

August 3, 2022

City of Sitka  
Planning Commission  
100 Lincoln St.

Dear City of Sitka Planning Commission Members,

I was very disheartened to read the recommendations for denying Sound Development their variance and subdivision request for their property purchased from the City off Kramer Avenue. Even more so the reasoning behind their decision.

Housing in Sitka is dire. The city has continuously expressed their interest in doing what they can to help remedy the situation. Yet when people try to create developments they are met with road block after road block and discouraged from continuing. Having more meetings and creating more plans for the situation doesn't make solutions, actions do.

Within the draft plan for NoName Mountain and Granite Creek master plan, it was suggested that the City acquire easements from property owners downhill of Kramer Avenue to access existing infrastructure on Halibut Point Road. This would make it more affordable to create the infrastructure needed for development on the benchlands properties. This is EXACTLY what Mr. Tisher has done. He has basically handed the City everything they need to take the first steps into getting properties on the Benchlands moving forward toward broader development and yet the City seems adamant that they do not support development of any property in this area. The infrastructure that Tisher has placed is well within the existing City standards for major developments, and it was in fact inspected by the City for compliance. Continuing the Sewer line in Kramer Avenue beyond where it currently ends was not found to be feasibly even by the City. The only other way to get utilities on Kramer to other properties is through utilities easement down to HPR.

Scott Brylinski said "Sitka's housing costs are due primarily to the cost of infrastructure and construction, not the lack of available land."

The infrastructure is here already, it's built to the City's standards and has been inspected to meet those standards, all at no expense to the City. All that is left is to start taking action on the City's own goals and recommendations by others and to say "yes" and accept this as a public utility to start opening up the entire area for further development and progression.

Our Community is in dire need of housing and there is land available. If we continue to get in our own way of progress we are only furthering the problem not addressing it.

Reality is that we need to accept the fact that land remaining for development is going to come with additional challenges. We must continue to move forward with doing our best as a community to come up with ways to develop the land that is available. The alternative is that we don't, and we continue to spiral into more and more dire straights in terms of housing in our community.

Jill Hirai