

DATE: May 7, 2019

To: PW Committee, City of Fort Bragg

FROM: Rayan Ghazal and Amy Rutherford (Owners, 310 N. Franklin Street)

SUBJECT: Comments regarding sprinkler installation costs and infrastructure fees

We were pleased to see this discussion of Deferred Capacity and Development Fee Programs planned for the Public Works Council Committee this week. Clearly, the PW Committee has outlined goal-oriented solutions to Development Impact Fees and incentives for the installation of sprinkler systems. We support the City in its focus for life-safety and the realities of making policies that impact these realities effective.

To be sure, the City and staff have been so receptive and helpful and encouraging with our questions and with our plans for renovating the commercial/residential building at 310 N. Franklin Street in the CBD. We appreciate the access we have been given to staff and the transparency with which our questions are fielded.

We currently live and work full-time in the Bay Area, committing our time and life-savings to open a small business in the historic district in Fort Bragg. We are designing a business to support the local crafts community, while renovating 2 apartments on the second floor with an eye to serve the MCC staff and their visiting workers.

The need for focused plans to deal with the fire danger among so many wood structures in the CBD is clear, and it is our priority to plan our structure to be as sound and resistant to fire danger as possible. We have worked with the Fire Marshall to review --and include in our plans-- new fire-proof paint innovations, and we are currently waiting for an estimate for fire sprinklers for both the retail area and the apartments.

We plan to spend the money necessary for the sprinkler system. If there will be any opportunity for financial assistance for this installation, or the deferral of fees for the permitting, etc., certainly we are very interested.

But we would like to note that we find the cost of the City water hookup and the fixed charges in the rate table to be prohibitive. We are not 'Developers' or planning a high volume retail business or high-end vacation rentals. We require access to the water and would suggest that a fare fee structure is one that is based on actual usage and not stand-by capacity. Renovations to these structures with a long-term commitment will only increase city revenues (through property tax, sales tax and the benefits of safe housing), and is a worthy and fair cost to the City, rather than ask for an admittance fee to city infrastructure.

The city has challenged property/business owners to take responsibility to match its vision of a safe downtown, and so the City needs to be an on-going partner in creating opportunities and incentives to make that happen. We are committed to being part of the City's solution for life-safety and to preserving the historic structures downtown. We would request the City act as a partner in providing access to the infrastructure.