

**From:** Leslie Spellman []

**Sent:** Wednesday, May 30, 2018 12:48 AM

**To:** Supervisor Candace Andersen <SupervisorAndersen@bos.cccounty.us>; Stacey Boyd <Stacey.Boyd@cob.cccounty.us>; Supervisor\_Burgis <Supervisor\_Burgis@bos.cccounty.us>; SupervisorMitchoff <SupervisorMitchoff@bos.cccounty.us>; District5 <District5@bos.cccounty.us>; John\_Gioia <John\_Gioia@bos.cccounty.us>

**Subject:** Please reject the Alamo Summit "mega-house" plan

Dear Members of the Board of Supervisors:

I live in Rossmoor at the east end of Grey Eagle Drive so the Alamo Summit project is literally a stone's throw from my home.

**I am strongly opposed to the 28-year-old plan for Alamo Summit in general AND especially the current proposed 15,000 square-foot "home" by Seeno/Discovery.**

The Seeno company/developers have shown blatant disregard for the environment and the law (federal and in a number of states) for many years.

**The original 1990 plan for Alamo Summit is outdated!** Some of the current issues that need to be readdressed are (1) there is at least one protected/endangered animal species on the parcel, (2) the general environmental impact of the development, (3) the evaluation of fire hazards need to be updated, (4) the noise that will be generated by the homes (especially the mega-house) if built, and (5) the reduction in value and quality of life in the surrounding Alamo and Rossmoor homes because of the development.

In a more-perfect world, perhaps Seeno could be given a tax break if they donate the 200-acre Alamo Summit parcel to the County for a dedicated and protected Open Space and/or regional-park designation.

Your support in opposing the Alamo Summit mega-house and the outdated plan for the whole project would be very much appreciated by the many neighbors/homeowners who will be impacted very negatively if this project continues.

The units (~224) in my Rossmoor "subdivision" are selling for at least \$1.2+ million each and that figure continues to rise ... this generates a lot more tax revenue for the County than the proposed mega-house which if built will decrease our property values (and hence your tax revenue) and annoy hundreds of residents.

Would YOU want the proposed mega-house in YOUR backyard? I don't think so.

Thank you very much.

Leslie Spellman



June 1, 2018

County Board of Supervisors, Contra Costa County  
Administration Building  
651 Pine Street  
Martinez, California 94553-1229  
Attn: David J. Twa, Clerk of the Board and County Administrator

Re: June 5<sup>th</sup> Hearing to Consider Appeal of Planning Commission Decision to Deny a Proposal to merge three lots, defer road improvements, and allow a 13,887-square-foot single family residence in the Alamo Summit Subdivision, Alamo area. (Discovery Builders, Inc., Appellant) (Alamo Land Investors, LLC, owners) (Lashun Cross and Seann Tully)

(1) **The Concerned Citizens of Walnut Creek Mutual 68 (Eagle Ridge) and greater Rossmoor** remain opposed to the revised "Modification of Final Development Plan and Amendment to Conditions of Approval;" Discovery Builders, Inc., Applicant" and strongly urge the County to follow the guidance of the County planning staff and the unanimous votes of the Alamo Improvement Association (AIA), Alamo MAC, and County Planning Commission in rejecting this proposal and enforcing all of the original conditions of approval.

(2) Attached is a May 30 article in the **Rossmoor News** (attached) outlining our position. One-hundred-and-forty-four (144) of our 233 condominiums in Eagle Ridge would have their views of Mt. Diablo visually impaired by a mega-mansion, with a footprint the size of four of our fourplexes combined and would be only 800 feet from some of these homes and 1,000 feet from many others (see attached pictures). The proposed building, to which we and many others would be exposed, is totally out of scale with the existing surrounding communities and the combination of three lots and a mega-mansion encroaching upon the second highest ridgetop in Contra Costa County would be visible everywhere in the San Ramon Valley and Rossmoor. Moreover, the scale of the building violates the expressed intention of the original conditions of approval limiting homesites to one acre each. This provision restricts the scale of homes to reasonably-sized residences that would comport with those in nearby communities. The applicant also suggests that building one residence on a combined three-lot site would "lessen" the ultimate overall development impact," of the project. As the Alamo Improvement Association noted in its February 28, 2017, letter to John Osborne: "Regardless of any 'reduction,' what matters is the actual size of the house, which is extremely large – too large to blend into its surroundings and avoid ridgetop prominence. It is in direct violation of the COAS dating back to 1991 by failing to maintain the natural appearance of the hillsides and ridgelines. No justification is provided to create such a prominent and imposing structure in violation of the FDP's, COAS and design guidelines."

