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The El Dorado County Board of Supervisors
360 Fair Lane
Placerville, CA 95667

Re: Measure HO-C Staff Report dated August 21, 2007
Hearing Date: August 28, 2007, Item 43

Honorable Chairwoman:

As a member of the task force, I wish to briefly comment on the above referenced staff report and, more specifically, on the proposed formation of a Housing Advisory Committee.

Referring to the Housing Advisory Committee makeup set out at the bottom of page three of the staff report, in order to achieve broader representation of the design professional community in the county, the "Architectural and/or Engineering Firm Representative" should be a representative from the local organization of development design professionals, Surveyors, Architects, Geologists and Engineers of El Dorado County (SAGE).

The following comments are presented from *an individual task-force member perspective only*. The questions discussed below did not present themselves in time for consideration by SAGE.

The present structure of the ad hoc task force is poorly equipped for tackling El Dorado County's affordable housing issues. There was broad agreement among task force participants that a smaller, more formal advisory group was necessary. However, task force members were not informed that the proposed Housing Advisory Committee would be required to employ majority rule decision making under Roberts Rules of Order. The small group attending the August 21 task force meeting was only then informed of this consequence of our recommendation.

Roberts Rules of Order are appropriate and effective for meeting management in many forums. However, my chief concerns with any majority rule decision-making process for this particular committee are:

- 1) At the risk of stating the obvious, opinions are varied and polarized regarding how best to achieve the County's affordable housing objectives. With this polarization, it is almost second nature to turn to a voting procedure that produces a win/lose result. Instead of maximizing group gains by jointly seeking solutions, a bare majority of the participants receive their desired result while the remainder is left to seek options outside of the group. Too often, particularly where the politics of growth are concerned, these options involve protracted and costly litigation.

- 2) Throughout the meetings, task-force members have reiterated the need for creativity and cooperation in addressing housing development issues. Majority rule decision making often fails to foster the creativity and cooperation needed on such a complex set of problems. A consensus based decision making process, ideally with the guidance of a neutral facilitator with mediation skills, is better suited for generating creative housing solutions and for collaborating in the implementation of those solutions.

A smaller, balanced group structure, **with concrete objectives and benchmarks, a solid process design and timeline** is clearly needed. We can find mutual-gain solutions within such a structure, if we are directed to attempt consensus. At a minimum, if Robert's Rules must be employed by the committee, please instruct the committee that proposed solutions having the support of a *unanimous* vote will assure the Board that a thorough search for mutual gains has been conducted, and are thus more likely to receive the Board's approval.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide my input.

Respectfully,

BREWSTER & ASSOCIATES

Danell L. Brewster