



# City of Sierra Madre

Office of the City Clerk

232 W. Sierra Madre Blvd.,

Sierra Madre, CA

(626) 355-7135

THE BROWN ACT PROVIDES THE PUBLIC WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE PUBLIC COMMENTS AT ANY PUBLIC MEETING.

THE FOLLOWING WRITTEN COMMENTS WERE RECEIVED IN ADVANCE OF THIS MEETING AND WILL BE POSTED ONTO THE CITY'S WEBSITE FOR PUBLIC ACCESS AND TRANSPARENCY.

THE COMMENTS ATTACHED ARE SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC. THE CITY DOES NOT CONFIRM THE VERACITY OF THE STATEMENTS PROVIDED BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

## Amber Tardif

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**From:** Sue Behrens [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 8, 2023 5:29 PM  
**To:** Public Comment  
**Subject:** In Support of Alverno's Master Plan - 3/14/23 City Council Meeting

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

**CAUTION:** This message is from an EXTERNAL SENDER - be CAUTIOUS, particularly with links and attachments.

### Letter to Mayor Ed Garcia and City Council:

For many years I worked all over L.A., Burbank, the South Bay and West Side, and I would sing the praises of life in Sierra Madre. Those unfamiliar with it would ask me what's so great about it - it's just another L.A. suburb, they'd say. And I would tell them about my beloved town - the close-knit family-oriented community that was *all about the kids!* The Easter Egg Hunt and Huck Finn Derby, Little League and Girls' Softball, the Halloween Costume Parade, not to mention our awesome Library and great Schools.

But unfortunately, I don't feel that way anymore. Sure, we still hold those annual events, but the whole "not in my backyard" attitude has infiltrated and tainted our town, at the expense of our kids' rights. The schools we should be supporting and holding in high regard are under attack! The bustling, noisy playgrounds that many of us grew up on are being silenced by a handful of crabby neighbors with unreasonable complaints. For example - are you all aware - that the middle school in our town isn't allowed to play basketball outside? What a joke! I couldn't believe it when I learned this! Sure, they have a gym, but fresh air and sunshine are just as important to growing bodies and minds as exercise. Yet, our City caved in to complaints from neighbors who knowingly bought a house next to a school, and it's the kids who suffer.

Why is it, that the selfish, often exaggerated complaints of the minority get to dictate what our schools can and can't do? When are the people running our town going to stand up for our kids? If the sounds of children playing, running, and squealing with delight is ruining your quality of life, as one neighbor of Alverno has stated on more than one occasion, the solution is simple - close your windows, turn up your radio, or move! We need schools, and kids need to exercise their bodies and their voices, *outdoors!* Unfortunately, many kids spend their time away from school sitting on their bottoms staring at a screen or

device. They need all the outdoor activity they can get, and schools provide that. Consider the alternative - poor health, obesity, lack of social skills, failing grades. Is this what we want for our kids? Shall we lock them inside and keep them silent? As we continue to strip away their freedoms, will the neighbors ever be satisfied?

So, my question to you is, do you want your legacy as Mayor and City Council Members to be that you voted against the kids of Sierra Madre Schools, and took away even more of their rights? Rights they aren't old enough to vote for, or to even know they deserve? Or are you going to do the right thing, and put a stop to this nonsense?! The Planning Commission already approved Alverno's Master Plan, now you have the chance to confirm it. Your actions will affect every school in our town.

How far are you going to let this go?

*Another \$400,000 special election, perhaps?*

Sue Behrens - [REDACTED]  
Lifelong resident of Sierra Madre, 1978 graduate of Alverno High School, and part-time recess and lunch proctor at Alverno's Lower School, since Fall 2020.

## Amber Tardif

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**From:** Carolyn [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 13, 2023 9:59 PM  
**To:** Public Comment  
**Cc:** K. S.  
**Subject:** March 14 City council regarding Alverno agenda item

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

**CAUTION:** This message is from an EXTERNAL SENDER - be CAUTIOUS, particularly with links and attachments.

Subject: March 14 City council regarding Alverno agenda item

Dear City Council of Sierra Madre and Mayor,

My family and I would like to thank you for starting discussions about Alverno at the February 14th meeting and including our input. Please accept the following regarding the agenda item regarding Alverno on this Tuesday evening.

I have lived across from Alverno for over 66 years. And, I still miss seeing those trees, as untrimmed as they were, lining Michillinda. There was something so serene and parklike with Alverno back in the day. Now, I come home to the Michillinda parking lot, full of noise. In fact, bringing in my trash tonight, there was still noise there at 6:30 pm. Why can't this be moved? It's noise, after noise, after noise. Please for the sake of my family and my health, just move it so we don't feel like we are living with the Alverno staff and kids, their parties and filming rentals every day of the year. What a shame that the high school is closing. My own parents went to the celebration the year that the high school opened. I understand that staff wasn't even given notice of it in advance that the announcement came out. That's just frightful. Will Alverno now try and grow their school? Potentially, trying to take students from our amazing public school which just won a state award? Or from the other more established k-8 schools in Sierra Madre or even Pasadena. That might mean that the school will become even noisier and traffic will become even more of a nightmare since the CUP says all of the K-8 must enter Michillinda and leave by Highland.

Do you have access to my previous letters? I ask that you read them. Read all the submitted letters by the neighbors who are impacted by this use. This has been like talking to a wall. We have spoken out against the traffic, the congestion, the parking lot and playground noise. I only have so much time to keep my city of Pasadena in the loop while trying to be heard by Sierra Madre and your police. My family has provided to the Planning Commission many concrete examples of the problems with the parking lot and playground use by the student body along with their rentals and traffic. Alverno also uses for the Villa rentals for filming and weddings a lot! There is a party rental every weekend for 6 weekends in a row! I have shown you photos of the traffic jams on Highland and Michillinda. In fact, I sent out Pasadena officials who did deem it a dangerous area but Alverno said they would change it. They never did. I came home north on Michillinda only to have a parent make a U-turn in front of me from the Pasadena side of Michillinda, swinging over to the Sierra Madre side to get in the line up for AHA pickup. It is happening more frequently. There are so many honking of horns from the traffic during that pick up time that it gives me a headache.