(3) Very importantly, there is also a serious fire hazard situation that needs to be taken into consideration affecting a community of 10,000 senior citizens and for which lessons

should have been learned from the Santa Rosa Fires. We join the Alamo Municipal Advisory Council in its continued opposition to the development of this site without contemporaneously meeting all the conditions required by the original site plan approval. First, any alternative approach to access to the site during development must take into consideration the Contra Costa's Fire authorities determination that the ravine in which the mega-mansion would be build is a "high fire hazard zone." We have been told – and have taken the best actions we can – to protect ourselves from firestorms that could rage up this vulnerable ravine that has Eagle Ridge on one side and the applicant's mega-mansion on the other. In an extreme, but possible, conflagration moving up the ravine from anywhere north of Danville, the proposed mansion would merely act as a torch in a fire, accelerating its movement -- and there is no practical way, even with current technologies, to protect this proposed building from firestorms. Remember, there is only one exit from Rossmoor for its 10,000 residents to use as an escape route and the Fire Department suggests we'd have to hope that those who could get out of their homes in time try to get to the golf course in the valley in the hope that its irrigated landscape would save us. We have elderly residents ranging up to 104 years old and many others who are unable to move on their own.

Again, we strongly urge the County to follow the guidance of the County planning staff and the unanimous votes of the Alamo Improvement Association (AIA), Alamo MAC, and County Planning Commission in rejecting this proposal and enforcing all of the original conditions of approval. This is just another example of the applicant wanting to not follow the rules. Being a major developer in the County does not place the applicant in a position to get special treatment. Approving this request would set a very bad precedent and undermine County residents' confidence in the Board and its development approval process.

Sincerely,

Brant W. Free, President of Walnut Creek Mutual 68 (Eagle Ridge)  
on behalf of the Concerned Citizens of Eagle Ridge and Rossmoor





feet  
meters

2000

800

Google Earth

Location of Alamo Summit  
in Relation to  
Eagle Ridge at Rossmore





Alamo Summit  
1000 ft. from Grey Eagle Drive



Alamo Summit  
830 ft. from Grey Eagle Drive





Alamo Summit  
1300 ft. from Grey Eagle Drive



# **The Rossmoor News**

**Wednesday, May 30, 2018**

## **Mutual 68 – Eagle Ridge – against 15,000-squarefoot hillside mansion in Alamo**

Discovery Builders/Seeno has appealed to the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors the recent Planning Commission's rejection of their application to build a 15,000-square-foot-plus mansion on the ridgeline overlooking Rossmoor's Eagle Ridge neighborhood. The meeting at which the Board of Supervisors will take up the appeal is Tuesday, June 5, at 9 a.m. in the County Administration Building at 651 Pine Street, Room 107, Martinez.

Eagle Ridge homeowners want to convince the Board of Supervisors to reject the builders' appeal. The Eagle Ridge board of directors, Mutual 68, has come out against the project. Eagle Ridge residents are encouraged to attend the meeting or write the County Board of Supervisors.

Eagle Ridge's strongest line of argument against the project is that the builder has not met the original conditions for development of the site, which were approved in 1999. Maintaining those conditions includes rebuilding existing roads on the Alamo side of the ridge because they are unsafe and inadequate structurally for construction traffic. The Mutual 68 board believes it is paramount that this condition be met.

Moreover, for Eagle Ridge, adequate access for emergency vehicles is a critical element of fire protection, since the property on which the mega-mansion is proposed to be built shares a common ravine that the county has designated as a high-fire risk. All the roads need to be built because safety is paramount for Alamo and Eagle Ridge.

The current siting and size of the mansion encroaches on the supposedly protected top of the second highest ridge in Contra Costa County. It will obscure the views of Rossmoor residents who live no more than 850 to 1,300 feet from the mansion. Overall, approximately 145 of Eagle Ridge's 233 condos will suffer some visual impact. Residents who live near the top of Ptarmigan and Skycrest Drives will be able to see the mansion and may have their views impacted.

The approval of the original site plan, limiting homes to one acre each, should not be set aside to create a three-acre exception without a demonstrable public benefit. The Mutual 68 board believes there is no such benefit here and that the impact would be negative.

Continued on page 8A



## Stacey Boyd

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**From:** Lawrence Cahn <lawrencecahn@msn.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 22, 2018 7:58 AM  
**To:** Stacey Boyd  
**Subject:** Argument against Seeno development

Argument against Seeno development

This is a question of comparing a distortion of legal rights with common sense of lifestyle considerations.

