

## **East Meadow Update, 10.16.21**

Dear friends of the meadow,

There has been little to update during the past few months. The Student Housing West project, with its controversial and destructive East Campus component, is unchanged. But while legal challenges proceed, nothing can be built. Only a reversal in court, it appears, will induce the UCSC leadership and, importantly, the UC Central Administration to change course.

EMAC originally filed suit under California environmental law in April 2019. We alleged two violations of that law: the illegal procedure the Regents used to approve the project, and the legal inadequacy of the EIR that justified the project. A year and a half later we got a split verdict: agreed with us on the illegal procedure, disagreed with us on the EIR.

That created the opportunity for Chancellor Larive to revise the project, pulling the 5% of it out of the East Meadow, and to take that revision back to the Regents for a proper approval. She did not take that opportunity. Instead, she asked the Regents to re-approve the same project that included sprawl in the East Meadow. And the Regents complied.

We have taken the EIR issue to the Appeals Court. All written briefs have now been filed in that appeal. Oral argument and verdict remain, but it may be months before that happens.

In addition, when the Regents reapproved the same project a second time, that gave us the opportunity to file a second suit, which we did in April 2020. When the UCSC administration first took the project to the Regents for approval, they justified their preferred plan for the project (with construction in the East Meadow) on grounds of financial cost. But they declined to present any of the financial data behind that claim to the Regents or to the public. That data was made public prior to the second approval by the Regents, and it was clearly skewed to support a decision they had made for non-financial reasons. Once we had that missing financial data, we sued on the basis of that data. That second suit will not be heard until next year.

While litigation is pending, the administration cannot get financing for the project. So the Meadow yet lives. The original decision to move part of this large project onto the East Meadow was made, in secret and in haste, to protect a planned construction start date of August 2018. Instead, it has resulted in massive delay. The best way to get this project moving forward would be to fix the mistake of putting 5% of it in the East Meadow, the source of so much opposition. It is noteworthy that the last of the administrators who advocated for and defended the original mistake is now leaving UCSC.

Stay tuned. And if you have an opportunity to register your views with the University, please do.

A guest editorial published on October 9th in the Sentinal and posted on the EMAC website expresses EMAC's view of the University's options.

With thanks for your support,

EMAC

**East Meadow Action Committee**