
Dear North Fair Oaks Community Council,

I plan to read the following comments at the upcoming FOCC meeting on Thursday 10/28 during the public comment period. I am sending this written version to you in advance, as it has links to important information related to my comments that you may wish to refer to.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

All the best,
Ginny Miller-Bowen

Agenda Item: Public Comment Period
To be read by Ginny Miller-Bowen, North Fair Oaks For Trees

I am a member of North Fair Oaks For Trees, a community group to address concerns about the rapid destruction of the mature tree canopy in our neighborhood. Our trees not only contribute to the unique character of our neighborhood, they also provide significant environmental benefits such as carbon sequestering, the cooling of our neighborhood, and providing wildlife habitat. Our group has collected over 460 signatures on our [petition to save our neighborhood tree canopy](#).

Outdated county tree protection regulations and lack of oversight has led to excessive tree removal in our neighborhood. Our desirable and relatively affordable neighborhood has become a target for big developers with little concern for our neighborhood character, or environmental protection.

We are specifically concerned about developer Thomas James Homes, who is using aggressive tactics to [buy up multiple lots in](#) our neighborhood and is removing mature trees in order to build the maximum square footage technically allowed. Their business plan, and county regulations don't account for the cumulative impact of multiple mature tree removals in our neighborhood. Also, these large houses are listed over \$3million and are inconsistent with the [County's stated goal to improve housing affordability and availability](#).

Protection of the mature tree canopy is key to combating climate change and aligns with the [County's goals and commitments for North Fair Oaks](#) and the [County's goal to advance carbon neutrality](#), which should be reflected in any decisions surrounding tree removal and development.

We ask the Fair Oaks Community Council to request that the County :

- Update tree removal regulations in North Fair Oaks to consider the cumulative environmental and neighborhood impacts and which align with surrounding communities
- And Place a moratorium on tree removal permits, and revoke existing permits, until regulations are updated.
- And place a moratorium on new housing construction that would result in the removal of any significant or heritage trees until regulations are updated.

Sincerely,

Ginny Miller-Bowen

Our neighborhood's mature tree canopy is being eroded lot by lot by developers, namely Thomas James Homes. They are taking advantage of our collective canopy for property valuation and attracting buyers, but have no responsibility to preserve the trees on their home sites or contribute substantively back to our tree canopy beyond small replacement trees. Waiting for small replacement trees to mature is a long game we shouldn't have to play.

If the county continues to allow this unfettered fill-up-the-lot development at the expense of mature trees and neighborhood character, NFO will soon become a barren tract development. We need the county's help to protect our tree canopy and hold developers accountable for respecting the neighborhood context for which they're profiting from.

Thomas James is a large, publicly traded company based out of Southern California with a track record of being pushed out of communities for these same reasons - we need to make a stand.

Meghan Kirby-McFarland