thank you for your assistance and consideration.

Arthur George
Chair, West County Homeless Advocates
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

WEST COUNTY HOMELESS ADVOCATES (WCHA) LETTER OF SUPPORT
FOR HORIZON SHINE RENEWED AUTHORIZATION

Dear Planning Director Kari Svanstrom and Planning Commission:

On behalf of West County Homeless Advocates (WCHA) of which I am chair, **this is to urge your support of renewed authorization for the Horizon Shine RV Village** for persons who might otherwise be unhoused. WCHA is an ad hoc volunteer group drawn from churches, service organizations, and interested and activist citizens, which has addressed the City Council numerous times supportive of Safe Parking, Sanitation, and Housing (e.g., Tiny Homes, Safe Parking areas) alternatives, and has worked in collaboration with the Police Department and its Chiefs Kevin Kilgore and Ron Nelson, West County Community Services, and the Council's Ad Hoc Committee on the Unhoused, and the Horizon Shine management entity SAVS to address and remedy unhoused issues.

Horizon Shine remains presently unfunded and is at risk of losing its funding by the end of the year. Nevertheless, approval of renewed use of the 845 Gravenstein Highway North site for Horizon Shine is a necessary first step, as efforts continue for funding from sources such as the County or State higher than the City of Sebastopol. The City appears to have approached its limits of what it can do financially. Even while no funding for additional use has yet materialized, authorization for continued use is necessary while the search for funding continues.

Closing Horizon Shine would expel its residents back onto city streets or outlying areas that are even more unwelcoming than when Horizon Shine was created earlier this year, defeating everything that the Council and the City's various departments including police, planning, and public works, and SAVS have accomplished in the past year. Timed with the creation of Horizon Shine, the revised City parking ordinance prohibits RVs from parking on any streets except for a narrow late night/early morning period.

- The burden would fall not only on the unhoused, but also on the citizenry and business community which once again would have the unhoused randomly in their midst, even worse now as the County Community Development Commission (CDC) has called for liberalized street camping, which while softening criminalization, does nothing to solve the unhoused situation. Termination of Horizon Shine simply spills all of its residents back out into wherever they might relocate in unorganized encampments without services.

There will likely be opposition from those who will assert that Horizon Shine was only to be for one year and now "The City" (perhaps including the Council, specifically Diana Rich and Una Glass; Planning; City Manager and City Attorney) is trying to sneak in an extension. There is nothing covert. As before, and as have been reviewed and found without defect by the Sonoma County Superior Court, the proper application and hearing procedures are being followed, upon the Council's finding that there is a continuing homeless emergency. It is true that representations (but not promises) were made of a one-year term, to "buy time" hoping that some other site would be found, or that the County would step up with some land alternative (e.g., county fairgrounds or satellite sites.)

- Despite a rigorous search by the Council's Ad Hoc Unhoused Committee (Diana Rich and Una Glass), no alternative has been forthcoming: there are no other sites available in Sebastopol: either property owners are unwilling, properties are otherwise encumbered by liens, or have some other difficulty. I have personally contacted Supervisor Lynda Hopkins and the funding unit Continuum of Care (COC) to suggest use of county properties other than the present Sebastopol site. No properties have been identified or advanced.

As the problem continues, through no fault of the City, SAVS, or Horizon Shine, so must Horizon Shine. This application should be viewed as a renewal of Horizon Shine's authorization, for a new 2-year term, rather than a prolonged or indefinite extension. The use is finite, as the property owner, St. Vincent de Paul plans to break ground for affordable housing on the site in 2024, and just last week commenced an effort before the City Council to seek loan funding from outside providers. While homelessness may continue indefinitely for a variety of societal factors, at some future point, Horizon Shine at 845 Gravenstein Highway North will terminate.

