



December 5, 2016

Mayor Robb Davis
Davis City Council Members

City of Davis
23 Russell Blvd.
Davis, CA 95616

Re: Families First Campus and Proposed Sterling 5th Street Apartment Project

Dear City Council Members:

Over the last 18 months, we have asked you a number of times to intercede and reject the proposed Sterling 5th Street Apartment Project due to the fact it is so totally incompatible with the City's community aspirations and the General Plan. The scope, size, and density of the Sterling project would establish a dangerous precedent for development throughout the entire city. No other project, built or proposed in Davis, is so completely unsuited for this community or for the neighborhood. We ask again that you deny this project, adhering to the present zoning restrictions, and instead focus on a plan to re-purpose the Families First Campus.

The planned demolition of the Families First Campus, built with taxpayer funds, would be incredibly wasteful of already bought-and-paid-for resources. City leaders (elected and staff) have stated that EMQ had the property on the market for several years and was unable to find a buyer until Dinerstein proposed the Sterling Project. Our inquiries suggest otherwise - that the property was only marketed in the private sector for possible commercial uses, but not for other potential uses. Further, considerably more effort must be made to consider how Yolo County service agencies and nonprofits might use of this campus.

We ask that you now consider the merits of another possibility – that the Families First campus, with its modern, fully functional facilities, be re-purposed for Davis/Yolo County social, senior, adult day care, and/or mental health services. Such uses would truly benefit the permanent residents of the City and County, where needs are great and resources are scarce. Attached is a document that expands on this topic and identifies possible candidates for a productive use of the Families First Campus facilities.

The City, County, and State elected officials should work together to find a way to acquire this property and use it to provide needed services to local-area residents. We realize that city, county, and state budgets continue to be stressed. But, let's be creative! For example, a city/county/state coordinated effort might do the following:

- Negotiate a purchase price for the property with EMQ. In so doing, it is important to know that the property has been free and clear of any mortgages since 2011, two years before the State of California forced EMQ to shut down the Families First campus.
- City and County Leaders would identify City/County Agencies and/or nonprofits that could productively make use of the Campus. The attached document has a partial list of very good candidates.



- The State of California would then arrange a transfer of the EMQ Bond debt to the City and/or County that is equivalent to the purchase price in exchange for title to the Families First Campus property at 2100 5th Street.
- The agencies/nonprofits selected to use the campus facilities would pay rent for the space and those funds would be used to retire the bond debt to the State.

Other possible strategies might accomplish the same result – saving the Families First Campus.

We ask that the City Council initiate a discussion with County Board of Supervisor members Jim Provenza and Don Saylor, along with representatives from the offices of our Assembly Member and State Senator to consider strategies for saving the Families First campus.

If after the suggested conversations, the Council determines it cannot save the Families First Campus, we ask that you participate in a negotiation aimed at downsizing the Sterling Project. Dinerstein representative Josh Vasbinder has recently suggested that he would consider reducing the size of the Sterling 5th Street Apartment Project, and has asked that we discuss options that would lead to some agreement. The Rancho Yolo Community Association (RYCA) Board of Directors and other interested residents met to consider the Dinerstein offer. The Board consensus is that discussions have the potential to be beneficial to all parties including Rancho Yolo, other communities in this neighborhood, Dinerstein, and most importantly, to the larger City community. However, we believe that those conversations will only be productive, meaningful, and hopefully successful, if the City Council participates in a formal way with representatives from the RYCA and Dinerstein. Please consider appointing two or three City leaders, including two City Council members, to participate in a formal consideration of the project options. Any serious consideration of project downsizing will require the City's participation.

We respectfully request that further action on the proposed Sterling Project be deferred while you consider the above possibilities. Please let us know at your earliest convenience if the Council is willing to have those discussions.

Sincerely,

Mary Jo Bryan Jerry Hallee
On behalf of the Rancho Yolo Community Association

CC: Supervisor Jim Provenza
 Supervisor Don Saylor
 State Senator Bill Dodd
 Assembly Member Cecilia Aguiar-Curry
 Congress Member John Garamendi