

June 11, 2020

Brent Schultz, Director  
Planning & Building Dept.  
County of Mendocino

Dear Mr. Schultz,

Members of the Redwood Valley Municipal Advisory Council have been receiving complaints about the illuminated sign recently installed at the Redwood Valley (Gas) Station located at 8551 East Road in the central commercial district of Redwood Valley. It is the first of its kind in our area, and many people feel that it is negatively impacting adjacent residences as well as the general public's desire to keep light pollution out of our otherwise widely enjoyed night sky.

I believe that the matter may have been reported by Trent Taylor of code enforcement after he received a complaint from a Redwood Valley resident. Rumor has it that the sign may have been installed without a proper permit being obtained by the owner, and that some corrective action may have been taken. If that is the case, we would certainly like to have that confirmed.

More to the point though, is the question of whether the sign meets county code. According to Sec. 20.184.025, "Signs may be illuminated unless otherwise specified, provided such signs are so constructed so that no light bulb, tube, filament or similar source of illumination is visible." While I suspect that this language was crafted prior to the common usage of this type of sign, one can clearly see that this sign is comprised of hundreds of small bulbs, all of which are clearly visible. I further suspect that the intent of the code was to encourage "indirect" lighting for the purpose of illuminating signs while avoiding the direct glare cause by the source of that light such as exposed bulbs and filaments. Clearly, this sign is out compliance with that intent.

As you know, the Redwood Valley MAC has been working over the past three years to develop a Community Action Plan, complete with Design Guidelines, with the intent that this plan and the guidelines are to be adopted into the county's General Plan. The 2017 Redwood Valley fire, and more recently the pandemic, have slowed that process, but submission of that plan is imminent. In the meantime, the community has been frustrated by various aspects of development that surely would have been tempered by the CAP Design Guidelines.

We would very much like to hear a timely response from Planning & Building on this matter, and we would be happy to have you or another member of the planning department attend our next virtual RV MAC meeting on Wednesday, July 8 at 5pm. We look forward to hearing from you at your very earliest convenience.



Sincerely,  
Sattie Clark, Member RV MAC

PS There is now an illuminated messaging sign at the Fire Station running all day. We see the value for important announcements, but not for continuous non-essential purposes.

Cc: Supervisor Carre Brown, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors, Mendocino County Planning Commission