About 2 years ago Alverno just up and started using the Michillinda parking lot. They put their playground by my home during an extended period of filming and never moved it. They did so without any heads up or studies as to how it impacted us neighbors. We have gone to the various city meetings and sent letters regarding the yelling and noise. The screaming is incessant. I work at Sierra Madre Elementary School. We quiet our students down if they scream. We have a wife of a former SM Firefighter who leads the morning PE with over 150 students who cautions them to stop screaming as police officers and firefighters who live near our school would think that they are in need of their services.

I have written to Alverno numerous times about the screaming- it's like they are actually telling their kids to scream. It's rampant.

I still don't understand how the city will require studies for some noisy activities but the playground and using the western parking lot along Michillinda Ave. You must have the ability to move the activities to another part of the campus from what I heard at the last meeting regarding this issue. It was suggested that the planning commission hire an unbiased noise consultant to help them apply the noise code for Sierra Madre and Pasadena. The planning commission should have considered how these uses affect the Sierra Madre and the Pasadena noise code. The attorney lied by omission to the commission. We on the Pasadena side were not asking Sierra Madre to enforce our noise code. We requested that Sierra Madre planning commission not willingly and knowingly violate our noise code with Alverno's use and rentals.

We are not asking for the play time or sports to stop. Exercise and fresh air are crucial to students. We are asking the city to make Alverno move it to a spot that is not so close to my home like the Wilson field and the parking lot for sports. That area is farther away from the homes on Wilson than where they are along Michillinda. Kids can spread out and the soft grass will absorb some noise. We already have the noisy weddings and filming on weekends and evenings. In fact, we just had one last weekend. And, neighbors are not made aware of everything, no matter what Alverno says, on weekend or evening events.

Or consider that since the high school will be gone in June then why can't Alverno can't just swap out the middle schoolers use of the offsite facilities they used for the high school? Alverno has been using offsite gyms for a long, long time. Alverno can do that with their lower school teams.

I can appreciate Officer Amos' commentary about what he says on a few visits, but it does not reflect my experience day in and day out. Michillinda and Sierra Madre is dealing with a multitude of traffic issues on school days and events. The traffic flow can't all be sent to the Michillinda parking lot next year when there will be no high school. There's no way that even the two months of summer camp will be smooth. Every time there is a change there are new families and Alverno's sandwich boards are useless. There's no way that the Sierra Madre or Pasadena Police can be around this location as often as the headaches I have experienced just trying to get to or from my home on school days and during events. It shouldn't take an accident or worse for some thing to be done about the traffic. Pasadena is all in on this; why isn't Sierra Madre since it's being generated in your town?

Lastly, when will the portables be moved? So much live, non-sick vegetation was removed to put those sardine cans in. When they were white, the sun bounced off of them and with the heat from the summer that it generated, killed my camellia plants. The portables were supposed to be surrounded by the trees in boxes down along Highland which had come from a movie studio. But they never were. Another lie. As I recall Alverno was given a year and a half to keep them in the current location. Why are they still there?

For a school who continues to hold itself to a higher authority, that of it being a religious school, I can't understand all of its misrepresentations. I'd like to see what Mrs. Fanara writes to her parents each week. Here is an excerpt from SME's Sunday eBlast to parents written by Principal Jodi Marchesso:

**Student and Community Safety**

We are seeing an increase in potential accidents during drop-off and pickup. Please remember to be mindful of our neighbors driveways when parking and be aware of other cars that might be passing you as you pull away from the curb. Also, the parking lot is for staff use only. Do not walk through the lot or use it as a pick up and drop off area. Thank you for helping to keep our community safe!

Does AHA do that? At SME we have every single teacher outside to help with the pick up of students and traffic. I don't see ONE HUMAN BEING EVER on Michillinda or Michillinda and Highland from AHA with that astonishingly horrific traffic that AHA creates - only two sandwich signs that are obscured from view by their traffic. It's hilarious if it weren't so egregious to the neighbors.

My family welcomes the city council's ability to fix these problems and not put the neighbors through a whole another 2 years of planning commission deliberations. Thank you.

Good evening Mayor Garcia, council members, and city staff.

I'm speaking as both a long-time resident, and as a long-time business owner in Sierra Madre. Also, as a direct neighbor of the Airbnb that has led to this city council meeting.

Simply stated, **Airbnbs and short term rentals are a threat to our community.**

These are the facts to support my statement:

Number 1– Sierra Madre is a unique city. I don't say this simply because I live here, and love my city. It is an undeniable fact.

Number 2– Sierra Madre is not a destination city with large venues with a demand for lodging. If needed, there are numerous hotels in Arcadia, and Pasadena. However, Sierra Madre IS a destination for families seeking a safe place to raise their children (as some council members here tonight know first-hand).

Neighbors know each other.

Neighbors walk together.

Neighbors run together.

Neighbors' children are in little league together.

Whether it's 5 o'clock in the morning, or 5 o'clock at night, we feel SAFE together.

The 3rd, very crucial fact is the residents of this city are relying on our newly elected council members to continue to uphold Sierra Madre's long-standing Mission Statement:

Quote "...to provide services that preserve the small town character and enhance the health, safety, and welfare of the community..."

ALL of these points matter because allowing Airbnbs and short term rentals in Sierra Madre is a **direct threat** to ALL of these core values we cherish in our town.

