

Mater Dolorosa Community Letter

May 30, 2014

Dear Friends,

We were disappointed to see our proposed plans for Mater Dolorosa's surplus property mischaracterized as a "massive" development that was "rapidly moving forward" through "secret meetings." Because it is so important for the public to have accurate information, we are providing it here.

In earlier updates, we explained how Holy Cross Province (which owns Mater Dolorosa) directed us to sell some of our surplus land to raise funds that will be used to provide for the long-term care of our senior priests and brothers and continue the Passionists' global mission. Simply put, Holy Cross Province faces a similar financial reality that each of us faces - they are growing older and need funds for retirement, just as you and I do - although as priests and brothers, they will be continuing a rather Spartan life in retirement, as they have in life.

The Mater Dolorosa Board has spent over seven years studying many possible ways to follow this directive before ultimately recommending single family homes. We approached our major donors; we evaluated borrowing funds; we evaluated a number of different land uses - from residential care communities to private schools; we even evaluated raising capital through tax benefits associated with the donation of land.

Throughout this entire process we were open to anyone's ideas, including fully vetting a proposal from the Coalition to Stop the Monastery, which is a group of concerned citizens who proposed a combination of a parcel tax and fundraising effort. Why did we finally settle on single family homes? Because nothing is more important to us than protecting the peaceful, spiritual experience that draws people to Mater Dolorosa. Ultimately our board decided that new single family homes can do that, and they will fit in well with the homes of our neighbors.

You may have heard that New Urban West is the homebuilder we have selected to move forward with us on this endeavor. This decision comes after a thorough process that was not based on the opportunity to maximize the sales price of our property. Our interest was finding the best firm and approach that could meet our financial needs while fully protecting the quiet environment for Mater Dolorosa and our neighbors.

Even as Mater Dolorosa and New Urban West have a shared vision, we contractually have made sure that we would have full say and approval rights in the project's design and vision.

We do not want private gates. We do want open space and trails and hopefully a connection to Bailey Canyon. We are concerned about protection of resources and want sustainability to be a part of the project's design. We want the homes to fit the look and feel of Sierra Madre,

and not detract from the experience of those who come to Mater Dolorosa for the quiet, spiritual experience of a religious retreat.

One reason New Urban West was selected is because they had the greatest sensitivity to our concerns and are deeply committed to the type of very intensive, one-on-one outreach we wanted to have incorporated into this process.

As a result, the road forward will be very different from these recent mischaracterizations:

“Massive development?” From our first communication on, we have talked about a project that is compatible with what is around us. For lot sizes to be similar to those of our neighbors there must be fewer than 50 homes, so there will not be the 60 homes we saw mentioned recently. Neither will the homes themselves be massive. The homes will be approximately 3,800 square feet in size.

“Moving forward rapidly?” New Urban West has not yet acquired the property. The next milestone is New Urban West approving due diligence. Due diligence is a time when New Urban West will be able to evaluate any constraints. Input is and will be sought before a site plan is created. Only then will they file a development application, which will kick off a very public process. Documents will be available for public review before they are considered by the Planning Commission or City Council, and there will be plenty of opportunities to ask questions and make comments.

“Secret meetings?” As part of their due diligence, New Urban West has requested our assistance introducing them to current and former city leaders. These meetings are intended to be “get to know you” meetings where no decisions will be made and no actions will be taken. To date, we have met with City Staff and reached out to leaders to introduce New Urban West and share the process they intend to follow in our community.

It is our sincere hope that New Urban West has the opportunity to meet with our city leaders. New Urban West wants to hear the thoughts and concerns of those who will be reviewing their plans once the process officially starts. As these meetings wrap up, similar “listening” meetings with neighbors and other interested parties will begin. In the interest of greater understanding, here is the planned sequence of meetings over the next 45 days:

- Initial informational meetings described above have been started.
- Meetings with members of the Coalition to Stop the Monastery. We plan to introduce them to New Urban West in the near future.
- Once New Urban West has approved due diligence, they will begin meeting with neighbors and other interested parties, probably later this summer.

We believe this is the right way to do things, which is important to us because as a religious retreat center, we are called to a higher level of kindness and integrity. We are happy to be able to provide support for our senior priests and brothers and the Passionists’ global mission. We are glad we have found a homebuilder that shares our vision and our concern for the community.

If you have any questions or would like to share your thoughts please call Cameron at the number below.

Sincerely,

Fr. Michael Higgins, C.P.
Retreat Director

Cameron Thornton
Mater Dolorosa Board Chair
818-281-2360

Mater Dolorosa Passionist Retreat Center Press Statement

Mater Dolorosa Wishes to Clarify Recent Mischaracterizations

May 30, 2014

The Board of Directors of Mater Dolorosa Passionist Retreat Center released this statement today, which is attributable to Cameron Thornton, Board Chair:

“Recent mischaracterizations of the proposed development of surplus land at Mater Dolorosa are unfortunate and terribly misleading. In the interest of providing the public with accurate information, we sent a letter today to our neighbors and other interested parties that made these points:

- **There will not be 60 homes built on the proposed site.** As we have said from our earliest communication, any project that is built must and will be compatible with what is around us. For lot sizes to be similar to those of our neighbors there must be fewer than 50 homes. The size of these homes will not be “massive” either. The homes will be approximately 3,800 square feet in size.
- **This will not be a “quick” process driven by “secret” meetings.** We recently selected the developer New Urban West for the project because they share our commitment to a very intensive, long-term, one-on-one type of outreach with the community. That is the best way to hear what is on people’s minds. There has been a “get to know you” meeting with city staff and we have reached out to current and former city leaders, so New Urban West can hear their thoughts and concerns. These are merely introductory meetings, where no decisions are made or actions taken.
- **Funds from the sale of our surplus land will be used to provide for the long-term care of our senior priests and brothers and continue the Passionists’ global mission.** Currently, 77% of the 62 Passionist priests and brothers of Holy Cross Province are age 65 and older. Of all the options we reviewed over the last seven years, the only one that would provide these funds, protect the Mater Dolorosa retreat experience, and be compatible with the homes in surrounding neighborhoods was the single family home option we are now beginning to pursue.

We look forward to formally introducing New Urban West to the community, which we will do later this summer once our Purchase and Sales Agreement Due Diligence period is completed.”

//END//

For questions contact Cameron Thornton at 818-281-2360 — or
cameron@cameronthornton.com

May 30, 2014

Dear [personalized salutation]:

We are very concerned about recent mischaracterizations of our proposed plans for surplus land at Mater Dolorosa.

Because the public needs accurate information on which to form their opinions, we sent the attached notice to the media today, and have updated our website with a more detailed clarification of the facts. (You can see the website update at <http://www.passionist.org/materdolorosa/property>.)

The contents of the information we posted on our website was incorporated into a letter which we sent to our neighbors today. A sample of this letter is enclosed for your reference.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please call Cameron at the number below.

Sincerely,

Fr. Michael Higgins, C.P.
Retreat Director

Cameron Thornton
Mater Dolorosa Board Chair
818-281-2360

CMT/

Enclosures:

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