

December 10, 2021

Dear City Council Members,

I'm writing in regard to a letter from Mr. Pendoley, Board Chair of MEHC, to the Belvedere City Council in support of the Mallard Pointe development that was posted on the City of Belvedere website. The letter includes misrepresentations and statements about Belvedere that need clarification.

It is apparent that MEHC representatives did not visit the proposed project area, given their description of the Mallard Road area as "a seriously deteriorated, environmentally compromised property." Contrary to this assertion, there have in fact been many upgrades to these homes that were originally designed to provide differentiated housing opportunities for Belvedere.

Furthermore, Mr. Pendoley's description of the existing duplexes is 180-degrees at odds with the description the developer is currently providing to prospective renters of these duplexes! For your edification, I am referencing below, a rental listing that the developer is currently posting both on craigslist.com and on apartments.com for a duplex located at 22 Mallard Road.

In this current listing, titled "\$5,500/2 Br-915 square feet-Bright, Spacious 2 BR Cottage-Experience the beauty of Belvedere!" the developer states that:

"Mallard Pointe is a luxury waterfront community featuring 22 light-filled, 2-bedroom cottages in Belvedere, California. Our residences feature spacious outdoor living, waterfront views, and private garages. 22 Mallard Rd. has been recently renovated with a chef's kitchen, skylight, stainless steel appliances, full-size in-home laundry, and hardwood flooring...Mallard Pointe offers an extraordinary, luxury living environment unmatched in the Bay Area." The listing goes on to list the many amenities of the cottage.

The 22 duplexes cannot be both as Mr. Pendoley describes them in his letter to the City Council and as the developer describes them in its rental listing.

Of the current 40+ residents, over half are seniors. Their displacement from a supportive neighborhood is of great concern to me, and others in our community. Over the years, older residents have lived in them as a way to remain close to their friends and families. Younger families have used them as a way to become part of the community. If Mr. Pendoley had visited he would have found lovely gardens, simple yet nicely kept homes, and a caring neighborhood.

In his letter Mr. Pendoley also stated, "the proposed apartments will frame the nearby park." As you know, the zoning of that area is R-2 and specifically prohibits apartment buildings. The structure, which is estimated to be over 33 feet high and 260 feet long, will instead loom over the playground, park and center of our city.

The MEHC mission refers to environmental integrity and I assume that includes issues of safety. This proposed subdivision will double the number of cars and delivery vehicles daily on the street that runs adjacent to our park, which is bustling with small children. It would also include subterranean parking in a FEMA flood zone. You should also know that over 60 trees will be destroyed. These facts seem to be at odds with the MEHC stated mission.

Additionally, the Belvedere Lagoon Property Owners Association (BLPOA) cites, in a letter to the City Council and posted on the Belvedere website, many concerns regarding this project and its potential impact on the delicate lagoon ecosystem.

We fully agree that teachers, employees and other essential workers cannot afford to live in Belvedere. We wish this project had focused on helping these groups. Unfortunately, according to the preliminary plans only 4 apartment units, not 7, will be for low-income renters. The other 19 will be market value rentals – once again leaving Belvedere out of the reach of these important groups.

In the view of the MEHC Board of Directors this new development will be “eliminating 22 substandard homes.” In our view this development will displace over 40 residents, mostly seniors including one who is 91 years old. The developers are subverting our local zoning codes for a mere 4 units of low-income housing.

I have written letters to MEHC, dated, respectively, December 1 and December 6, 2021, in which I point out the inaccuracies in Mr. Pendoley’s November 30 letter to you. I copied you on those letters. I also noted that, per MEHC’s website, the developer’s principals have in the past made donations to MEHC, and asked why, in the interests of transparency and fair dealing, Mr. Pendoley had not disclosed this in his letter to you.

We need to keep the record straight.

Thank you,

Jane Cooper  
On behalf of Belvedere Residents for Intelligent Growth  
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