Short term renters are simply passing through. They don't know their neighbors—and we don't know them. They do not share our commitment to community.

As an example, I'm a direct neighbor of the Airbnb in question which allows up to 15 guests.

One Sunday afternoon, there were 10 cars parked on both sides of N Auburn Ave, impeding access to any—and ALL— emergency vehicles from reaching the destination of neighbors who live above me. This is one-hundred-percent unacceptable! And....an one-hundred-percent avoidable tragedy waiting to happen! I trust council member, Kris Lowe, would agree with me on this statement after serving many years as a fire captain.

To conclude, I am respectfully asking you, our council members, to restrict short term rentals and Airbnbs in Sierra Madre before more out of town investors purchase homes for the sole purpose of business income. Returning to my main point: **It IS, has been, and if allowed to continue, WILL be a threat to our community.**

I sincerely appreciate your attention this evening.

Marinella Pollo





**Venskus & Associates**  
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March 9, 2023

**SENT BY ELECTRONIC MAIL ONLY**

Sierra Madre City Council  
c/o  
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Aleks Giragosian  
Sierra Madre City Clerk Office  
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**APPEAL RE: THE SIERRA MADRE PLANNING COMMISSION'S APPROVAL OF AMENDMENT TO CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT AND ADDENDUM TO MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION TO UPDATE THE ALVERNO HEIGHTS ACADEMY MASTER PLAN TO ALLOW FOR PERMANENT CLASSROOMS FOR K-8 AND OTHER CAMPUS IMPROVEMENTS**

This letter is submitted in support of Kristin and Keith Stephens' appeal of the Sierra Madre Planning Commission's decision in the above-entitled proceeding pursuant to Sierra Madre Municipal Code § 17.66.020 (B). This letter, which must be placed into the council file and made a part of the administrative record, provides public comment in response to the Applicant's indication that it now wants to revise the project.

The applicant has announced that it will no longer offer high school education starting with the next school year. Appellants are sorry to hear about this development because children in the community need schools and schools improve the communities in which they operate. However, schools must respect the communities in which they operate as well. Here, fortunately, there is a way for the community and for Academy to exist in harmony and all it will take to achieve this harmony is the imposition of a few permit conditions.

Appellants propose the following (very simple and inexpensive) permit conditions for the Michillinda Parking Lot which will take effect on June 2, 2023:

- Use of the Michillinda Parking Lot is limited exclusively to the parking of vehicles.
- No other uses will be permitted on the Michillinda Parking Lot.

To ensure that neither the student body, nor the school are deprived of a use as a result of these limitations on the Michillinda Parking Lot, the city can add permit conditions relocating the following activities to occur exclusively at the following locations as of the date of project approval:

- **Public Safety Demonstrations/Assemblies:** Multi-Purpose Sports Field
- **Play/recess:** Multi-Purpose Sports Field; New Sports Court; space immediately south of the Wilson Parking Lot (relocate playground because it has existing bathrooms); and/or the Wilson Parking lot

- **Sports, including games and practices:** Multi-Use Sports Field; New Sports Court; and offsite locations such as Memorial Park; Hamilton Park; the Eugene Field Elementary School; Sierra Madre Middle School; and/or AGBU Vatch and Tamar Manoukian High School 2495 E. Mountain St., Pasadena, CA.
- **City events:** offsite locations such as: Memorial Park; The Santa Anita Racetrack, Sierra Madre Elementary or Middle School, (all of which have space for event use AND parking for things like the Wisteria Festival); The Lodge at Sierra Madre; The Women’s Club; First Church of the Nazarene (has event space and in the past some films have used it for vehicle staging).
- **Physical education classes:** New Sports Court; the Wilson Parking Lot; and/or Multi-Use Sports Field.
- **Lunch:** Cafeteria; outdoor area next to cafeteria; and outdoor lunch area next to Multi-purpose Sports Field.

Appellants also recommend the following permit conditions to adequately mitigate noise and light impacts:

- Require the applicant to prioritize construction of the sports court, to the extent feasible, within 90 days of project approval;
- To address glare from parking activities in the Michillinda Parking Lot, require AHA to complete the landscape plans approved in the 2011 CUP along the Grandview and Michillinda side of the parking lot by September 1, 2023;
- All sports practices or games must be finished by 5:00 p.m..
- All events occurring on campus of the applicant must adhere to the following restrictions:
  - No use of whistles or amplified equipment during physical education classes
  - No use of whistles or amplified equipment during sport practices
  - No use of whistles or amplified equipment during play/recess
  - No use of whistles, amplified equipment or lights on new sports court
  - The same permit conditions from the 2011 approval will apply to the Multi-Sports Field.
  - Where applicable, such as the St. Claire Ct, amplified equipment must be utilized in combination with a noise monitor and automatic power shut-off or kill switch, which is programmed to turn-off the power to amplified equipment if the noise exceeds 80DB measured at 25’ from the source and in addition, the noise should not be decipherable beyond the property plane. All amplified equipment must be oriented and directed away from the boundary of the property and located in areas, to the extent feasible, that will provide a buffer between the source of the sound and the property boundary.

Imposing these permit conditions is a simple and inexpensive prospect and the easiest solution for the Academy’s issues. If the City Council is inclined to approve the revised project as-is, based on the current record, it must consider whether that decision will be an abuse of discretion.

An increase of K-8 enrollment above the current level of 200 K-8 students is now a virtual certainty. At the time the 2011 MND was approved, there was no K-8 enrollment at the Academy. Thus, the very existence of K-8 enrollment at AHA, let alone an increase in K-8 enrollment represents new information and gives rise to new impacts that require full environmental review despite the existing MND approved in 2011. (CEQA Guideline § 15162.) The noise impacts of the revised project will be substantially more severe than as described in the prior MND. The prior MND did not analyze K-8 enrollment or increased K-8 enrollment. (CEQA Guidelines § 15162; Pub. Resources Code § 21166.)

