

From: [Yolanda Mathew](#)
To: [Mary Gourley](#)
Cc: [Barney Aldridge](#)
Subject: Public Comment- Council meeting 10/27
Date: Wednesday, October 27, 2021 4:41:40 PM

Mary, can you please confirm receipt and confirm this will be added to public comment for tonight's meeting along with the attached photo.

Dear City of Sebastopol,

I appreciate the compassion and care shown by the City of Sebastopol for the 16 RV's parked on Morris Street with at least 16-20 people living inside these vehicles. My team and I are in the process of looking for a safe long term solution to help these folks. We hope the City is doing the same. Last Sunday night we experienced an atmospheric river which dumped record amounts of rain in an unbelievably short period of time. Within a few hours, the Laguna de Santa Rosa went from being a dry lake bed to having rising water heights that hit 66 feet. Had it continued to rise just another 3 feet, the RVs and people living there would have been deluged with water. We came very close to facing a middle of the night emergency evacuation for all these campers on Sunday night. As someone who has recently lived through the horror of a fast moving flood on Morris Street, I'm asking you to please move these people to higher ground - as soon as possible.

Just 2 1/2 years ago on February 26, 2019 the area where you are allowing and encouraging these RV dwellers to park and sleep was under 9 feet of water. These folks' lives are at risk. The city is potentially violating FEMA, Zoning laws and current building safety codes by allowing this situation to continue and encouraging these people to stay where they are. The laws at issue are in place for life safety, and ignoring them may lead to disastrous consequences. The street height where these people are parked is 68' above sea level. The flood zone where these people are parked is 78 feet above sea level. You are allowing them to sleep 10 feet below the flood line. When that area floods, they would not be able to walk out, they will be swimming - or drowning. Their property would almost certainly be destroyed and their lives are at risk.

I believe the City has a moral duty and an obligation for the safety of these citizens. Please see attached photo of this area 2.5 years ago. It would be a devastating event for these folks to be trapped in this area losing their vehicles, all their belongings, and potentially their lives. Allowing this situation to stay unchanged and unaddressed for another risky winter is unacceptable and the consequences of your continued inaction will be your responsibility - that includes

the City of Sebastopol, as well as the City Council members, Mayor, City Manager, Police Department, Fire Department, Building Department and Planning Department. Encouraging these people to stay in place will do nothing to mitigate the life safety risk that currently exists for these citizens on Morris Street.

The existing proposal you're voting on tonight to move these poor folks and their RV's even deeper into the flood zone is a terrible idea and not only fails to address the life safety issues, it exacerbates them. What you're proposing is probably unlawful in that it violates current FEMA, building code and zoning requirements, and will allow an unsafe and dangerous situation to become even worse. These laws are in place to protect lives.

It is incomprehensible that the City would use \$300-\$400k to make relatively minor improvements for the purpose of allowing RV's to remain in a flood zone. Any further investment in housing in this area defies both logic and common sense. Any housing of unhoused people in a flood zone is both short sighted and cruel. You are doing nothing more than kicking the proverbial "can down the road," by substituting an ill-advised short term "quick fix" for a safe, long term solution that addresses the needs of both the people at risk, and the community as a whole. Flood zones are not an appropriate place for housing and these people deserve better - you can do better.

From,

Barney Aldridge

YOLANDA MATHEW
Operations Director