The residents of Rossmoor who purchased their homes (in some cases more than 10 years ago) did so on the basis of the suitability of their homes based on location and the surroundings. These people made a major investment of capital at a time when their earning ability had declined. These were major life style choices. The open views and tranquil environment were major parts of their decision for the type of life style they were choosing.

Seeno has been clandestine in their intent to develop the site in question by surreptitiously removing trees without permits and creating a false impression of the purpose of this new development. Seeno has presented their plan in bad faith but is seeking a distortion of legal matters to justify their purpose for this property.

There you have a distortion of the legal process to gain development rights that will have a negative impact on dozens of neighbors who purchased their properties over a decade ago.

Larry





## Jami Napier

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**From:** Stacey Boyd  
**Sent:** Monday, May 21, 2018 8:57 AM  
**To:** Jami Napier  
**Cc:** June McHuen  
**Subject:** FW: Alamo Ridge Home

Jami,  
I'm sending this to you & June. I believe this is for the June 5<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**Stacey M. Boyd**  
**Deputy Clerk**  
**Clerk of the Board**  
**651 Pine St., Room 106**  
**Martinez, CA 94553**  
**(925)335-1904 (Desk)**  
**(925)335-1900 (Office)**

**From:** Casey Dixon [mailto:marycasedixon@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Saturday, May 19, 2018 12:51 PM  
**To:** Stacey Boyd <Stacey.Boyd@cob.cccounty.us>  
**Subject:** Alamo Ridge Home

Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors,

As a former Alamo resident and a current resident of Eagle Ridge in Walnut Creek I am strongly opposed to the Seeno monstrosity that is proposed to be built on the picturesque Alamo ridge line. To get a sense of the effect simply look at the mega homes permitted on the hillside at Stone Valley Rd. and 680. The country ambiance that caused many of us to move to Contra Costa County is being destroyed one unscrupulous developer at a time. A number of my Rossmoor neighbors are former Alamo friends and while mobility issues may prevent them from attending the Board Hearing they are as adamant as I am that this project be denied. Although I will be out of town on June 5th please know I am strongly opposed to allowing a 15,000 square foot home to be built on ANY Contra Costa County hillside or any ridge line for that matter. Demonstrate some backbone and deny Seeno's building request.

Mary Case Dixon





**From:** KENNETH HOFFMAN [

**Sent:** Thursday, April 26, 2018 5:25 PM

**To:** Jami Napier <Jami.Napier@cob.cccounty.us>

**Subject:** Alamo Summit Project Appeal to Board of Supervisors, File # DP 15-3039

Jami, Please provide to the Board of Supervisors regarding the Alamo Summit Project appeal to be heard in May 1. Please put this first, on top of the accompanying more detailed memo being provided separately. Thank you.

Outline: **The Request to CHANGE-** not just defer- the Conditions of Approval

#### Endangers the Residents of Ridgewood Road

##### Existing Conditions

- 1) Ridgewood Road is not safe for construction traffic

Private road, not built to County standards. Only way in and out for residents and emergency vehicles.

Sections of road are only 16 feet wide, sharp curves, steep drop-offs and steep uphill embankments.

- 2) County determined construction traffic "significantly" increases safety hazards.
- 3) County required mitigation measures for safety in Conditions of Approval.
- 4) NO construction, and NO construction traffic, until road improvements completed ( Condition 26)
- 5) Improvements include, resurfacing, guard rails, and WIDENING of road to 20 feet and SLOPE supports of concrete piers.
- 6) Construction of PAVED roadway link from Castle Crest Road along ridge to Ridgewood Road to be built BEFORE road improvements are done. To be used as needed on a temporary basis to provide access for Ridgewood residents and emergency vehicles while road improvements take place. (Condition 25)
- 7) Special conditions for emergency vehicles. Recognizing that for emergency vehicles in Alamo to travel to edge of Walnut Creek, go up Castle Crest, and travel along ridge to Ridgewood Road adds significant response time.

In addition to improvements to Ridgewood Road to prevent road failure and blockage of emergency vehicles and in addition to paved linked road to be used as alternative only as needed during road improvement construction:

- a) Limits on duration of road closure during road improvement construction period ( Condition 25)
- b) Even if road closed for improvements, road TO BE MAINTAINED BY DEVELOPER AS PASSABLE BY

EMERGENCY VEHICLES ( Condition 25)

- c) Any closure for emergency vehicles requires PRIOR approval by Public Works and PRIOR notice to emergency response agencies ( Condition 25)

##### Developer's Proposed Changes

1) Developer seeks to construct almost 14,000 sq. ft. residence, construct access roads connecting new residence to Castle Crest, and to install utilities, without FIRST doing road improvements, a clear CHANGE from Conditions requiring road improvements be done first. ( Such a change in Conditions should require new review under the California Environmental Quality Act.)