The existing sound and traffic studies/models at AHA were based on a population of 200 High School Students and 200 K-8 students. So those are irrelevant. Thus, the evidence that is currently before the council is insufficient to constitute substantial evidence that the project, as revised to include 400 or less K-8 students, will not have significant noise and traffic impacts, either individually or cumulatively. It follows then that the city’s analysis of the evidence is also insufficient to support approval of the revised project. The council’s approval of the revised project without conducting new analysis will constitute an abuse of discretion.

The prior 2011 MND did not study and/or analyze all the noise-producing activities that currently take place on the Michillinda Parking Lot and concluded that the noise from the parking lot did not produce significant noise impacts. Since that time, the applicant has utilized the parking lot for a variety of activities above and beyond parking. This represents yet another new fact and new impact which will be substantially more severe than those described in the prior environmental document. (CEQA Guidelines § 15162; Pub. Resources Code § 21166.) This is yet another ground that requires the city to conduct a full environmental review of the noise emanating from the Michillinda Parking Lot.

The city and applicant have conceded that there is no pre-existing permit condition regulating activity that is occurring on the Michillinda Parking Lot. As a revision to the proposed project, the applicant has offered to limit activities on the Michillinda Parking Lot to the following activities, none of which can occur with amplified equipment:

- Public Safety Demonstrations
- Play/recess (in the event of the Multi-Purpose Field being unavailable due to rain or sports)
- After-school sports games and practices (no night time games or practices will be permitted)
- City events
- Permitted filming and photography

Even if these activities were acceptable to appellants, which they are not, the city could not approve the instant project and associated use of the Michillinda Parking Lot because neither the prior environmental approvals, nor the staff reports prepared for the instant project have evaluated the noise that these activities produce or will produce on the Michillinda Parking Lot. The 2011 MND only analyzed parking activities and the 2021/2022 MND only analyzed parking activity and outdoor sports activities. There are no models, noise studies or analysis pertaining to the Michillinda Parking Lot for any of the other items, including public safety demonstrations, play/recess, city events and filming/photography.

The city must determine whether each use that AHA seeks to conduct on the Michillinda Parking Lot is above or below the noise threshold of significance. Put another way, the city must determine whether the generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project (either individually or cumulatively) in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies will result from each contemplated use.

The city is subject to both qualitative and quantitative noise regulations. (see Land Use Element L37.8; Noise Element Hz14; 14.3; SMMC § 9.32.010; SMMC § 9.32.030; SMMC § 9.32.100 [qualitative standards] and SMMC § 9.32.050 [quantitative standard].) How can the council make its determinations under either a qualitative or quantitative standard if it has no idea how loud a proposed activity is? This issue is particularly troubling in the context of assessing whether quantitative thresholds like SMMC § 9.32.050 have been or will be exceeded. Approval of the project, even as revised, without this evidence would be an abuse of discretion, especially with there being some evidence in the record that these activities (play/recess/sports) can be heard from neighboring properties. In fact, appellants have recently obtained noise measurements showing the qualitative thresholds are being violated. (see Exhibit A.)

In conclusion, appellants believe that the community and the Academy can co-exist in harmony with the imposition of a few simple permit conditions. Appellants urge the applicant to confirm that these very reasonable, inexpensive permit conditions are acceptable and urge the city to impose these conditions on the Academy. This will allow the Academy to move into the next school ready to provide high quality education to its K-8 students while respecting the surrounding neighborhood.

Sincerely,

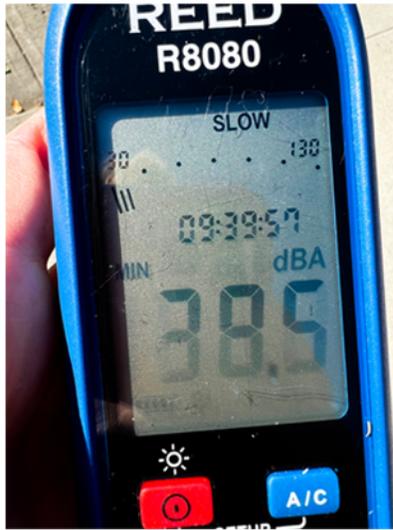


Jason Sanders, Esq.

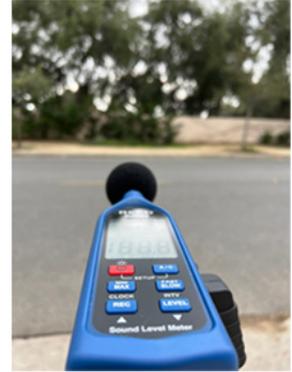
# EXHIBIT A

# SAMPLE NOISE READINGS TAKEN ON APPELLANT PROPERTY

1. Best ambient noise level reading taken for 2+ minutes. This number repeated several times on Grandview without school in session or anyone using the parking lot.



2. Readings done on a tripod at property line across from the parking lot with windscreen. (Images showing hand held was only for purpose of pushing buttons and photographing the readings)



3. 2022\_12 13 noise read 12:56 PM kids on parking lot sports



4. 2023\_01 06 PE on parking lot middle school



5. 2022\_12 06 game using fast detect blasts of noise



6. 2022\_11 29 lunch/recess



## Amber Tardif

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**From:** Lacy Stephens [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 14, 2023 12:11 PM  
**To:** Public Comment  
**Subject:** Tonights agenda item Alverno academy hearing #3

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

**CAUTION:** This message is from an EXTERNAL SENDER - be CAUTIOUS, particularly with links and attachments.

Dear Mayor and members of the City Council,

Please have Alverno move the sports court location and activities in June to the Wilson parking lot, the field or offsite (like they have been doing since 2005 or before). The Wilson lot either one of them, the one to be built or the existing one are the same size as the painted court they did illegally without permit on Michillinda. At least all of Michillinda can be used for parking. As it is now, whenever there are sports events, no one can park there so they fill up Grandview and Michillinda. I counted the number of parking space taken up by the court and their surrounding area. It's 30 spaces if you don't count all the other spaces that no one can get to once the pick up line is closed. Essentially it's about 50 spaces are not used because cars and trucks shouldn't be driving next to the kids, or during games, the spectators or the players. During the day the lot has about 3 cars in it because the school uses it for everything but parking.

