

LOCAL NEWS

Marin supervisors allot \$622K for emergency Bolinas housing



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Marin County supervisors allocated \$622,000 on Tuesday to help provide emergency housing for approximately 60 people who have been living in substandard conditions for years in Bolinas.

The Bolinas Community Land Trust has installed 27 new recreational vehicles on a 20-acre parcel at 130 Mesa Road into which the ill-housed people, most of them low-income Latino residents, began moving on Tuesday.

"Today, we will officially open the emergency RV campground to the residents of the Tacherra ranch," said Annie O'Connor, executive director of the land trust.

The trust obtained an emergency permit from Marin County to construct a mound septic system to which the vehicles will connect. The organization is reallocating water assignments from some of its other properties to comply with Bolinas' moratorium on new water connections. The new recreational vehicles will also have electrical connections and heat.

O'Connor told supervisors that the county's financial contribution was vital to the success of the \$2.59 million project. The land trust used its own funds to lease the trailers and build the septic system.

Jeff Clapp, the trust's treasurer, told supervisors that "it has been an enormous financial drain on our organization, but we never hesitated at

\$22,000 grant.

The people moving into the trailers have long been living in makeshift housing on property owned by the Tacherra family at 160 Mesa Road. Two of the residents, Azucena Vazquez and Ingris Yanet Lopez Hernandez, addressed the supervisors through interpreters Tuesday.

"If you did not know where we lived before, or that so many of us lived on the Tacherra ranch in very difficult conditions, it is because we are strong and resilient people," said Hernandez. "Our hardships have been hiding in your plain sight for two decades. Our fear of losing what little we have has kept us from speaking up. But now we have to, because now we have hope for a better future and that is worth taking a risk for."

Both women spoke in some detail about their previous living conditions.

"The trailer we live in is very old and unfortunately we have had to deal with hygiene problems because of the presence of large rats," Vazquez said. "In addition, on some occasions we had problems with the hot water supply and we do not have drinking water. We use water bottles that have to drive over two hours to refill in the city."

Hernandez said, "We need immediate relief from the mold, the rats that bite us in the night, the rain that already began leaking through our roofs again this weekend, the cold, and the indignity and the risks of using portable toilets."

Hernandez and Vazquez are among more than a dozen people who are attempting to sue the receiver in control of Tacherra ranch, Larry Baskin, and the Tacherra family for back rent as well as compensatory and punitive damages. Baskin was appointed following a legal dispute between Jim Tacherra and Ernie Tacherra.

Hernandez also said, "We need to hold onto our hope that we can improve the situation that we and the Tacherra family have become trapped in. Jim and Susan Tacherra gave us a place to live when nobody else would. But now it is not a good situation for any of us. It needs to change as soon as possible."

Baskin said last week that "we're fully supportive of the Bolinas Community Land Trust efforts to create the emergency temporary RV park for them to move off the ranch and then move back when affordable housing is constructed."

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