



Sonoma County Community Development Commission  
Housing Authority • Redevelopment Agency  
1440 Guerneville Road, Santa Rosa, CA 95403-4107

## Russian River Redevelopment Project Newsletter Summer 2009

### ***Newest Projects in the Russian River Redevelopment Project***

**Small Business Assistance Program** — The CDC is contracting with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at the Santa Rosa Junior College to offer professional business counseling on a one-to-one basis to potential and existing businesses on topics including business planning, operations, marketing, record keeping, accounting, management, taxes, cash flow, capital access and acquisition, pricing and cost control, and other areas of small business operations. The SBDC will also conduct group trainings for Project Area businesses on subjects such as those listed above. Businesses located in the project area can participate at no cost.

Counselors would be in the area one day a week for 50 weeks for appointments at businesses or a central location. In addition, SBDC offers workshops and seminars customized to local business issues.

More information on the project is on the SBDC website [www.sbdcsantarosa.org](http://www.sbdcsantarosa.org), or contact the Redevelopment Agency at 565-7523.

**Guerneville Banners and Baskets Program** — The CDC has contracted with the Russian River Chamber of Commerce to promote the economic development of the Russian River Redevelopment Project Area by enhancing the visual appeal of commercial areas with dynamic promotional displays such as banners and flower baskets to attract visitors to stop, lodge, dine and shop in the area.

The CDC would like to thank the Chamber and all others who helped with this pilot program for the wonderful, colorful banners and beautiful hanging baskets filled with drought tolerant perennials hung along Main Street, Armstrong Woods Road, and throughout the plaza of downtown Guerneville.

### ***Other Current Projects***

- Riverkeeper Stewardship Park
- Sweetwater Springs Water District Repairs
- Proposed Redevelopment Plan Amendment
- Russian River Design Guidelines
- Guerneville River Park, Phase 2
- Monte Rio Recreation & Park District Sports Court Rehabilitation



### ***Project Task Groups***

The CDC appoints Project Task Groups to provide input on a range of redevelopment project issues. We strive for balanced community input on each of these groups. Current Task Groups can be viewed at: [www.sonoma-county.org/cdc/redev\\_rr\\_task\\_groups.htm](http://www.sonoma-county.org/cdc/redev_rr_task_groups.htm).

Two new groups to discuss the Russian River Plan Amendment and Project Area Clean Up activities are now being formed. Please contact the Redevelopment Agency at 565-7523 if you are interested in serving on a Task Group.

# Fife Creek Commons



By, Mark Krug, CDC Community Development Manager

Here at the CDC, we keep an inventory of all the apartment complexes in Sonoma County that have affordability contracts that require rental units to be leased at below market rent levels. The inventory totals nearly 10,000 units for the nine incorporated jurisdictions and the unincorporated parts of the county combined. Of this total, what would you guess the number of units in the lower Russian River area to be? Perhaps 5% of the total or 500? Maybe just 1% or 100?

No and no. The actual number of units: zero. That's right; not a single rental complex in the Monte Rio, Guerneville, Rio Nido area has affordable, that is, rent-restricted units; nor does Bodega or Jenner or Graton or Forestville. The City of Sebastopol has 327 affordable rental units by our count and while that number may seem low as a fraction of 10,000, the City of Sebastopol actually has the highest number of rent-restricted units of any jurisdiction, when expressed on a per capita basis.

But Sebastopol is a ways away and really a different housing sub-market.

There are actually some rent-restricted units at Sea Ranch, but that too is quite a haul and a different sub-market.

This bleak picture is about to change.

Two local non-profit developers of affordable housing, Burbank Housing Development Corporation (BHDC) and Community Housing Sonoma County (CHSC) have teamed up to build 48 units of new, high quality rental housing at Fifth and Mill Streets in Guerneville. The project is now called Fife Creek Commons. Acquiring the Imperial Lodge and adjacent Noonan's Garage properties for this purpose came after a long, exhaustive and often frustrating search for suitable parcels to acquire and develop in the lower Russian River area. Clearly, the dearth of quality, affordable rental housing in the region is due, in part, to the topography, flood history, and lack of infrastructure in the area. It is simply an extremely challenging area to construct apartment buildings. Indeed, rent-restricted and market apartment proposals face these same, seemingly insurmountable barriers.

But BHDC and CHSC persevered and the County offered high levels of support and financial resources, and so, Fife Creek Commons is moving

toward the construction phase. In fact, if BHDC's funding application now pending with a State agency is selected for funding, it is possible that construction could begin as early as next spring.

To address the flood-prone nature of the area, the apartments will be built over a one-story parking garage. While this is a more expensive way to build, it does result in getting all the habitable space above the so-called 100-year flood level and has the added benefit of easily providing more than the required number of off-street parking spots.

Once complete, Fife Creek Commons will offer 16 one-bedroom, 20 two-bedroom and 12 three-bedroom units for monthly rents of approximately \$263 to \$1,084. The building will include many green building features and will include a community room as well.

The total development cost is anticipated to be about \$18.7M, of which just over \$2M is Russian River Redevelopment Area funding and another \$2.8M in other local funding. The minimum term of affordability is 55 years so these up-front investments, while significant, do purchase affordable rental housing units for area residents for the long haul.