I ask why does Alverno run a for profit business out of the Villa and then claim to the Planning Commission that they needed this business to pay for scholarships, then bemoan they need the film and party rentals to pay for the Villa repairs and not the scholarships? This is a new hearing but you should know that Alverno absolutely has had money and been spending it but not where they tell the city. They need to deal with the fact that they aren't attracting families that will pay for what a private school education costs. Not laying some arbitrary blame on the neighbors for restricting their religious right as this staff report tries to allude to.

Alverno has put this burden of Villa upkeep on the neighbors so that when there isn't school there are "paid for rental events", "not for profit events" and more school events taking place at night and on weekends on the grounds and using the Michillinda parking lot. We accept that there is noise from the parking lot but not all of this school play and sports all day too. Alverno will minimize what my family, and my friends who are neighbors experience. Even their noise reports are skewed not using the right number that would show it violates the noise. The school parking lot use is still noisy but not like what we have now. Last weekend there was a huge bus that idled in the parking lot for over 30" after 9PM and then returned after 10PM to idle again picking up partiers plus limos. We felt the vibrations from the music bass prior to this for a few hours. When that ended, the bus let us know the lot was still being used.

Why hasn't Alverno paid for the new roof with the hundreds of thousands they receive with the rental money they collected for years from excessive filming and wedding rentals? It just depends on the agenda before the city what they say. If the school uses the Villa and there are plenty of online images of this, then the school should be paying for it's upkeep not funneling the funds into their school model.

Alverno should not bemoan moving their sports, assemblies, and eating areas to places they have already had their students using because it's a burden. Take a look at their website and online presence. See attached pictures. Alverno has utilized all kinds of other spaces until they had a film and moved the K-8 to the parking

lot in 2021. My parents were asking for a year why? When was it going to be moved? First they were ignored, then told it was temporary. Then Alverno's principal refused to answer them or meet with them to work it out. My parents were harassed at the traffic meeting by the K-8 principal and an Alverno attorney/board of trustee during the meeting for wanting to talk about the noise from the parking lot. Not very christian like behavior in my book.

You won't find what my dad said in the minutes of the 1st expansion meeting and they wrote down things my mom didn't say. My parents reflection of what was actually said has never been attached so the city gets another skewed to Alverno's view report.

The current staff report seems bent on pleasing Alverno and ignoring their residents. We want the village atmosphere like all the other neighborhoods under the general plan.

It's not like moving the sports will end the noise of the school and the Villa business but it will bring it back to a more tolerable level pre K-8. Alverno lower school moved next to us, not vice versa.

Thank you for reading my comments and I hope you keep them in mind when Alverno and your city staff present tonight. I also have to ask why weren't they at the last meeting? The city agreed to hold one meeting but instead staff is stretching this out on purpose so that my folks attorney has to come each time. This isn't costing Alverno to send their Board of trustee and already paid principal

Yours,  
L. Stephens...

Other places on campus Alverno used for their student body prior to overtaking the parking lot and clearing away the surrounding landscape to bring it even closer to my home. See the traffic mess it brings?



## Amber Tardif

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**From:** Lacy Stephens [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 14, 2023 12:20 PM  
**To:** Public Comment  
**Subject:** Alverno agenda item #3 photos

**CAUTION:** This message is from an EXTERNAL SENDER - be CAUTIOUS, particularly with links and attachments.

Hello,

I just sent an email but my photos weren't sent properly. Please see photos in regards to Alverno agenda item #3. Thank you for your time.

-L Stephens









## Amber Tardif

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**From:** Brad Patterson [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 14, 2023 12:29 PM  
**To:** Public Comment  
**Cc:** Brad Patterson  
**Subject:** Support Alverno Heights Academy!

CAUTION: This message is from an EXTERNAL SENDER - be CAUTIOUS, particularly with links and attachments.

To the Mayor Ed Garcia and Sierra Madre City Council:

Unfortunately I am not able to make the city council meeting this evening due to the requirements of my job. However I wanted to write this letter in support of Alverno Heights Academy. The fact this is even needed when it is the extremely small group complaining is astonishing. This is a waste of the tax payers money and time to further this discussion after the proposal was already approved.

At what point will this mayor and council stand up to the vocal minority and look at the facts of this situation. The sound of children playing outside is the greatest sound a community could hear. If a person has an issue with the sound of children then they have greater psychological concerns that need addressed. This is under the assumption that the sounds are even that audible outside of the grounds of the school, which is doubtful it would even be at a level that would be bothersome to a normal human being. This complaint just sounds like a vendetta against the school or a dislike of children.

It should also be addressed that the schools of Sierra Madre have been around a lot longer than most of the residents that purchased the homes near them. This complaint from the minority seems to be frivolous and a waste of this councils time and energy.

Again the fact someone is complaining of children enjoying the outdoors within the confines of the school astounds me. Sierra Madre is about families and part of that is the children who live here. You as a council need to support the schools and put an end to this nonsense from this small group. If this mayor and council cannot support our children of the community we will not support the businesses of Sierra Madre. We all can just as easily get our dinners, ice cream, and coffees in other communities that support our children. Maybe those complaining will enjoy the quietness of an empty downtown and closed businesses.

