

Dear Board of Supervisors,

I do not support the purchase of the hotel on Orchard Avenue in Ukiah for the purpose of creating a homeless housing facility. There are a multitude of reasons that this decision is not the right one including the following:

1. Public Safety - as with the other homeless services facilities in Ukiah, the impact to public health and safety is undeniable. Look at the Redwood Community Services facility on South State Street and tell me that the facility is a shining example of a well-run program. It is absolutely not and has created a nightmare for businesses and residences in the area. Cars up on blocks in the parking lot, drug use rampant surrounding the area, fights and an attempted murder, etc., etc., etc.. Purchasing an entire hotel for a similar population will have similar impact to the adjacent area.

2. Rules for Conduct - unless and until there are strict rules of conduct at this and other homeless service facilities, this hotel will be a disaster and will attract the exact problem population that will dissuade those needing the help the most from participating (e.g., families who are desperately trying to lift themselves up and out of homelessness). Families and those serious about improving their situation will avoid this facility unless there are rules of conduct for participation which promote good behavior, no drug use, no crime, etc. Accountability is critical and without it, lawlessness and drug problems will be the norm. Transient crime has become the norm in our once beautiful and safe town. It is not a stretch to imagine this hotel literally up in flames in the near future unless rules are established and enforced with serious consequences.

3. Neighborhood Input - where was the due process in this decision? Where was the proper vetting? The BOS gave the public and the neighbors little to no notice of their intentions. This is wrong as the decision has far-reaching and tangible impacts to the businesses and residences adjacent to this hotel. I own residential property within a few blocks, and fear my property value will plummet as a result of the transient crime that will likely ensue. In speaking to numerous Ukiahans and neighbors in the Orchard Avenue area, there is ZERO SUPPORT for your decision.

As elected officials, the public trusts you to represent the will of the voters, your constituents. You have failed in this case. This project, if allowed to continue, will result in the further degradation of our town. We are already a magnet for out of area transients. The Marbut Assessment confirmed that, stating that almost 40% of the homeless in the area were from out of the area.

Our town has become an embarrassment - rife with trash, abandoned campsites, and environmental pollution and biohazards. We have handcuffed law enforcement with little power to impact the problem. We already have a multitude of services with little accountability for those they literally serve. I've personally seen the lack of rules and lawlessness. I've cleaned up needles, trash, mattresses, human feces, with my own gloved hands, and watched as good people are harassed or attacked by the transient criminals that are a large part of the homeless population. I'm sick and tired of this situation. Feel good money from the state to buy a hotel is not the answer. A properly planned and vetted facility in an appropriate location, with specific rules for participation, and consequences for breaking the rules, is the answer.

Say no to the hotel purchase.

Aaron Niderost
Ukiah
5th District Voter