



From the Westwinds Residents Organization archives: March 11, 2020

Victory at City Hall!

What a busy two months! All of us were blindsided by the flyer from park management (MHC) claiming that the landowners wanted everyone evicted by 2022. The following Friday (when MHC posted the second flyer about suing the landowners), a core group of us met to organize a residents association for Westwinds Mobile Home Park. We wrote bylaws. We contacted San Jose city officials. We met with lawyers, housing advocates, and folks from other organizations who might help us.

Mayor Sam Liccardo and District 4 Councilmember Lan Diep met with residents on January 27 in a packed Hermitage club house. They assured us they would accelerate the adoption of a mobile home park land use designation. The City had been working on this important protection and was now going to take action. The new designation would protect residents by placing an additional hurdle in front of redevelopers, requiring a city council vote.

We sprang into action to ensure that this new land use designation got adopted. We spoke at the Housing & Community Development Commission meeting on January 23, and at the Planning Commission meeting on February 12. Our public testimony helped convince both groups to vote in favor -- the Planning Commission vote was unanimous!

Martha O'Connell from Golden State Mobilehome Owners League (GSMOL) spoke at the Spindrift clubhouse on February 16 to explain their history of protecting mobile home owners and the resources they have available. Later that week, on February 20, the Law Foundation of Silicon Valley accepted our invitation to give a presentation on mobile home law to a packed El Bosque clubhouse. We advertised this meeting on NextDoor and our Facebook group page, and we posted flyers on each home. We were also joined that evening by the president of the Winchester Ranch Senior Mobilehome Owners Association.

March 10 was when the San Jose City Council would vote on whether to adopt the new land use designation. The council proposed to protect only the two parks currently zoned Urban Residential (Westwinds and Mountain Springs). We decided to work toward protecting all parks. We again walked the entire park posting reminders of the upcoming meeting. We were at city hall encouraging residents to speak and shepherding them through the speaker signup process. After one to two hours of public testimony (with speakers limited to one minute each), no one on the council wanted to be seen opposing this proposal. The city council voted unanimously to protect all 58 mobile home parks in San Jose!

This was a huge victory. We need to remain vigilant. With our astronomical land prices, a redevelopment attempt seems inevitable. But just as we showed on March 10, if we are united, we will save our park!