Take a stand against this nonsense from those that are really not a part of this community if they don't support the schools.

Regards,  
Brad

## Amber Tardif

---

**From:** Beth Patterson [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 14, 2023 12:56 PM  
**To:** Public Comment  
**Subject:** Alverno Heights Academy

**CAUTION:** This message is from an EXTERNAL SENDER - be CAUTIOUS, particularly with links and attachments.

To Mayor Ed Garcia and the Sierra Madre City Council:

I am unfortunately not able to make the city council meeting today due to being at work. However, I am in complete support of Alverno Heights Academy.

Alverno Heights is a wonderful school full of incredible staff and children that provides an amazing education - and all in a fantastic environment. The fact that I am having to write to defend a school so that they can become even better is astounding. There should be no questions.

It seems as though there is a person that is opposing the Alverno Heights plans. My question is why? Why do they not like children? Why don't they like children having a good education at a location that is trying to add even more opportunities for the children to grow as human beings? This doesn't seem to be an issue with Alverno or any school for that matter. It seems to instead be an issue with a person that is angry at life itself. One person's unhappiness with life shouldn't be an issue for the school to worry about, nor the parents, nor the children. Some people will simply be angry regardless while taking pleasure in harming others. This doesn't serve a place in our beautiful community.

Let Alverno Heights Academy flourish!

Thank you,  
Beth

**Amber Tardif**

---

**From:** Robert [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 14, 2023 1:51 PM  
**To:** Public Comment  
**Subject:** We support Alverno's master plan

CAUTION: This message is from an EXTERNAL SENDER - be CAUTIOUS, particularly with links and attachments.

Dear City Council,

We would like to express our support of Alverno School's master plan.

This school is a vital part of the community and improving our community is critical to our long term sustainability.

Thank you,  
Robert Bauer

## Amber Tardif

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**From:** Cynthia Flores [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 14, 2023 1:57 PM  
**To:** Public Comment  
**Subject:** Tuesday, March 14, 2023 5:30 pm. ALVERNO

**CAUTION:** This message is from an EXTERNAL SENDER - be CAUTIOUS, particularly with links and attachments.

Dear Mayor Garcia, City Council, and Residents,

This winter I have been reflecting deeply on the shifts in education. As a mother, educator, and homeowner in Sierra Madre, I am especially attuned to the education of the youngest members of our community.

My family has lived in our town for over forty-five years. I was educated in Sierra Madre Schools and worked my first official jobs during my summers home from college - first Lozano's, then A Touch of France. I remember when the City Hall building was newly built and recollect the fun my friends and I had at the Annual Mater Dolorosa Carnival. I came back to raise my kids in Sierra Madre because I love our traditions and our community; however, I am also aware that there comes a time when the old ways must make way for what is most needed. That moment is now.

If you are an educator or a parent, you likely see the significant problems that our society is facing with a population of students who are suffering. Our children and especially our young teens and tweens are in crisis. According to the CDC, in 2021 more than 42% of students felt persistently sad or hopeless, and nearly one-third experienced poor mental health. Moreover, in 2021, more than one in five students seriously considered attempting suicide, and one in ten attempted suicide. These are numbers that cannot be ignored. This is our nation right now. This is not some other place. This is our town right now, today.

**But there is a clear solution to this serious problem. That solution is good schools that are responsive to our youth's emotional and physical needs.**

In their report, the CDC clearly showed “that a sense of being cared for, supported, and belonging at school — called “school connectedness” — had an important effect on students during a time of severe disruption. Youth who felt connected to adults and peers at school were significantly less likely than those who did not to report persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness (35% vs. 53%); that they seriously considered attempting suicide (14% vs. 26%); or attempted suicide (6% vs. 12%). In other words, a school that cares for the whole child, a school like Alverno Heights Academy brings hope and healing to our youngest members.

Alverno is a place where students of many denominations come to feel community and to be nurtured body and spirit into their future by caring educators in a safe environment. Sierra Madre depends on our youngest members to ensure a strong tomorrow. We need good citizens who will uphold our values and a workforce that is stable because one day these children will be helping us. As Nelson Mandela noted, "There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than how it treats its children." As the city moves to action, I wonder how our elected leaders care for our children.

Your vote is an important one. I urge you to consider our children and recognize the exigency of this moment because caring for our youngest is caring for all. One neighbor's need cannot be confused with our community's greatest need.

Mayor Garcia, I urge you to protect the true treasures of Sierra Madre, our children.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Flores



**Venskus & Associates**  
A PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION

603 WEST OJAI AVE., SUITE F  
OJAI, CALIFORNIA 93023  
TEL: 805-272-8621

1055 WILSHIRE BLVD., SUITE 1996  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90017  
TEL: 213-482-4200

March 14, 2023

**SENT BY ELECTRONIC MAIL ONLY**

Sierra Madre City Council  
c/o  
Vincent Gonzalez  
Aleks Giragosian  
Sierra Madre City Clerk Office  
Email: [VGonzalez@cityofsierramadre.com](mailto:VGonzalez@cityofsierramadre.com)  
Email: [agiragosian@chwlaw.us](mailto:agiragosian@chwlaw.us)  
Email: [PublicComment@CityofSierraMadre.com](mailto:PublicComment@CityofSierraMadre.com)

**APPEAL RE: THE SIERRA MADRE PLANNING COMMISSION'S APPROVAL OF AMENDMENT TO CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT AND ADDENDUM TO MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION TO UPDATE THE ALVERNO HEIGHTS ACADEMY MASTER PLAN TO ALLOW FOR PERMANENT CLASSROOMS FOR K-8 AND OTHER CAMPUS IMPROVEMENTS**

This letter is submitted in support of Kristin and Keith Stephens' appeal of the Sierra Madre Planning Commission's decision in the above-entitled proceeding pursuant to Sierra Madre Municipal Code § 17.66.020 (B). This letter, which must be placed into the council file and made a part of the administrative record, provides public comment in response to the Applicant's indication that it now wants to revise the project.