However, the remedial work with Horizon Shine residents has just begun; to close it would be akin to closing a hospital where people are just beginning treatment. Neighbors to Horizon Shine who complain of more camping in the area cannot attribute that to Horizon Shine. Horizon Shine residents are not are not camping rough, they are sleeping safely inside the Village. Even Police Chief Ron Nelson has said there is no complete link between Horizon Shine as a magnet to other unhoused; just as likely is that with sweeps of Laguna and Morris, unhoused go somewhere, and an opportunistic choice is the darkened empty storefronts of Lucky's, Mary's Pizza Shack, Chase Bank in Redwood Marketplace shopping center, pre-existing vacancies due to business events not part of Horizon Shine.

It is well-established that housing, even such as Tiny Homes, or RV villages, is key to recovery for the unhoused, with drug and mental health services. Horizon Shine is a model for meaningful response. The quarterly report of SAVS provided to the Council is admirable in its honesty. While documenting its successes, it does not sugarcoat its problems. These problems are not failures. Rather they speak to the enormity of the task in assisting the unhoused who are disadvantaged in a variety of directions. Even SAVS staff and volunteers have been shocked as they intimately encounter situations they formerly knew closely but at arm's length. These problems are not a creation of SAVS or Horizon Shine; they are existing problems which SAVS and Horizon Shine seek to remedy. This is a process of education for all. A reported reduction in the homeless count does not mean the problem is close to being solved; it reflects only a beginning. The task undertaken by Horizon Shine cannot be allowed to lapse.

One can care not at all about the unhoused themselves, yet decide to assist them because it is better for the City in every way, than to have them back randomly and unsupported on streets, in the Laguna, in neighborhoods, or on outlying private lands. Even as some blame the unhoused for their predicament as a result of bad choices (ignoring mental health challenges that may go back to childhood and early youth), we do not vilify the tobacco smoker with lung cancer for their decisions or deny them insurance coverage or programs/treatment/hospitalizations to help. Unhoused local unfortunates deserve no less.

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur George
Chair, West County Homeless Advocates (WCHA)

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From: Kari Svanstrom
Sent: Tuesday, October 11, 2022 4:13 PM
To: Planning Technician
Subject: Fw: Horizon Shine use extension

From: Barbara Harris [REDACTED] >
Sent: Tuesday, October 11, 2022 1:12 PM
To: Kari Svanstrom <ksvanstrom@cityofsebastopol.org>
Subject: Horizon Shine use extension

Hello.

Please accept this communication as my request to Sebastopol City Council to extend the use of 845 Gravenstein Highway for Horizon Shine.

Thanks so much, Barbara Harris

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

From: Kari Svanstrom
Sent: Tuesday, October 11, 2022 4:12 PM
To: Planning Technician
Subject: Fw: Horizon Shine

From: Eileen Bill [REDACTED] >
Sent: Tuesday, October 11, 2022 1:42 PM
To: Kari Svanstrom <ksvanstrom@cityofsebastopol.org>
Cc: Eileen Bill [REDACTED]
Subject: Horizon Shine

Dear Planning Director Kari Svanstrom,

There has been such an invaluable service for all in Sebastopol provided by Horizon Shine. I am sure the people at The Barlow are very happy to have the trailers off of Morris Street as are the shoppers and others visiting the Barlow.

But, primarily, it has been such a boost to the residents of Horizon Shine. The development is providing a safe place where the residents can work on getting their lives together - health-wise, education-wise and job-wise! Also, the increased sense of well being must surely be enhanced.

I understand there have been no significant problems by these residents being dealt upon their neighbors. Many volunteers have provided support, as well.

Please extend this very beneficial project for two more years. It will be a great service to the residents and all of Sebastopol and the rest of the county.

Thank you very much for your consideration.
Eileen Bill

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

From: Kari Svanstrom
Sent: Tuesday, October 11, 2022 4:14 PM
To: Planning Technician
Subject: Fw: Public Comment for SAVS Permit - 10/11/22

From: Kate Haug
Sent: Sunday, October 9, 2022 1:15 PM
To: Kari Svanstrom <ksvanstrom@cityofsebastopol.org>
Subject: Public Comment for SAVS Permit - 10/11/22

Dear Commissioners,

SAVS - No Exit

I have been writing letters in regards to the exit strategy for the residents of the SAVS RV site for over six months. When the site was being discussed, I asked similar questions on how the SAVS program was going to transition people into permanent housing, jobs, mental health care and drug treatment. I asked why, if SAVS had been working with people on Morris Street for a year, had no one moved into permanent housing.

