

My name is Deirdre Whalen and I live at 13631 Blundell Road. I am here as a representative of the Richmond Poverty Response Committee (PRC). The PRC is in support of the City of Richmond's zoning bylaw 8500 and amendment bylaw 9135 concerning a rezoning permit development for Pinnacle International.

I understand the applicant wishes to build approximately 1,228 ~~market-purchase~~ units, ^{including} +/- 63 affordable housing units and 17 affordable dwelling units for professional artists. Although the PRC would like to see more affordable housing units in each development, the 80 or so affordable units is above the 5% ceiling set by the City's Affordable Housing Strategy and they are very much needed in Richmond.

With regard to the artist work/live units, I am reminded of the City of Richmond's Arts Strategy (2012-2017), which states its purpose is *"to help facilitate the growth of the arts in Richmond by creating an environment and culture in the city that ensures the arts play a strong role in place-making, community building, tourism and economic development."* Two of the Strategy's five strategic directions are to: increase the number of art spaces and more effectively use existing ones and broaden the economic potential and contribution of the arts.

This development proposal moves the City in that direction and will be a welcome addition to the only artists' community in Richmond, Finn Slough. I would add that every local emerging artist I know lives in Vancouver mainly because of the price of rent-both for a home and for studio space. Bringing some of that talent back to Richmond would be an important step in building a creative, inventive city.

In addition, the City's Social Development Strategy (2013-2022) seeks as its first goal: *"Social Equity and Inclusion."* The strategy emphasizes an expansion of housing choices with priority attention to people living on limited income as well as an increase in the supply of "workforce housing" so people can afford to live where they work.

The PRC works with local community agencies that provide services to low-income individuals and families. The served population is primarily seniors, youth at risk, single parents, homeless people, recent immigrants and refugee families. There are also more reports of low-wage workers with children seeking help to make ends meet. For instance over 1500 people a week use the Food Bank and 1/3 of these are children. We also hear of Richmond rooming houses where several people or several families share kitchen and bathrooms. This is because rents are too high to live one family to a home or one person to an apartment. People living on limited budgets cannot continue to spend 50% of more on rent. The City of Richmond can start to change that by encouraging more building of affordable rentals.

In conclusion, Council will know that the PRC urged the City to establish the Affordable Housing Strategy. We are pleased to see that the City of Richmond continues to move forward on creating affordable rental housing. Thank you.

