

9/20/2026

Public Comment on the proposed housing development at 8100 Valentine Ave

To the Sebastopol Planning Commissioners, and all relevant decision makers

The proposed development of the LDS Church property at 8100 Valentine Avenue, dividing the property into 20 lots, and building 20 two-story homes and an additional 19 one-story "ADU's" would significantly degrade the character of the surrounding neighborhood, impinging on the serenity of what is currently a quiet residential neighborhood. This urban-level density has no place in our R4-zoned neighborhood, to say nothing of the ghastly aesthetics of the proposed buildings. Approving it would only serve the interests of a property development company with no ties to our community (and a clearly demonstrated lack of understanding and respect for local values), at the expense of the community whose long term interests you are supposed to serve.

Of the dozen properties who share a property line with 8100 Valentine Ave, at least 9 of them would experience a significant degradation of the quality and privacy of their indoor and outdoor space if this development is approved in its current state. And the entire neighborhood would experience a significant increase in traffic, noise, and light pollution.

My property (8116 Valentine Ave) is immediately west of the church property, adjacent to the proposed "lot 5" (2 units) and the front unit (primary dwelling) of "lot 6". Those 2 lots include one single story ADU adjacent to my front yard likely with views into my 2 front bedrooms from their windows, and 2 two-story homes overlooking my back yard, with direct views into every square foot of my back yard, as well as bird's eye views into my master bedroom, both bathrooms, and the living room. As far as I know, there are currently no homes in the neighborhood whose privacy is compromised to anywhere near this level. Most homes are parallel to each other with minimal (if any) windows along the sides facing their neighbors. And mine is not the only property which would be similarly affected if this plan is approved.

In addition to rampant crowding and disregard for the privacy of homes around the perimeter of the proposed development, I am concerned that Grupe's plan includes insufficient protection for several of the heritage trees they are pledging to protect. Much has been said about the redwoods, but I wish to address two other trees. Tree 54 on the map is a large twin-trunked cedar on the southeast corner of my property, a few feet from the property line. As the corner of the proposed lot 5 ADU falls inside the drip zone, there is no way excavation and heavy equipment will not impinge significantly further upon its root system and thereby jeopardize the health of the tree. This tree is large enough and tall enough to do severe damage to any number of existing or planned homes if it were to fall as a result of deteriorated health. Additionally, building 22 (the ADU on lot 6) is completely under the canopy and inside the drip zone of tree 52, a large Valley Oak on the edge of the proposed development property, and building 17, the 2 story primary dwelling on lot 6, also falls partially under the same tree. I am

concerned that both of these heritage trees are put at risk by the proposed building plan, in addition to the homes being put at increased fire risk and risk of falling limbs with the trees' canopies extending over their roofs. Both trees and the homes could easily be protected by scaling back the number of lots and homes to a level more in keeping with the R4 neighborhood they are a part of.

The Grupe's proposal states that because they are setting aside >10% of the units as "affordable", they are eligible for a concession, to wit they are requesting that they be allowed to remove a majority of the heritage trees on the property. They specify that 3 of the homes will meet this "affordability" standard. However, 3 out of 39 units is actually only 7.69% so the math isn't mathing, and they should not be entitled to this concession at all.

Furthermore, they go on to request 8 additional waivers to zoning requirements, asking you to bend the rules on

- a. Lot size
- b. Lot width,
- c. Maximum building height
- d. Building setback requirements
- e. Maximum lot coverage
- f. Mechanical equipment setbacks
- g. Parking location relative to the residences
- h. Parking space depth requirements

Which begs the question, which of our zoning laws are left that they do actually intend to follow? Zoning laws are there for a reason, to uphold the integrity of the neighborhood, and we should not be allowing some company with no ties to our community to run roughshod over them in pursuit of maximum profit for themselves.

When I attended the previous meeting in which the Grupe proposal was presented, I was struck by the obvious platitudes that riddled their presentation, attempting to demonstrate their understanding and respect for our local flavor and values, which actually only served to underscore their lack of understanding, or even curiosity about the community they were addressing. Their inclusion of and repeated focus on a "community expression area" is a perfect example of this ridiculous pandering. As was their emphasis on the "opportunity" we have with this project to be on the cutting edge of a new way to approach urban planning through a very broad interpretation of AB 1033, which is supposed to allow homeowners (NOT a development company) to sell ADUs while retaining ownership of the primary dwelling. I would suggest that this is not a trail we want any part in blazing, as it will lead to the systematic degradation of the small-town atmosphere which is what residents of Sebastopol value, and why this is widely seen as such a desirable place to live.

I would strongly urge you NOT to approve the proposal in its current form. There is a way to develop this property to create additional housing without sacrificing the character of the neighborhood and bending the building ordinances (which are there to ensure quality of life

throughout the neighborhood) beyond recognition. If Grupe development company isn't willing to set aside their greed in milking this piece of property for every last dollar they can get in home sales, then we should be willing to wait for another developer who will.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Una Hall

Sebastopol native, and Long time resident