Council Promised Site Would Close - December 2022

When the site was implemented, the Council, on numerous occasions, said, in public meetings, the site would only last through December 2022.

Below are just a few quotes from Council Meetings taken from the minutes of meetings Nov 30-Dec 7th, 2021:

Mayor Glass: The goal of a site like this is to provide *transition* for people to get their lives together. There are some people that may want to live in RVs permanently. But *this is not a permanent site*. What we need to work on as a county, permanent locations for RV villages and this is not that prospective site. We may, *if we get this site going, we will immediately be looking for new permanent sites*. Around West county.

Council Member Hinton: I just wanted to remind the public *it's a one-year program*.

Council Member Rich: We wanted to make sure everyone understands *this is in fact a temporary one year urgent use*.

Funding for the site, a mix of left over COVID funds and County bridge funding, only extended through that time period.

Does Council have to keep their word when it is given in public on multiple occasions?
Does the Council have an obligation to uphold their promise when it is made at a Council meeting?

The Ad Hoc Committee on the Unhoused has been extremely vague and opaque in their reports. For instance, they simply had "site relocation for the RV Village" drop off their agenda at the last meeting.

Rich U-Turns - Now 2 More Years?

Now, we find out that Council Member Rich wants a one to two year extension for the RV Site. Agenda Item 6b.

<https://www.ci.sebastopol.ca.us/getattachment/Meeting-Event/City-Council/2022/City-Council-Meeting-October-4,-2022/Agenda-Item-Number-6-b-St-Vincent-de-Paul-SVdP-Resolution-Of-Support-845-Grav-N-Site.pdf.aspx>

Is this the type of community transparency and honest communication we want from our City Council?

SAVS Understaffed, Under Resourced

From item 6a, we learn that the SAVS facility is understaffed and does not have appropriate staffing for the mental health and addiction issues of occupants.

In addition, a violent occupant was asked to leave the facility and SAVS has a restraining order against this person. This leaves the public wondering if the person is still in our community with their mental health needs unattended and their violent tendencies unaddressed.

<https://www.ci.sebastopol.ca.us/getattachment/Meeting-Event/City-Council/2022/City-Council-Meeting-October-4,-2022/Agenda-Item-Number-6-a-Informational-Report-from-SAVS-For-Horizon-Shine-RV-Village.pdf.aspx>

"Not one, but two, of our core case managers have had serious health issues that kept them off work for many days."

"In the middle of some major revamping, our village manager resigned without notice."

"There are villagers with addiction problems, and we've tried many paths to treatment for this serious illness. Recently, we tried again to connect with Narcotics Anonymous. They told us that they are getting requests from other encampments and are currently stretched thin. We're happy to see more homeless people and homeless advocates looking for this kind of help. We only wish there were more addicts in recovery willing to do this difficult and important work."

"Two villagers moved out in this quarter. One gentleman was asked to leave due to violent behavior and the Sonoma County Superior Court imposed a restraining order to prevent him from harassing our staff. The second villager was accused of theft when a visitor's valuable item disappeared. He was asked to leave. This incident is under investigation and a decision on whether to invite him to return is under review."

I am grateful to Adrienne Lauby for her honesty. I think her report underscores the fact that many homeless individuals are suffering from untreated addiction and mental health issues. It also underscores the need for the funding for mental health and addiction treatment. The County has spent over \$92,000,000 in the last 2 years and has not increased mental health beds or addiction treatment to even begin addressing the needs of our current homeless population. Our mental health beds are at numbers lower than a decade ago.

Thus the funding for these sites are probably not the \$680,000 allotted for the 10 month period of the SAVS village but the \$3,400,000 annual budget of the Sebastopol Inn.

