

HIDDENBROOKE SUBDIVISION 2003-2004 Grand Jury Report

I. Reason For Investigation

The Grand Jury received citizen complaints regarding the management, record keeping and allocation of the Community Facilities District Funds by the City of Vallejo as they relate to the Hiddenbrooke Subdivision located in the City of Vallejo.

II. Procedure

The Grand Jury:

- Reviewed all correspondence provided by the complainants
- Reviewed all correspondence provided by the City of Vallejo
- Interviewed complainants
- Interviewed Greater Vallejo Recreation District (GVRD) Interim General Manager and the Park Planner

III. Background

1. The Hiddenbrooke Subdivision was approved by the Vallejo City Council on September 15, 1987 by way of a "Specific Plan" which presents the setting, plans, standards and procedures for the development.

2. The area is approximately 1,339 acres to be developed into a recreation-oriented residential community and the Specific Plan was prepared in compliance with State law and consistent with Vallejo General Plan policies. A maximum of 1,551 residential units were planned to be oriented around a championship eighteen-hole golf course which is already completed.

3. Other current and planned amenities include a golf clubhouse, a driving range, a swim and fitness center, a fire station, a school and a developed park site.

4. The park, as described in the Hiddenbrooke Specific Plan, is to be an active use park that will be 6-8 acres on a 16-18 acre site which will also accommodate a school. The GVRD is to construct and maintain the park and the Vallejo City Unified School District is to construct the school. However, at the time of this report (May 1, 2004), the school district had no plans to construct the school and since the school has planning priority of the site, the GVRD can not proceed with plans for the park.

5. The project is to be completed in four phases, three of which are completed. Phase I contains up to 773 residential units and the completion of the golf course. Phase II contains up to 624 residential units, a swimming, tennis and fitness center. Phase III contains up to 84 residential units and a restaurant. Phase IV contains 70 residential units, a school and a park.

6. Financing for the project's construction and maintenance generally took four forms: private funds, maintenance district funds, Mello-Roos funds, and development fees and revenues. The Hiddenbrooke Specific Plan provides a Financing Table showing how each facility or use will be financed and who has the responsibility. The City of Vallejo is responsible for the collection and management of fees received from homeowners. The Specific Plan states that the park will be developed by using Mello-Roos funds. On April 19, 2004, the Grand Jury requested a full accounting of the Mello-Roos funds set aside for the park.

The Grand Jury decided to focus on the funds collected to construct and maintain the park which is to be developed during Phase IV which had begun at the time of this report.

IV. Findings And Recommendations

Each finding is referenced to the background paragraph number

Finding #1 – The Vallejo City Unified School District has serious financial problems which will likely delay any decision to proceed with the school and park. Until the school district's financial problems are brought under control, it appears that no progress can be made on the school site or park. (4)

Recommendation #1 – None.

Finding #2 - Construction of the park, as identified in the Hiddenbrooke Specific Plan, is to be 100%-funded by Mello-Roos funds. GVRD reports that they have been informed by the City of Vallejo that there are no Mello-Roos funds available for this project. (6)

Recommendation #2 – At the time of this report (May 1, 2004), the City of Vallejo had requested an extension of response time relating to the Grand Jury's request for the status of Mello-Roos funds as designated for the construction of the park. Therefore, no recommendation can be made as to finding #2.

Finding #3 - In a letter to the Grand Jury from the complainants dated March 4, 2003, it was stated that a letter to the City of Vallejo from the complainants for records of the Hiddenbrooke Community Facilities District Fund provided information with no details of expenditures and allocation of funds for the Hiddenbrooke Subdivision. (6)

Recommendation #3 – The City of Vallejo and the GVRD should meet with the representatives of the Hiddenbrooke Subdivision to provide details of fees collected and expenditures as specified in the Hiddenbrooke Specific Plan. If fees and expenditures do not meet the guidelines of the Plan, the City and the GVRD should provide to the residents a complete explanation as to any and all alterations to the Specific Plan guidelines.

V. Comments

It is recommended that the seated Grand Jury interview a newly appointed or assigned Vallejo City Unified School District Superintendent to update him/her regarding of the current situation. It is also recommended that the same Grand Jury interview the new GVRD general manager and that he/she be required to keep Hiddenbrooke residents apprised as to the progress of the park. While many of the amenities adopted in the Hiddenbrooke Specific Plan almost seventeen years ago have been completed, the residents of the Hiddenbrooke subdivision have been and continue to be assessed for amenities which have yet to be completed. The City of Vallejo, the GVRD and Vallejo City Unified School District must follow the requirements set forth by the City Council-adopted Specific Plan.

The Grand Jury recommends that the 2004-2005 Grand Jury and all successive Grand Juries review the progress made by the City of Vallejo, the GVRD and Vallejo City Unified School District as to the completion of the Hiddenbrooke Specific Plan.

VI. Affected Agencies

- City of Vallejo
- Greater Vallejo Recreation District
- Vallejo City Unified School District