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October 31, 2024

Aaron Mount
Planning Manager
Planning Department
El Dorado County

Subject: Expedited Issuance of Permits for Youth Perinatal Residential Project at 2761 Sands Road, Rescue (Building #0374255, Grading #0372970)

Dear Mr. Mount,

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to provide additional clarity and request expedited action for the Youth Perinatal Residential Project at 2761 Sands Road, Rescue. This project is a state-funded initiative under AB 133 through the Behavioral Health Continuum Infrastructure Program (BHCIP). It aims to provide essential services to young Native American mothers, a vulnerable population in critical need of support. Any further delays in the approval process will significantly affect the lives of those this project is designed to serve.

CEQA Exemption and Ministerial Nature

The project qualifies as a ministerial project under the California Environmental Quality Act. Welfare and Institution Code Section 5960.3(a) states:

"Notwithstanding any other law, a facility project funded by a grant pursuant to this chapter shall be deemed consistent with and in conformity with any applicable local plan, standard, or requirement, and allowed as a permitted use, within the zone in which the structure is located, and shall not be subject to a conditional use permit, discretionary permit, or ANY OTHER DISCRETIONARY REVIEWS OR APPROVALS." This latter prohibition makes this a ministerial determination by the county, and under CEQA guidelines section 15268, ministerial projects are not subject to CEQA.

Accordingly, the County's role involves verification that the project complies with pre-existing, objective standards. As all objective standards have been met, the project qualifies for ministerial approval, and the issuance of the grading and building permits should proceed accordingly.

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Zoning Exemption and AB 133

In addition to the CEQA ministerial exemption, the project is also exempt from local zoning ordinances and conditional use permits under Welfare & Institutions Code Section 5960.3(a).

Addressing Community and Board Concerns

While the project is exempt from discretionary review, we have nonetheless been sensitive to the concerns raised by local community members and the Board of Supervisors. We have proactively communicated with them and incorporated several mitigation measures into our project design. These adjustments include modifications to the site plan to minimize its impact on the surrounding environment while maintaining the project's core objectives.

Request for Coordination with the Building Department

The Building Department has completed its review and calculated the necessary fees for the Youth Perinatal Residential Project. Therefore, the only remaining step is for Planning to coordinate with the Building Department to issue the grading and building permits. Given the ministerial nature of this project and its exemption from CEQA and local zoning laws, I respectfully request that these permits be issued without further delay.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter. I look forward to your timely action to help move this critical project forward.

Sincerely,

Gina Wasdyke
Gina Wasdyke, President
HomeCA Inc.

Ramona Valadez
Ramona Valadez, Executive Director
Native Directions Inc.