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Wilder Homeowners Association appeals approval of memory care facility on Wilder Road

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At a special meeting on Sept. 29, the Orinda City Council will hear an appeal regarding the planning commission's approval of Wilder CountryHouse Memory Care to be built by Agemark, owned by Orinda resident Richard Weston, at 1 Wilder Rd. The Wilder Owners Association appealed the certification of the final environmental impact report, the approval of the design review application, the general use permit and the approval exceptions granted by the planning commission on July 14. The approved project consists of 38 assisted living units in a one- to two-story, 32,084-square-foot congregate care facility.

The WOA appeal addresses a number of alleged inadequacies in the facility. Chief among them appears to be the allegation that the project includes kitchens in the units which are, according to the appeal, specifically forbidden in dementia housing because of the potential danger. The approval allows for the installation of kitchen appliances that would be locked, inaccessible to the resident, and only accessible to staff and guests. The appeal alleges that "the city is sneaking around its own regulations to permit an inappropriate, impermissible facility in an inappropriate zone."

The appeal also asserts that the project will have adverse impacts on health and safety, that the evacuation plan is inadequate, that the EIR cannot be legally certified, and that the project plan set is inadequate to support responsible design review. In addition, the appeal claims that the building height exception is not supported by the required findings. The full text of the appeal will be included in the agenda packet for the Sept. 29 special meeting of the city council.

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