This letter specifically addresses the issue raised during discussions with the City that the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act ("RLUIP") prevents the city from imposing certain permit conditions on Alverno Heights Academy due to its religious character. Appellants respect the religious identity of the Academy, but respectfully submit that the imposition of a few simple permit conditions to abate ongoing nuisance activities and violations of CEQA will not work a substantial burden on any religious exercise at the Academy.

42 USCS § 2000cc contains two separate provisions. The first is a "substantial burden on religious exercise" provision and the second is a "equal treatment" provision. The substantial burden provision prohibits governments from implementing a land use regulation that imposes a substantial burden on the religious exercise of a person, including a religious assembly or institution, unless the government demonstrates that imposition of the burden on that person, assembly, or institution (A) is in furtherance of a compelling governmental interest; and (B) is the least restrictive means of furthering that compelling governmental interest." (42 U.S.C.S. § 2000cc.)

The equal treatment provision does not require a showing of religious exercise and instead requires that governments treat secular and non-secular institutions equally in land use decisions. (*Ibid.*) The city does not appear to be concerned about a violation of the equal treatment provision. The city is concerned that the imposition of permit conditions may be violation of the substantial burden provision. The substantial burden provision will not be an issue with this project.

The threshold issue in a substantial burden claim in this case will be whether engaging in athletic activity constitutes religious exercise. The RLUIPA defines religious exercise as including “any exercise of religion, whether or not compelled by, or central to, a system of religious belief “and states that “The use, building, or conversion of real property for the purpose of religious exercise shall be considered to be religious exercise of the person or entity that uses or intends to use the property for that purpose.” (42 USCS § 2000cc-5) The city and appellant appear to be in agreement that there is scant authority making a definitive determination as to whether participation in sports, in and of itself, constitutes religious exercise.

The city attorney cites *Marianist Province of United States v. City of Kirkwood* (2019 8<sup>th</sup> Cir.) 944 F.3d 996, 1000 and correctly points out that the case did not decide the issue of whether engaging in sports constitutes religious activity. So it is unpersuasive on this threshold issue. The city attorney also cites to *Edgewood High Sch. of the Sacred Heart, Inc. v. City of Madison*, 2022 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 233570, but in that case, the court again assumed, without definitively deciding, that sports activity is an important element of the school’s religious exercise. The court even stated that sports activity being an important element of a school’s religious exercise is “certainly not a given.” (*Ibid.*) There is no evidence in the record that suggests AHA’s sports activities are an important element of its religious mission and religious exercise. Thus, the city can safely decide to regulate the sports activities on the parking lot.

Even if we assume (without conceding) that sports activities do constitute religious exercise, the applicant has not presented any evidence that the proposed permit conditions would be substantial burden on religious exercise. Here in the ninth circuit, the courts have stated the following:

“We have explained that a substantial burden ‘must place more than inconvenience on religious exercise.’ *Id.* (quoting *Guru Nanak*, 456 F.3d at 988). Instead, a challenged land use regulation must impose a ‘significantly great restriction or onus upon [religious] exercise.’ *Foursquare Gospel*, 673 F.3d at 1067 (quoting *San Jose Christian Coll.*, 360 F.3d at 1034); see also *Guru Nanak*, 456 F.3d at 988-89. Our previous cases indicate that some factors we consider in determining the existence of a substantial burden include, but are not necessarily limited to, whether the government’s reasons for denying an application were arbitrary, such that they could easily apply to future applications by the religious group; whether the religious group has ready alternatives available to it or whether the alternatives would entail substantial uncertainty, delay, or expense; and whether the religious group was precluded **from using other sites in the city**. See *San Jose Christian Coll.*, 360 F.3d at 1035-36; *Guru Nanak*, 456 F.3d at 989; *Foursquare Gospel*, 673 F.3d at 1067, 1070. These cases demonstrate that our approach to determining the presence or absence of a substantial burden is to look to the totality of the circumstances.” (*New Harvest Christian Fellowship v. City of Salinas* (2022) 29 F.4th 596.)(Emphasis added.)

The *New Harvest* court further stated “Looking, then, to the totality of the circumstances, we agree with the district court that New Harvest has failed to demonstrate a substantial burden. That is so for three primary reasons, none of which alone is necessarily dispositive....First, New Harvest has not shown that the Assembly Uses Provision precludes it from conducting worship services in the Beverly Building....Second, even if we were to conclude that it would be a substantial burden for New Harvest to conduct worship on the second floor or to remodel the first floor, New Harvest has not shown that it was precluded from using other sites within the City....Finally, New Harvest’s wholesale failure of proof concerning available alternatives is more significant because New Harvest purchased a building that it knew at the time was subject to unique zoning restrictions that would preclude it from conducting worship services on the first floor. (*New Harvest Christian Fellowship, supra*, (2022) 29 F.4th 596.)

Here, the applicant has introduced no evidence of why moving the sports activities to other locations on its campus, or indeed elsewhere in the city would be infeasible. Nor has the applicant denied that it previously used other locations in the city for sports activities. Financial infeasibility would appear to lack merit given that the Academy has recently taken out a \$10,000,000 mortgage on the property in 2020. (Exhibit A.)

