



**Anderson Valley
Housing Association**

Making Affordable Housing a Reality

12/8/2017

To: Dan Hamburg and John McCowen
Mendocino County Public Health, Safety, and Resources Standing Committee

Dear Supervisor Hamburg and Supervisor McCowen,

The Anderson Valley Housing Association (AVHA) mission is to help address the great need and insufficient supply of affordable housing in our valley.

We appreciate the time and energy your committee has dedicated to researching what revisions to Mendocino's Class K Ordinance might be of value to Mendocino, but we are concerned with how some of these proposals might affect the county's growing need for affordable housing. We hope you will review each of these directives, as we do, bearing in mind the initial spirit of the Class K Ordinance: to promote and facilitate affordable housing in our rural county.

We'd like to share our thoughts regarding the committee directives and proposals that were discussed during your 9/25/17 meeting. Thank you for considering them.

1. County Counsel shall investigate options in respect to "grandfathering" existing Class K structures, as well as options for hardship exemptions or time extensions.

AVHA Recommendation: We agree. It is hard to imagine requiring existing Class K structures to re-permit according to these more stringent directives. Options for hardship exemptions should be thoughtful and compassionate, so long as the application process did not become a new hardship.

2. That all future Class K structures come into compliance with CA State Law and require automatic fire sprinklers in all single family residential structures.

AVHA Recommendation: We agree that fire suppression has become an increasingly important topic, but we disagree with the efficacy of requiring expensive fire sprinkler systems for new Class K structures, especially as the vast majority of existing structures do not have and are not being required to add these sprinkler systems. It's estimated that these sprinkler systems would add upwards of \$10,000 to the cost of a new home. Such a cost might derail people from building, or if they build, it might drive people away from obtaining legitimate permits.

3. That Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) requirements shall be required for all new single family residential structures.

AVHA Recommendation: Fire resistant building materials have a clear value to our wildfire-prone county, so long as the requirement of those materials doesn't conflict with the Class K Ordinance spirit of affordable housing. We recommend research be done to ascertain what the cost increase would be and if it would be prohibitive before deciding whether changing the WUI requirements would help or hinder our county's need for affordable housing in the wake of our recent fires. Please keep in mind, Mendocino County's median income is \$59,900 – a few thousand dollars in extra expense can make or break an owner/builder's ability to carry out a project.



Anderson Valley Housing Association

4. That a perimeter foundation, as required by California all new single family residences, and all accessory structures otherwise determined by an engineer.

AVHA Recommendation: We ask that you not implement Ordinance post/pier foundation. Requiring a perimeter \$10,000 that could hinder the building of affordable housing.

5. That three (3) inspections will be required to obtain a AVHA Recommendation: We are very much in favor of and as requested by the builder/owner. We question if the Board will view all these proposals with a clear view of

6. That a new single family residence shall be limited to 2 Class K.

AVHA Recommendation: We are not aware of the necessity so long as it doesn't increase the cost to or discourage the intent of Class K to promote affordable housing. This proposal if the sprinkler, perimeter foundation, and WUI requirements was the rationale given for people seeking

7. That a minimum parcel size of five acres shall be required. AVHA Recommendation: We strongly oppose this proposal the affordable housing premise of the original Class K Ordinance.

8. That staff shall investigate how much leeway the Board has for existing Class K structures.

AVHA Recommendation: That sounds like a fine idea!

9. That the Class K Ordinance shall state that the most recent Building Code (UBC) would be the operative code. This was Class K each time the UBC was re-adopted.

AVHA Recommendation: We understand the attraction of reviews, but it seems risky to the original intent of affordable housing as none of us know what financial burdens future UBC

We hope you will remember that it is a spirit of self-reliance character of Mendocino County. The Class K Ordinance and revisions to this ordinance be in accord with the will of the

Thank you,

Anderson Valley Housing Association
Board of Directors