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**From:** Cervantes, Clarissa <[CCervantes@riversideca.gov](mailto:CCervantes@riversideca.gov)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 23, 2023 5:01 PM  
**To:** Futrell, Mike <[MFutrell@riversideca.gov](mailto:MFutrell@riversideca.gov)>  
**Cc:** Lujano, Miguel <[MLujano@riversideca.gov](mailto:MLujano@riversideca.gov)>  
**Subject:** Fwd: [External] Request to refer to City Council the Mt Vernon Ave RC zone site case PR-2021-001108(DR, GE)

Hi Mike,

Please see the request below that has come in from one of my residents in Ward 2, who is also a member of the Friends of Riverside Hills.

The Friends have several experts and researchers who are extremely familiar with the landscape of the Box Spring Mountains, hills, etc. They've won and settled several lawsuits with the city over multiple projects that I'm sure the COA can provide you with.

I'd like to see this item referred to the city council as this could potentially have an impact on reserve and wildlife.

Thank you!

CM Cervantes

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**From:** Richard Block <[rblock31@charter.net](mailto:rblock31@charter.net)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 23, 2023 12:08 PM  
**To:** Cervantes, Clarissa <[CCervantes@riversideca.gov](mailto:CCervantes@riversideca.gov)>  
**Subject:** [External] Request to refer to City Council the Mt Vernon Ave RC zone site case PR-2021-001108(DR, GE)

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Thursday, Feb 23, 2023

To: City Councilmember Clarissa Cervantes

From: Richard and Jane Block

Re: Request for referral to City Council of a DRC project approval

Dear Clarissa,

Jane and I are very happy to have been early supporters and to have had you as the Councilmember for our ward. We understand that you are running for the State Assembly – unfortunately the University neighborhood is not included in that district, but we certainly think you are very well qualified for that role, far more so than Ronaldo. We hope you succeed in that race, but will be sorry to lose you as our councilperson.

Now to the subject of this email: We are asking you to refer to the City Council the Mt Vernon Ave RC zone site proposal PR-2021-001108(DR, GE), which was approved by the DRC yesterday over objections by university neighborhood residents, including immediate neighbors, and the University Neighborhood Association, and Friends of Riverside's Hills.

As you know, referral to the Council is an alternative to filing an appeal to the Planning Commission (and then perhaps having to appeal to the Council) with each appeal requiring a \$2,529 fee, with those rather exorbitant fees being an unfair burden on the immediate neighbors and, if done by a larger public interest group, such as the University Neighborhood Association, an unfair burden on any such public interest group. In fact the large appeal fee is so unfair that the case planner originally told a neighbor that there was no fee for an appeal for a project on a single RC zone lot, but then had to correct herself when her error was pointed out to her. INDEED IT USED TO BE THE CASE THAT THERE WAS NO FEE FOR CITY RESIDENTS TO APPEAL PLANNING DECISIONS TO THE CITY COUNCIL.

As noted below, the project at issue, with its hugely excessive grading, will have bad impacts not only on the project's immediate neighbors, who are vociferously opposed to it, but bad impacts throughout the University neighborhood and on the adjacent-to-the-project Box Springs Mountain Reserve and its wildlife.

The project involves a house and ADU on an RC-zoned lot, the problem being that the applicant chose to put the buildings up on top of a hill, necessitating a long steep driveway with a massive amount of grading, so that, per the project grading plan, there will be over 9,400 cu yds of cut, 3,900 cu yds of fill, and an export of over 5,500 cu yds of dirt, which at 11 cu yds per 15-ton dump truck will be roughly 500 dump truck loads, and those dump truck will have to go through quiet streets of the University neighborhood. And the grossly excessive grading will also create noise impacts to the immediate neighbors as well as creating air quality construction impacts to wider neighborhood and to the Box Springs Mountain Reserve.

And speaking of the Reserve, the proposed ADU would be only 54 ft and the house only 61 ft from the Reserve -- the Staff Report to the DRC falsely says the Reserve is to the west and much farther away from the buildings whereas it is actually to the east and a stone's throw away, one example of egregious errors in that Report, despite letters stating the actual facts.

The unnecessary placement of the buildings so close to the Reserve will impact with light and noise the wildlife in the Reserve and violate provisions of the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) to which the City is supposed to be committed, and this in a very high fire hazard zone.

The staff considerations ignored expert testimony from an architect experienced with hillside development that the buildings could be located farther west down the hill with very much less grading (and with less fire hazard and farther from the Reserve), so that the project as approved appears to violate the Grading Code restrictions on RC zoned steep lots about minimizing grading and preserving hilltops.

Thus it really needs to be considered by the City Council, with an updated and corrected staff report. In asking you to refer it, we are not expecting any commitment to oppose the project when it gets heard by the Council. We are simply urging you to have this case referred to the Council as a matter of public interest and fairness.

Thanks, and regards,  
Richard and Jane

PS: You may also get the same request directly from the University Neighborhood Association and from Friends of Riverside's Hills, and from a representative (Brian Williams) of the project's immediate neighbors, but from communications with all of them, I know they all want the same thing: to have it referred to the Council.

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