

July 8, 2002

Honorable Rodney S. Melville
Presiding Judge, Santa Barbara Superior Court
312-C East Cook Street
Santa Maria, CA. 93456-5369

RE: Grand Jury Response- Housing the Citizens of
Santa Barbara County

Dear Judge Melville,

The Solvang City Council considered the Grand Jury Report and offers the following comments:

Finding 1: The cities and County will have great difficulty in achieving the State mandated housing goals.

Partially agree. Please keep in mind that these are housing goals, not mandates. The State of California specifically mandates that each city and county have adequate zoning and property available to accommodate the allocated housing needs for each income category but does not mandate that each jurisdiction produce the number of allocated units by the end of the goal period. Government cannot compel landowners to produce units. Each local Association of Government, which for us is the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG), allocates the entire County's "fair share" of units between its member jurisdictions that in turn must be incorporated into the Housing Element of the General Plan.

The City of Solvang is currently in the process of updating its Housing Element. The draft Regional Housing Needs Plan (RHNP) shows that Solvang will need to accommodate 338 housing units between 2002 and 2008. The breakdown of units in each income category is as follows: 139 above moderate, 61 moderate, 58 low-income and 81 very low-income units. According to the draft RHNP, our current General Plan allows for a total of approximately 450 units, although a currently pending housing project would reduce that to approximately 320 units. Given this estimate, it appears that Solvang has roughly that amount of adequate land area, properly zoned, to accommodate the allocation.

Finding 2: The cities and County have already lost valuable time in setting goals and policies to achieve housing growth rates to provide adequate housing for our citizens.

Disagree. The State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) late last year began the process to produce new allocation numbers for the Regional Housing Needs Plan (RHNP) for period of January 2001 through July 2008. In November of 2001, the State provided Santa Barbara County's fair share estimate of housing needs to SBCAG. In January, SBCAG submitted a request to HCD to lower the countywide allocation based upon several local factors, which was successful. SBCAG staff developed an allocation methodology with the Technical

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Planning Advisory Committee (TPAC) which has representatives of each local jurisdiction. The draft RHNP is expected to be finalized in August by SBCAG and will be transmitted to the State by the December 31, 2002 deadline.

Recommendation 1: In meeting the housing goals established by the State and soon to be allocated by SBCAG, the cities and County need to establish policies and metrics to facilitate the necessary actions and to track performance.

Agree. The City of Solvang's Housing Element update is expected to be adopted well in advance of December 2003 and will include performance measures.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Palmer
Mayor, City of Solvang

cc: Solvang City Councilmembers
Santa Barbara County Grand Jury Foreperson