2) Developer offers to repair Ridgewood Road as damage occurs. But, closures could be of indefinite duration and could occur multiple times. If slope failure occurs, could be days, weeks, or longer. Not passable for emergency vehicles. Emergency vehicles blocked indefinitely, with no prior notice or warning. Violates all Conditions intended to guarantee access for emergency vehicles.

3) Developer declines to build paved link road. Instead, proposes gravel road for construction vehicles. Thus, no safe and reliable access for emergency vehicles or for residents in an emergency if Ridgewood Road blocked.

DANGEROUS violation of Conditions of Approval.

Conclusion: Delays cost lives. If the road is blocked, delay of ambulance can cost lives. If fire, can become major blaze by time fire engines arrive. If fire, residents can be trapped

Therefore, enforce the EXISTING Conditions of Approval without change. Require road improvements and paved link road before project construction may commence. To do otherwise puts residents at risk.

Kenneth D. Hoffman, President,  
on behalf of Upper Ridgewood Homeowners Association residents

Note: This is an outline. Information provided is documented in longer memo provided separately.



**From:** KENNETH HOFFMAN [

**Sent:** Thursday, April 26, 2018 5:33 PM

**To:** Jami Napier <Jami.Napier@cob.cccounty.us>

**Subject:** Fw: Alamo Summit Project, File No. DP15-3039

Jami, Here is the second longer memo, to be placed after the outline sent to you earlier today, to be provided to the Board of Supervisors for the hearing on May 1 regarding the Alamo Summit Project appeal. Thanks. Ken Hoffman

**Sent:** Sunday, April 15, 2018 8:35 PM

**From:** KENNETH HOFFMAN >

**To:** John Osborne <john.osborne@dcd.cccounty.us>

**Sent:** Monday, February 12, 2018 1:57 PM

**Subject:** Fw: Alamo Summit Project, File No. 15-3039

John, Please include this e-mail in the materials for the Planning Commission hearing on February 14. It represents an effort to focus matters raised in prior materials on the specific issue currently before the Planning Commission. Thanks.

**Why deferring improvements to Ridgewood Road is dangerous.**

The County staff has correctly analyzed this issue. The County identified construction traffic for this project as adding "significantly" to existing safety hazards. ( See 1989 FEIR and Supplemental EIR, IIIA, Transportation, page 50.)

Thus, before any project construction takes place, Ridgewood Road must be improved. ( Condition of Approval 26) Improvements include "resurfacing; widening to a minimum width of 20 feet; and installation of guard rails and slope reinforcing concrete piers..." Supplemental EIR at page 52.

( Note, the road has existing pavement width with sections as narrow as 16 feet, has several sharp curves, sections with narrow shoulders, and a number of steep drop-offs and steep uphill embankments. Supplemental EIR, page 48.)

The Developer proposes deferring the Ridgewood Road improvements, using the road for construction equipment to build the roughly 14, 000 sq. ft. residence, and repairing the road as necessary as damage to the road occurs during the residence construction. ( As an aside, defer improvements until when, the building of a second residence, the building of a third residence, the building of internal roads? When does safety matter?)

This proposal of the Developer simply misses the point.

To begin with, building such an almost 14,000 sq. ft. residence on three lots is the same as building approximately four residences of 3500 sq. ft., much closer to a norm in Alamo. It will require a substantial amount of trucks to carry the concrete for the pad alone, not to mention the residence construction itself. Plus, how much grading equipment? How many trucks to move thousands of cubic yards of dirt?

It ignores all the construction traffic necessary to build infrastructure for the new residence, such as roads to the residence. The Developer wants to construct access roads connecting to Castle Crest for the new residence, Salerno Lane and Valenza Lane, again using the unimproved Ridgewood Road for construction traffic.

The proposal also ignores the construction traffic for other infrastructure such as utilities, including water lines and electric and gas lines, and either sewer lines or a cess pool. Again, construction traffic that uses an unimproved Ridgewood Road.

There will be an extremely high likelihood of road damage to Ridgewood Road from this heavy volume of construction traffic.

Repairs for road damage take time, during which Ridgewood Road would almost certainly be blocked or closed.

SLOPE FAILURE is a real possibility. See HSI Engineering Report at p. 1

" Heavy trucks such as concrete trucks and semi-trucks cause the SAME pavement damage as about 9,000 passenger vehicles." HSI Engineering Report, page 7, emphasis added.

