



Marin Interfaith Council

1510 Fifth Avenue, San Rafael, CA, 94901,
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Celebrate faith traditions, advocate justice, and build community.

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Community Development Director
City of San Rafael
1313 Fifth Avenue
San Rafael, CA 94901

November 20, 2009

Dear Mr. Brown,

The Marin Interfaith Council Board of Directors strongly supports the Marin congregations who have offered to house the rotating winter shelter. We urge you to issue permits to those four San Rafael congregations who have applied, to assure the shelter will operate. In addition, we ask that you grant these four congregations "provisional" permits while the SR churches wait for the Dec. 8th Planning Commission decision. Because the rotating shelter opens on Dec. 1st elsewhere in the County, it seems an undue burden that vulnerable women will have to wait 9 more days.

The MIC Board applauds the Marin Emergency Shelter goal of providing a safe night's sleep for up to 20 women and 30 men at different sites from December 2009 through March 2010. The shelter will rotate between 12 different congregations throughout Marin County. We are painfully aware that there are too few shelter beds to meet the needs of the hundreds of unsheltered people in our midst. As people of faith and conscience, we believe a safe place to sleep is a basic human right. Our religious convictions move us to compassion and action to address the lack of shelter here in Marin County, and we support the work of the Marin Organizing Committee and the County to find and fund a new permanent shelter before next winter.

In addition, we are aware of nearby neighbor concerns regarding safety and property values, and we know the congregations have met with their housed neighbors to work together to alleviate these fears and concerns. Observing the rotating shelter model in action last year we know the shelter is safe for the guests and the neighborhood, and benefits everyone.

Thus, we ask the City of San Rafael, the Planning Commission and the City Council to support the Marin Emergency Shelter by approving and issuing the relevant permits.

In compassion and justice,

The Rev. Rob Gieselmann, President, MIC Board of Directors

c.c. The City Council members; The Planning Commission members
Ms. Caron Parker, City of San Rafael; Dr. Tom Peters, CEO, Marin Community Foundation;
President Hal Brown, President, Marin County Board of Supervisors; Bobbe Rockoff, County
of Marin; Mr. Steve Boyer, Executive Director, St. Vincent DePaul Society.