Questions for the Planning Commission:

- 1.
- 2.
3. Where is the funding for the site coming from so that it could operate for 2 more years?;
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
7. If SAVS does not have the current staffing resources to address the mental health and addiction needs of the site's occupants,
8. does that impact the community and neighborhoods immediately around the site? Are there more drug dealers, petty crime and unstable individuals within close range of a public trail and a K-8 school that might negatively impact our students, families, visitors,
9. walkers and bicyclists? Does this impact our community businesses?;
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
13. Each occupant of the RV Village will have received 10 months free rent, free food, free utilities. Are they required to
14. become sober, get jobs or any in way move toward self sufficiency?;
- 15.
- 16.
- 17.
18. Will drug use still be permitted on the site if Council grants this extension? Is drug use at the site bringing more drugs
19. into our community, near a school?;
- 20.
- 21.
- 22.
23. Were all the terms of the Original Agreement met and do they continue to be met?;
- 24.
- 25.

- 26.
27. What is the neighborhood input on this site?;
- 28.
- 29.
- 30.
31. What do community businesses have to say about the site?;
- 32.
- 33.
- 34.
35. Is this site legal?:
- 36.
- 37.
- 38.
39. Can anyone put RVs onto a piece of commercial land and let people live in them within the City Limits or is this only
40. something that Council can do?.
- 41.

Best,
Kate Haug

From: Heather Stone [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, October 4, 2022 10:07 AM
To: John Jay
Subject: Proposed 2 Year extension to RV encampment at 845 Gravenstein

I am vehemently Opposed to the two-year extension on the RV encampment that was sprung on the residents of this area of Sebastopol without any notice, opportunity to comment or due process.

As an attorney, a resident, and an investor in local real estate, I am appalled by the total disregard shown for the hardworking tax-paying Sebastopol residents.

The crime, garbage and drugs this encampment has brought to our neighborhood is obvious to all who live nearby. I no longer feel safe walking to the store or walking my dog in the evening here. I pay hefty property taxes for the privilege of living here. Local property values are being crushed by the improper installation of this homeless encampment in our backyard. One might call that it unconstitutional "taking" of property rights. You have shifted a problem that was developing near the Barlow onto our backs and we had no say. We also pay hefty taxes and contribute mightily to the Sebastopol economy.

Solving homelessness is a challenge, but This project has been undertaken in the wrong way from inception, without participation from the neighbors or the local community, it's been rammed down our throats without proper notice, without properly following the the law or exploring alternatives.

Now. The promise "That this is only a one year emergency project and it will be over in December 2022" is magically reversed? A 2 YEAR EXTENSION? No!

I have endeavored to keep rents low at investment properties I have purchased. I am keeping people comfortably housed, choosing humanity over profit. I am doing my part already. Seek alternatives as promised.

I cannot attend the meeting tonight, but I know I speak for many.

Heather Stone Esq.

From: Kari Svanstrom
Sent: Tuesday, October 11, 2022 4:11 PM
To: Planning Technician
Subject: Fw: Horizon Shine

From: Tomas Phillips [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, October 11, 2022 3:57 PM
To: Kari Svanstrom <kvanstrom@cityofsebastopol.org>
Cc: Adrienne [REDACTED]
Subject: Horizon Shine

To: Kari Svanstrom, City of Sebastopol

Dear Mr Svanstrom,

I support the extension of use for Horizon Shine Village. I have been to the village several times, and found it clean and well organized, with a positive vibe. I am mentoring a man who lives there. I've known Adrienne Lauby for 10 years or more, and I know her commitment to improving the lives of those with homes.

SAVS is a great model of self governance, with supervision by SAVS, of the 25 residents there. There are several caseworkers who work at the village, some part time, to work with the residents to improve their lives. I'm requesting the City of Sebastopol to extend their use of the property. As a resident of Sebastopol for over 25 years, I'm proud that this village is in our community, and I appreciate the support from the City.

Sincerely,

Tomas Phillips

[REDACTED]