

## **PUBLIC HEARING ON THE TRANSFORMATION OF SONOMA DEVELOPMENTAL CENTER**

JULY 18, 2015

By Kathleen Miller-PHA President

Today was the public hearing on SDC. There were originally around 150 who showed up but many left early as they were unable to spend the hours needed that they would be forced to wait to testify. Others came to listen.

Around 100 individuals did testify and according to my tally the results were as follows:

15 objected to the short timeline for closure.

67 individuals wanted SDC to remain open-while some did not specifically request that SDC remain open they spent their time explaining how SDC has proved to be critical in caring for their loved one and sharing concerns over any plan to move them.

47 individuals requested that some type of services be maintained for individuals with DD on the SDC site and of those.

24 wanted housing-they specifically requested housing for those not successful in community housing.

40 wanted medical, dental, behavioral, or medical equipment services or all of these.

12 mentioned crises services-no doubt more would have but as they already exist they may not have felt it as needed to cite this.

22 mentioned the importance of maintaining open space.

13 talked about other uses that would also work on the SDC site or the need to determine them.

18 raised concerns over the lack of needed training in community staff.

13 cited concerns over the loss of choice for SDC residents now that they would be forced to leave SDC.

11 cited concerns over the lack of transparency in the community.

9 cited concerns over the lack of oversight in community homes.

6 cited the importance of the history of the site and that it felt sacred due to its unique history.

25 said how they appreciated the SDC staff and their caring and expertise-some concerns over maintaining them in community.

Other concerns included that if PHA folded there is no longer any family based organization for advocacy and several talked about having their family member placed close to them.

Almost everyone spoke about the concern that community services would not be up to the job of caring for their family/loved one.

One individual supported closure but he was an employee of disability rights, a legal organization and long time advocate for community settings.

I want to thank everyone who came out to speak today. You are awesome and truly transforming into the warriors you need to be for the fight ahead. I am proud to represent you and the residents of SDC.