



Santa Ana Lodge, No. 794

Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks

SUBJECT: Support for Historic Exterior Modification Application No. 2022-02

Dear Historic Resources Commission,

On behalf of the Santa Ana Elks, I am writing to express enthusiastic support for WISEPlace and its efforts to develop supportive housing for women experiencing homelessness, some of Orange County's most vulnerable citizens for whom there has been a longstanding housing shortage.

As active members of our great Santa Ana community, The Santa Ana Elks are pleased to support this solution to ending homelessness through this housing development and wrap around services provided by WISEPlace. Santa Ana Elks has recently created a valued partnership with WISEPlace and are impressed with their demonstration of care for this vulnerable population. They are best positioned, along with their partners Jamboree Housing, to help end homelessness in our community. And Santa Ana Elks is committed to staying involved and leveraging resources to help these great organizations.

WISEPlace is the only nonprofit in Orange County who is solely focused on the unmet needs of this vulnerable population (unaccompanied women.) One in three women make up this part of the homeless population with over 40% survivors of domestic violence. This population of women endure high rates of first-time homelessness, longer spells of homelessness, and higher barriers in accessing stable housing. Unaccompanied women also report extremely high incidence of trauma—whether physical, sexual, or psychological in nature—that is compounded by their ongoing homelessness. The opportunity to create options for women on this site with so many community amenities will provide a safe home for women for future generations.

We are so pleased to see the groundwork that has gone into exploring the existing WISEPlace location. Maintaining the historic integrity of the location, and being able to restore it, is needed for our community. Creating housing for vulnerable women will create an important solution that has never been specifically addressed in Orange County. A place where women can live with support services to address their disabling conditions will create a stable environment where they can thrive.

This opportunity to provide affordable housing at this existing location can create a welcome solution to a growing community need. I am pleased to provide support and respectfully ask for your consideration.

Thank you for all you do in our great community of Santa Ana!

Respectfully,

Lisa Darmousseh
Exalted Ruler - President
Santa Ana Elks Lodge #794

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