

HOMELESS IN PARADISE

September 16, 2016

Column #101

Part 3 – Monterey Workshop Addresses Affordable Housing Solutions



Photo from Jenny Sturm

TROLLING WITH STICKERS, FISHING WITH BAIT

By Wanda Sue Parrott

USING colored stickers is like luring fish with bright objects, as fishers who troll for their living know. If trolling succeeds, baited hooks and nets can complete the catch.

Since Monterey's fame and fortune began when its sardine fishery employed up to 8,000 people in two dozen smelly canneries, credit goes to author John Steinbeck for his novel "Cannery Row" which immortalized the peninsula.

Indirectly, Steinbeck inspired entrepreneurs to redevelop the former Italian American fishing village into today's tourism mecca after sardines declined in the 1950s.

The little silver fish eventually returned, but again were put on the endangered list last year when the Pacific Coast sardine fishery was shut down and anchovies prevailed.

Problem is today, for many who consider the peninsula their home, it's no longer affordable to live or work here regardless of which fish occupy the sea. Nor is it clear whether many concerned citizens are the symbolic fish or the fishermen!

Not that Steinbeck can be blamed for today's homelessness/near homelessness, but one can see how one man's fame can influence multitudes for better or worse.

Little Fish, Big Fish, Or Fisherman?

The City of Monterey's Planning Department hosted an Affordable Housing Workshop Aug. 31 to troll for public input about various aspects of the Housing Element issues that will result in suggested actions to be made to City Council.

Colored-sticker metaphors for trolling were evident in charts that asked: “What do you think about second units in Monterey?” Attendees were to express their preferences by placing colored stickers on the charts.

Those who need them would be for them, so let’s call them the little fish.

Landlords who want to keep them out in order to keep rents high or limit available units in order to sustain rental income, would be against them, so let’s call them the big fish.

The in-betweens are everyone who neither knows nor cares.

The City of Monterey, as metaphorical fisherman, must evaluate its catch by separating the sardines, anchovies, and starfish from bigger fish, then act to protect and promulgate the best interests of the whole city.

Since in real life big fish generally devour smaller fish, this hypothetical exercise in sticker voting raises the question: Who wins?

If you live on the peninsula and want to express your opinions online, there is still time. See details below.

Like Starfish On The Beach

This column predicts that homeless men, women and children may soon start turning up, not like sardines but more like starfish, on the beaches of the Monterey Peninsula. Why?

Disparate income. One round of golf at Pebble Beach costs about half the average monthly Social Security income of several retired senior women who now sleep in their cars, in tents, or on friends’ couches because local affordable housing is unavailable. Who are they?

One was a nurse, one a journalist and one a science writer; they range in age from early 70s down to late 50s.

An 84-year-old who recently ended a 3-year stay in her van was former buyer for a chain of sporting goods stores; she once owned a home on a golf course.

A few years ago, Dr. Tia Sukin was inspired by the legend about starfish dying in droves on the beach, except for one lone starfish which a kind stranger threw back into the ocean. She kicked off the One Starfish Safe Parking and Support Services Program that now provides overnight parking for mostly single women who live in their vehicles and who, one by one, have been rehoused.

One Starfish is now under the direction of Pass the Word Ministry, sponsor of “Harvest for Hope” fundraising brunch, to be held on Sunday, Oct. 23, 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., at the Elks Lodge, 150 Mar Vista Dr., Monterey. Tickets are \$25.

For reservations and information, contact Sara Myers at 931-324-4624.

Scads of homeless starfish on the beach in Monterey? Hopefully not.

The City of Monterey would like your input on short-term rentals, second units, adaptive reuse of existing hotels/ motels, and the unbundling of parking costs for new residential development within the city.

The issue of a homeless shelter will be covered separately in a future column. Next week’s column will include results of the Affordable Housing survey.

Please take a few moments to share your thoughts and opinions by completing this short online survey, deadline for which is Mon., Sept. 19, at [www. Monterey.org](http://www.Monterey.org), Housing Opportunities Survey.

For 24-hour suggestions: (831) 646- 3799; Fax: (831) 646-3793; Email: montereysuggest@monterey.org. Contact: Elizabeth Caraker, Principal Planner, (831) 646-1739, caraker@monterey.org.

No colored stickers are required.

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