If there is a slope failure or other road blockages, how long would Ridgewood be closed... days, weeks, months? In the meantime, the residents are trapped. Emergency vehicles cannot get in or out. The 19 households on Upper Ridgewood Road are all endangered.

The only alternative is the so-called link road between Ridgewood and Castle Crest along the ridge line.

But how long does it take an emergency vehicle from Alamo to travel to the edge of Walnut Creek, make its way up the steep Castle Crest, endeavor to cross over the ridge on the link road, and finally reach Ridgewood.?

An additional 20 minutes, an additional 30 minutes, more? If someone has a heart attack, this may be the difference between life and death.

If there is a fire, this is the difference between a small kitchen fire and a major conflagration. How do the residents quickly and safely escape?



Furthermore, this assumes there is even a safe link road on which to travel. The Developer does not wish to pave a safe and secure link road as required by Condition of Approval 25, but just to have compacted gravel for the link road and use it for construction access purposes along the ridge from Ridgewood to the proposed residence.

Could emergency vehicles safely navigate this gravel construction road? Could residents of Ridgewood in passenger vehicles safely navigate this gravel construction road? Is it safe to travel on during the night? Is it safe during a storm? But it may be needed during the night or during a storm by residents of Ridgewood and emergency vehicles.

The Developer's proposal ignores the purpose of the Conditions of Approval

The Ridgewood Road improvements are designed to avoid road closures and to keep the road intact while it is used by project construction traffic. The link road is not intended for routine use when project construction takes place, but to be used while Ridgewood Road improvements take place. The link road is not to be used in lieu of road improvements.

Condition 25 states "To provide a temporary means of alternative access for upper Ridgewood Road residents during construction of improvements" to Ridgewood Road... "a paved roadway link through the project site to Castle Crest Road shall be provided for temporary use as needed by upper Ridgewood Road residents during the lower Ridgewood Road construction period."

Strict notice requirements are placed on closure of Ridgewood Road. (Condition 25) Sudden emergency closures do not appear to be anticipated.

Further, even if Ridgewood Road is closed after the required notice, Ridgewood is still to be maintained by the Developer as "passable" for emergency vehicles. (Condition 25) Any exception to emergency vehicles being able to use Ridgewood Road requires prior approval by Public Works and notice to emergency response agencies. (Condition 25)

Thus, it is absolutely clear that use of the link road is not intended to be a substitute for the required improvements to Ridgewood Road. Rather, the link road is to be used, as necessary, while Ridgewood Road is improved, which improvements are meant to avoid damage to the road and avoid having to close the road during project construction itself, (except for short periods of a 3 to 4 minutes, after Ridgewood has been improved, as construction trucks with wide loads use the road. Supplemental EIR, page 52.)

The request by the Developer to defer the improvements to Ridgewood and to defer establishing a safe paved link road simply ignores all of the foregoing, putting the residents of Upper Ridgewood in potential physical harm every time there is a road failure due to project construction traffic.

Note, as specified in prior memos attached to the Staff Report, the Catch 22 of using Ridgewood Road for construction traffic to build the link road before Ridgewood Road itself is improved must be addressed. If construction traffic to pave the link road caused a slope failure or blockage of Ridgewood Road this could be catastrophic. Again, no safe paved link road in place for residents of Ridgewood to use and no safe timely access for emergency vehicles.

Public Works must assess Ridgewood Road before the link road construction traffic uses Ridgewood and determine how best to proceed safely with the link road construction. Only the paving of the link road, with smaller, lighter vehicles, should be allowed. No work on the project itself may take place until after Ridgewood Road has been improved. No debris should be hauled back down Ridgewood Road from the link road paving until after the paved link road is completed and the improvements to Ridgewood Road are completed.

In addition, the Developer must maintain Ridgewood Road while the link road is constructed. During link road construction, or if the construction traffic for the link road causes a road failure on Ridgewood Road, this must be immediately repaired and rectified, and should be the responsibility of the Developer. (This is consistent with the Developer's duty to maintain Ridgewood Road as passable for emergency vehicles as specified in Condition 25)

In short, the County itself has determined that Ridgewood Road is unsafe for use by construction traffic without first putting in a paved link road and making the required Ridgewood Road improvements.

For the County to ignore its own findings and conclusions would make the County itself responsible for any resulting injuries or damages.

The County should adhere to its original determinations and the recommendations of its own staff, and require the Developer to follow established and necessary safety requirements before any project or construction may proceed.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Kenneth Hoffman  
President, Upper Ridgewood HOA