



May 18, 2016

City of Morgan Hill
City Council
17575 Peak Avenue
Morgan Hill, CA 95037

Re: City Council Agenda Item 23 (16-318) – ZA-16-03 – Congregate Care Definition Amendment

Honorable Mayor and Morgan Hill City Councilmembers,

The Wolff Company submitted CUP application **UP-16-06** to build a 67-unit Senior Independent Living (SIL) project as 3rd and final phase of Senior Congregate Housing along Butterfield Road between San Pedro Ave and Barrett Ave. The Application date is April 25th but the work to design the project sufficient to make application started many months prior.

Staff informs us that the primary reasons for modification to the current and adopted definition of congregate care are to avoid possible unintended RDCS exemption conflicts. Mandating state licensure may indeed eliminate risk of such potential misuse, but there is also the unintended elimination of a class of Congregate Care that is fast emerging as important and desirable. That of Senior Independent Living or SIL. The City has accurately exempted Congregate Care from RDCS in order to provide needed services to current residents and to more efficiently utilize the existing housing inventory.

We respectfully submit that staff has not fully analyzed the emerging Senior Independent Living operational model proposed by our project. Senior Independent Living is a commercial operation having more in common with a hotel than an apartment project. The units have limited kitchens, three meals are cooked from scratch in a commercial kitchen on site, and served each day in a restaurant setting. Daily dedicated bus transportation is provided, daily staff led exercise and social activities are provided, staff is on site 24 hours a day, and all utilities including cable and internet service are included in the rent.

Staff assists residents in selecting Licensed, third party home health care providers for residents if desired, or residents can select their own individual home health care provider.

Wolff has no conflict with the City RDCS exemption as currently defined.

The addition of a facility State of California Department of Social Services licensure requirement may have unintended consequences adverse to the objectives behind exempting senior care from RDCS. This occurs by delaying cycling of existing homes back into the market inventory for younger household creation. Because Seniors have no other local, self-directed choice they stay in homes, often as single occupants struggling to maintain it, until some health event forces relocation facilitated by a loved one.

By requiring licensure for SIL in Morgan Hill you will decrease the option for seniors to select an “Age in Place” alternative that can ramp up services as residents need them.

We urge the council not to adopt this restrictive definition but instead evaluate this project on its merits. Senior care is evolving quickly to meet the demands of the Baby Boom generation. Every community must assess how to best meet this wave of citizens that have redefined every category of product and service in our economy. Senior Independent Living to Age in Place with flexibility, dignity and choice in service providers is a very positive evolution in congregate care.

Respectfully,

Daniel Nethercott

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel Nethercott". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D".