

FRIENDS OF RIPPLING RIVER

Oct. 28, 2020

Rippling River residents have long been considered an asset to neighbors of Carmel Valley Village and beyond. They are reporting changes in conditions that lead them to wonder if there are plans afoot to sell the property.

Long before the pandemic limited access for us all, management imposed a \$50 deposit to use the community room; blocked access to the pool table and table tennis; removed the donated library books; removed therapeutic exercise equipment that was donated by the CV community; vastly limited access to the crafts room; computers owned by residents in the community room were removed while replacements donated by the nonprofit Loaves, Fishes, and Computers are not maintained; the community room and access to Post Office mail was locked at random times; resident events cancelled, such as bingo, movie nights, open mic, and monthly birthday parties. They can no longer access the donated piano. The little “sharing table” maintained by residents was removed. Their vegetable garden area has been rendered off limits by removal of outdoor seating, a shade, and a trench creating a tripping hazard. The lights and heat have been set below state standards for safety and comfort in public spaces. Rats are infesting the dumpster area, which is littered with garbage. (The video is shocking.) Numerous reports are made about inspections being held without the legally required 24 hours notice. Cameras and lights in the parking lots for safety would be welcome, but surveillance in common pathways and garden areas impedes the ability to relax and enjoy the premises.

Rippling River residents are all 62 years of age or older, or individuals with disabilities. Residents are differently abled, some fully competent, some with chronic conditions, some with limited mobility, but are by turn treated like children in an institution, or told brusquely “this isn’t a hotel.” Residents would most appreciate respectful communications. As one resident put it, ***“There has to be a way some kind of mediation can take place to create positive outcomes for all.”***

Please see the Oct. 24 letter from Rippling River Residents Association President Sharon Miles below, outlining new restrictions:

I’m doing fine, plugging along. However, there’s no communication with Manager Maria. This is the latest:

1. Residents went out and saw red, blue, yellow and purple sticker dots on their stuff outside their apartment, such as: plants, tables, wooden side tables, chairs, medical scooters or wheelchairs.

There was no prior notice or memo, as to why, nor explanation.

It really unnerved the residents. Some of them are unable to lift those items or move them themselves. Besides that, again, no one knew what the dots really meant.

2. Some of the residents got a good size, bright Yellow/red’ish sticker on their front car window that said they had to move their vehicle or have it towed with their own money. Some residents have two or more

vehicles, some have current registration, some do not. Last year some of those got a sticker that said they have to register their cars or they had to be towed. I believe I read in my rental agreement, that we are only allowed to have one car. I think there's 5 cars that are violating that rule. Management didn't do anything about having those cars towed, even though, some still have their old stickers.

There was no notice or memo beforehand, about the stickers.

3. The manager walked around the parking lots with Miriam Luster, the day before yesterday. Then Management had the new Maintenance Man walk around the lots and write things on a piece of paper. I believe that isn't a Maintenance department function, but she has to keep him busy because no Maintenance is being done, except for emergencies.

This is an example of the residents unrest: A neighbor of mine has a pickup truck and a van, both have current registration. He has lived here for seven (7) years and has never had an issue with his vehicles. Yesterday, his van was tagged and he is livid. He had a conversation with Management that didn't end well, and he was very upset. He said he got sick last night with very rapid heartbeat and profuse perspiration and felt like he couldn't breathe well. He said he thought he'd have to go to the hospital, but after a while he calmed down.

Another lady called me almost crying, saying that a few of her plants got a sticker and she just got a bag of soil to replant some of them. Her outdoor Buddha, also, got a sticker. In my opinion, that is very disrespectful.

4. Also, another very inconsiderate, lack of communication from Management. Some residents told me they had memos on their doors that afternoon, stating there'd be some men coming into our apartments to inspect our overhead sprinklers. Side note: I didn't get one that day, but did the next day. The memo was less than 24 hours notice to anyone, and stated they'd start the inspection at 8:00am the next day, and would continue until they were completed. Many of the residents were very upset because their apartment wasn't as presentable as they'd like it. They didn't have enough time to clean because of their various disabilities.

Something is brewing, and some residents feel that Management and the higher-ups are planning to sell Rippling River and they'd be out of a home.

I'm hoping you can guide us as to what we can do with our current issues. These are uncertain times, and we residents, need to feel secure and comfortable in our homes. There are some residents that feel we need an attorney, and I feel there's someone who can advise us.

Thank you very much for any help you can give.

All the best,

Sharon A. Miles
RRRA, President

Rippling River is owned and operated by the Monterey County Housing Development Corporation, (HDC) [<http://hdcmonterey.org/>] a 501(c)(4) beneficial corporation. It is not to be confused with the Monterey County Housing Authority, [<https://hamonterey.org/>] although their boards are appointed by the Monterey County Supervisors and virtually identical. Rippling River was formerly owned and operated by HUD, specifically as an experiment to see if disabled people could live independently. During HUD's operation, the residents enjoyed meal service, staff, a swimming pool, and access to the numerous amenities, including physical therapy, a massage room, and resident driven crafts and activities.

The HDC contracts with the John Stewart Corporation (JSCO) [<https://jsco.net/>] to manage the facility. They are a California property management company. They manage about a dozen low-income facilities in Monterey County.

The residents run their own Residents Association, (RRRA) and formed the community advocacy group, Friends of Rippling River, (FORR) in 2004, when the facility was threatened with being sold due to its need for renovation. The community rallied support, keeping the disabled in their homes while renovations were done and ownership restructured. Prior to COVID, FORR provided residents educational, entertaining, and informative programs. We continue to activate on their behalf in unfair eviction warnings, safety issues, and assist in their ability to self-govern, and manage charitable funding in partnership with the Monterey County Action Council. We have been staying in touch with residents via phone of late.

Is Rippling River threatened? Does Rippling River fall under any guidelines or regulations of HUD subsidized housing, which prohibits interference in residents association by management and provides other rights? Who is responsible for oversight of subsidized housing developments in Monterey County, given the overlay of “public/private” financial entanglements? Below is a bit of history of the establishment of the current financing structure, a tax credit private equity operation.

Feb. 8–2006

(Local News

A \$22 million financing plan to renovate the Rippling River residential center in Carmel Valley was approved unanimously Tuesday by the Monterey County Board of Supervisors. The proposal calls for a combination of tax credits, tax-exempt bonds, fee deferrals and county housing money, and includes the sale of Rippling River to a new limited partnership. The Housing Authority would be the general partner in the new ownership group, said Starla Warren, housing authority development director, noting that such an entity is needed to raise money through tax-exempt bonds and tax credits. She and county housing programs chief Jim Cook said the plan creates a sub-recipient agreement with the county with a limited liability corporation, Rippling River Affordable Housing LLC, and a limited partnership, Rippling River LP, with the Housing Authority as the managing general partner.