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One day in March after returning from a brief vacation, I spotted an unsigned letter on the security door. I almost threw it away but I didn't. Fortunately, I read the letter in full, complied with the request and wondered -- who was this newcomer to the neighborhood?

At last, at our garage sale in June, I happened to meet the writer and his young son, Makai. Here in part is THE LETTER and a thought-provoking reminder of the reasons for concern.

Anne Lee

IMPORTANT MESSAGE ABOUT YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD !!!!

by Samson Douglass

Hello. My wife, 20 month old son and I live in your neighborhood. We feel blessed to have stumbled upon one of the "gems" of San Diego. I've lived in Clairemont, Bay Park, Mira Mesa, UTC, North Park, Pacific Beach, and Chula Vista, and I've never experienced a neighborhood like Allied Gardens. On Tuesday, March 18th at the Nazarene Church, at the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) meeting, the first meeting of three major steps has begun for Archstone Builders (a 20 billion dollar, S&P 500 corporation based in Colorado) to develop what is currently a 119 unit Mission Gorge mobile home park adjacent to Greenbrier St. off Mission Gorge into a 4- story 444 unit "condominium for rent" complex. I, like many of you, had mixed feelings at first. Is this good? Is this bad? Are they going to make our community nicer or will it be this over-densely populated monstrosity like central Mission Valley?

These are valid questions, but at the EIR meeting I saw a heartbreaking story of closed door deals, amendments to strip away legal securities and a complete disregard of our senior neighbors over at the Mobile Home Park. I witnessed sorrow and despair that have truly taken a toll. We could have the morbid debate as to WHY, but the truth is that ever since the seniors at the mobile home park have been issued the unexpected and unfair notices that the land that their homes lie on was sold out from under them to a developer, there have been 5 heart attacks and 2 deaths. This is the truth. Even if some of these folks are ill or in the last days of their lives, **NO ONE HAS THE RIGHT TO AFFECT THAT!** These people are armed service veterans, working class, community leaders, and widows, some on a meager social security, unable to retire in their 70's and 80's. These aren't folks who didn't plan well. These are folks who put their eggs in a mobile home park to spend the rest of their days. In the current rental market, even considering "affordable" units being made available, these people don't stand a chance. This is not half the story or an embellishment, this is a factual travesty.

I admit that I was a little disappointed to see our community off Greenbrier St. show their lack of presence at the EIR meeting, because this project affects us deeply. Currently there is a quiet, well-maintained, "village style" community with only 96 vehicles. The Archstone project will consist of 4 stories, 444 units and a parking garage to barely accommodate them. Archstone is predicting no more than 700 cars (not that they're necessarily installing that many parking spaces.) This is a false projection. Moneycentral.com sources say that today there is an average of 2.4 cars per household of 3, and with condo rentals in this area catering to students in roommate circumstances, you can be sure that will hold true. Add visitors and it doesn't take much to have Greenbrier and all the surrounding streets filled with parked cars (exactly how it is in Mission Valley and SDSU) In turn this creates pollution, noise, congestion and crime. Archstone will take any debate and push THEIR facts right through the grey area and into the white for the sake of their argument. **THE DEVIL IS IN THE DETAILS**, and the project will be the first major crack in our "gem", opening the door for more to follow.

Ideas to think about:

Good, law abiding Americans and San Diego citizens being unjustly wronged (sneaky amendments to lift the mobile home overlay zone.)

Schools being flooded with an unexpected and sudden jump in population, especially in the midst of education budget costs.

Traffic congestion. 900 cars at an average of 2 trips a day between 8 a.m. and 7 p.m. is approx. 63 cars per hour or 2.7 per minute, or anywhere from 4 - 8 cars waiting at the newly installed traffic light every time.

Parking spillover. Car alarms and strangers in front of our homes at night -- sounds great, doesn't it?

The maximum units allowed on that acreage with total disregard to the surrounding residents or the very fragile San Diego River and its wildlife.

Air pollution. We're already frazzled on lead toys, tainted water, unsafe plastics for our children. Do we really have to worry about the air we breathe? I understand that there is already pollution, but thinking this won't add to the existing problem is quite naive.

Dense populations will always raise crime, whether it's burglary or violent crimes. It's inevitable.

Many residents paid more for their houses with a view than they are currently worth which will be lowered further by a four story eyesore, decreasing your property value or at least your feng shui.

Noise pollution. The monotone and underlying roar that is already prevalent in our daily lives will rise.

It's going to get hotter. Our predominant offshore winds here in San Diego travel east, up Mission Valley, along the I-8 freeway and gust up this valley like many other valleys along the way. We get some of the last ocean breezes here at Mission Gorge, and you all know that if you move just a little east in the summer, the temperature rises quickly. Purely on physics alone, the four story building proposed will have a detrimental effect of some sort.

The gateway for developers to turn Allied Gardens into the new central Mission Valley, A defiant community will send a rippling message throughout the developer's community that this place is a difficult and discouraging place to attempt to destroy. These communities are not some cookie cutter suburbs on the outskirts of civilization, surrounded by torn apart hills where the next Lego houses are going. These neighborhoods have character and integrity, camaraderie and friendship, passion and concern.

Let's not lose that. Thank you for your time,
Your neighbor Samson Douglass