

Letters to the Editor

To be a vital community, we need a variety of housing types in a range of prices. The three proposed projects — the Anacortes Family Center's new apartments, the Anacortes Housing Authority's 19th Street townhouses and the Olson building renovation will help Anacortes provide safe, affordable housing for those who need it.

Please give this proposal your serious consideration.

MARCL. ESTVOLD
Anacortes

Prioritize affordable housing
We are asking the voters of Anacortes to support an ordinance that authorizes the collection of the Affordable Housing Sales Tax. This is an exciting and important step toward providing more affordable housing for our Anacortes residents. No one likes new taxes, but if we want to address this critical issue, we as a community are going to have to find new sources of funding.

Affordable housing is defined as housing that doesn't cost more than 30% of your family income. This definition has been in use for close to 70 years and is the figure that financial institutes use in determining mortgage eligibility. In Anacortes, according to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) data, 33% of our residents are paying more than 30% of their income for rent and utilities.

We need market rate housing, affordable housing and/or low-income housing. We need the housing for our teachers, health care providers, seniors and low-income families.

Think of the consequences of being unable to recruit or retain new teachers, policemen, shipyard workers, etc. because there is no housing.

I support the small sales tax increase that will help provide affordable housing units. And the bonus is that the state will rebate a small percentage if we pass that measure.

I also support Anacortes' efforts to attract developers to build market rate housing. Height increases and property tax abatement incentives make Anacortes competitively attractive for investors.

Yes, we need to figure out the neighborhood impacts of increased heights. But at the same time, realize that Anacortes has only a very narrow strip of land on either side of Commercial Drive that is

zoned to allow multifamily housing bigger than a triplex; the most cost-effective housing. We must make the most of what's available.

Let's do this on Feb. 11 and vote yes.

MARTHA SCHOENTHAL
Anacortes

Vote yes on housing tax

I would like to encourage everybody to vote yes on the Affordable Housing Tax Measure on Feb. 11. As a member of the Anacortes Housing Authority Board, I see firsthand the urgent need for affordable housing. We currently have a four-year backlog for housing in Anacortes. We have 183 units occupied at 99.7% year-round.

We are getting ready to add five units on 19th street and start renovation of the Olson Building on Commer-

cial Avenue.

We also have other properties ready but with the lack of funding, they are on hold.

BILL FRENCH
Anacortes

Letter guidelines

The Views page is meant to offer a space for the community to be able to add voices in a greater civil conversation about the issues of the place we live in.

Letters should be limited to about 400 words. We ask that you give a source for all information presented as fact to support your opinion because we do not fact-check letters.

Letters can have only one author. Provide your name, address and phone number with your letter. Send letters to news@goanacortes.com.