# ***Russian River Redevelopment Project Area Update***

## **Proposed Redevelopment Plan Amendment**

The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors (Board) directed staff in April of 2008 to begin a Plan Amendment process for the Russian River Redevelopment Project Area to establish a maximum cap on the amount of property tax increment that may be allocated for the Russian River Redevelopment Project Area.

Toward this effort, the Planning Commission adopted Resolution No. 09-017 on June 4, 2009, approving the Preliminary Plan Amendment, which was the first step in the Plan Amendment process as required by California Community Redevelopment Law. Approval of this Resolution directed the CDC to move forward with a detailed identification and analysis of potential projects and associated costs, and the preparation of an amendment to the Redevelopment Plan for the Project Area.

The CDC held the first in a series of community meetings on June 11, 2009 related to the proposed amendment and focusing on how redevelopment funding may be able to assist the special districts in the Redevelopment Project Area. To assist with the comprehensive identification and analysis of projects necessary to make needed improvements in the Area, the CDC intends to hire a consultant and sent out a Request for Proposals to approximately 40 firms to solicit quotes. Proposals are due back by August 14, 2009.

For additional information about the proposed Plan Amendment, and for information about future community meetings, please visit the CDC Redevelopment website at [www.sonoma-county.org/cdc/redev\\_rr\\_redev\\_plan.htm](http://www.sonoma-county.org/cdc/redev_rr_redev_plan.htm) or by contacting Cas Ellena, Redevelopment Manager, Sonoma County Community Development Commission, at 707-565-7508.

## **Monte Rio Recreation & Park District Sports Court Project**

On August 4, 2009, the Board of Supervisors approved the approved \$144,500 in funding for the Monte Rio Sports Court Rehabilitation Project, which is a part of the larger Monte Rio Youth Center Amphitheater & Sports Complex Rehabilitation Project. CDC staff will be working with the Monte Rio Recreation & Park District and Praxis Architects on implementation of this Project.

## **2009 RRROC Election**

The Russian River Redevelopment Oversight Committee (RRROC) consists of nine elected members who represent Redevelopment Project Area residents, property owners, and business owners to advise the CDC/Board of Supervisors on use of redevelopment funds. RRROC members are elected in one of three categories for a term of four years.

The next RRROC election will take place on December 18, 2009. There are five seats up for election – two in the Residential Tenant category, two in the Residential Owner-Occupant/Residential Property Owner category, and one in the Business Owner/Business Property Owner category.

**Candidate filing period will be open from August 20 – September 14, 2009 at 5:00 p.m.**

Persons interested in running for election should contact Al Lerma, Redevelopment Associate at (707) 565-7523

**Two Candidate Forums will be held:**

*Monday, November 16<sup>th</sup>, 5:30 – 8:30 p.m. at Monte Rio Community Center*  
*Saturday, December 5<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. at Guerneville Veterans' Hall*

**To register to vote in the upcoming RRROC Election please call 707-565-7523.**

RRROC election information can also be obtained by visiting our website:

[http://www.sonoma-county.org/cdc/rrroc\\_election.htm](http://www.sonoma-county.org/cdc/rrroc_election.htm)

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## POSTAL CUSTOMER

**Sonoma County Community Development Commission / Redevelopment Agency**

1440 Guerneville Rd., Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Kathleen H. Kane, Executive Director  
Cas Ellena, Redevelopment Manager  
Al Lerma, Redevelopment Associate

**Russian River Redevelopment Oversight Committee (RRROC)**

**Residential Property Owners:** Dan Fein, Tom Lynch, John Uniack;

**Business Owners/Business Property Owners:** Lynn Crescione, Gary Getchell, Ken Wikle;

**Residential Tenants:** Suzie Baxman, Sarah Ronis, Catherine Young

**Be a Part of Your Community Process!**

***RRROC Monthly Meetings:***

September 17, 2009, 6 p.m., Guerneville Vets' Hall, First & Church Streets, Guerneville

October 15, 2009, 6 p.m., Monte Rio Community Center, Monte Rio

November 19, 2009, 6 p.m., Guerneville Vets' Hall, First & Church Streets, Guerneville

December 17, 2009, 6 p.m., Monte Rio Community Center, Monte Rio

***Updated Meeting Announcements & Agendas are posted at:***

Rio Nido Post Office, Rio Nido Community Bulletin Board, Guerneville Veterans' Hall,  
Guerneville Regional Library, Guerneville Post Office, Guerneville Chamber of Commerce,  
Monte Rio Post Office Community Bulletin Board, Monte Rio Community Center, Villa Grande Post Office fence,  
and the Community Development Commission, 1440 Guerneville Road, Santa Rosa

***Contact Information:***

Russian River Redevelopment Home Page: [www.sonoma-county.org/cdc/rrrocmain.htm](http://www.sonoma-county.org/cdc/rrrocmain.htm)

Frequently Asked Questions: [www.sonoma-county.org/cdc/redevrussianriverfaq.htm](http://www.sonoma-county.org/cdc/redevrussianriverfaq.htm)

Community Development Commission: [www.sonoma-county.org/cdc/rdmain.htm](http://www.sonoma-county.org/cdc/rdmain.htm), or call  
707.565.7523 or 707.565.7903, or email the RRROC at [rrroc@sonoma-county.org](mailto:rrroc@sonoma-county.org)

**WE INVITE YOUR FEEDBACK!**