Indeed, the other cases cited by the city appear to support the fact that no substantial burden would be imposed by the proposed permit conditions. One case cited by the city states “We agree with other circuits that have concluded requiring a religious institution to use feasible alternative locations for religious exercise does not constitute a substantial burden. See, e.g., *San Jose Christian Coll. v. City of Morgan Hill*, 360 F.3d 1024, 1035 (9th Cir. 2004) (finding that, although a Christian college was not permitted to provide religious education at its desired location, this was not a substantial burden because the college did not demonstrate that it was ‘precluded from using other sites within the city’); *Midrash Sephardi, Inc. v. Town of Surfside*, 366 F.3d 1214, 1227-28 (11th Cir. 2004) (concluding that requiring a synagogue to relocate to a different location was not a substantial burden even though it required elderly congregants to ‘walk[] a few extra blocks’). In a factually similar situation, the Sixth Circuit found that a Christian school was not substantially burdened by the denial of a special-use permit to relocate its school to a new, more convenient location because the school could still carry out its religious mission at its current location. *Livingston Christian Schs. v. Genoa Charter Twp.*, 858 F.3d 996, 1007-09 (6th Cir. 2017).” (*Marianist Province of United States v. City of Kirkwood* (2019 8<sup>th</sup> Cir.) 944 F.3d 996, 1000.)

Another case cited by the city, *Corp. of the Catholic Archbishop of Seattle v. City of Seattle* (2014 W.D. Wash.) 28 F.Supp.3d 1163, did discuss sports, but it involved an equal treatment claim not a substantial burden claim. The issue was therefore not whether sports constituted an exercise of religion, but whether the institution was being treated equally with secular schools in engaging in sports activity. It is therefore inapposite. Even if the city finds that imposing the proposed permit conditions on the applicant would be a substantial burden, which based on the above case law, it would not be, the city may lawfully do so if it is in furtherance of a compelling governmental interest; and is the least restrictive means of furthering that compelling governmental interest. (42 U.S.C.S. § 2000cc.)

Here, imposing permit conditions the applicant would further the compelling governmental interest of preventing a public nuisance, private nuisance and violations of the California Environmental Quality Act with respect to the exceedance of thresholds of significance for Noise Impacts. Moving activity occurring on the Michillinda Parking lot to another location on campus or indeed elsewhere in the city would be the least restrictive means of furthering that compelling governmental interest. It would in no way prevent the academy from engaging in sports activity or exercising religion.

The proposed permit condition for the Michillinda Parking lot contained in the most recent staff report reads as follows: 11. Proposed Use Restrictions on the Michillinda Parking Lot – In order to mitigate potential noise impacts from the Michillinda Parking Lot, the main uses shall be for vehicle parking. Minor uses of the parking lot would be for recesses in the event of the Multi-Purpose Field being unavailable due to rain events and for basket/ball and volleyball for 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> students. The first priority for scheduling the majority of games and practices shall be on the sports court, once completed. The lot may be used for public safety demonstrations and a gathering space for public safety emergencies. There shall be no night games or practices. There shall be no amplification used. The Michillinda Parking lot would not be used for non-school or third-party events, with the exception of City events and permitted filming and photography under Chapter 5.36 of the Sierra Madre Municipal Code.

Appellants recommend the following revisions to this language, in addition, to the imposition of the proposed conditions in our March 9<sup>th</sup> Appeal Letter:

Proposed Use Restrictions on the Michillinda Parking Lot – In order to mitigate potential noise impacts from the Michillinda Parking Lot, the permitted uses on the Michillinda Parking Lot shall be:

1. Vehicle parking.
2. Recesses in the event of visible water pooling on the grounds and the playing surfaces of the Multi-Purpose Sports Field after a rain event. After the construction of permanent sports court, the temporary sports (which shall be retained) shall provide the axillary play/recess area in the event of rain events.
3. Sports Practice and Games for Basketball and Volleyball for 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade: offsite or Michillinda Parking Lot until the Sports Court is constructed (the Sports Court must be constructed within 90 days of project approval).

4. After 90 days from project approval, the sports and games for Basketball and Volleyball must occur on the Permanent Sports Court, temporary sport court, multi-purpose building, Wilson Parking Lot or offsite.
5. Public safety demonstrations and a gathering space for public safety emergencies.
6. There shall be no night games or practices on the Michillinda Parking Lot at anytime, with night time being defined as 5:00 p.m.
7. There shall be no amplification used on the Michillinda Parking Lot at any time.
8. The Michillinda Parking lot would not be used for non-school or third-party events.
9. School related religious assemblies shall not occur on Michillinda Parking lot but shall be permitted in quad area.
10. Landscaping plan for Grandview under the 2010 CUP landscape plan agreed to prevent light trespass and glare onto the neighboring homes. This would include replanting the vegetation and trees removed in 2022 along the Michillinda parking lot to be completed by September 1, 2023.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason Sanders". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Jason Sanders, Esq.

# EXHIBIT A

**200 N Michillinda Ave, Sierra Madre, CA 91024-1616, Los Angeles County**

APN: 5768-001-004 CLIP: 5165872980

**MULTIPLE BUILDING PROPERTY SUMMARY**

	<b>Beds</b>	<b>Fu Baths</b>	<b>Ha f Baths</b>	<b>Sa e Pr ce</b>	<b>Sa e Date</b>
	N/A	4	N/A	\$700,000	N/A
	<b>B dg Sq Ft</b>	<b>Lot Sq Ft</b>	<b>Yr Bu t</b>	<b>Type</b>	
	49,720	526,726	1960	PRVT SCL	

**OWNER INFORMATION**

Owner Name	Mt Alverno High School	Tax Billing Zip	91024
Mail Owner Name	Mt Alverno High School	Tax Billing Zip 4	1616
Tax Billing Address	200 N Michillinda Ave	Owner Occupied	Yes
Tax Billing City & State	Sierra Madre, CA		

**LOCATION INFORMATION**

Zip Code	91024	School District	Pasadena
Carrier Route	C003	Comm College District Code	Pasadena
Zoning	SRR111	Census Tract	4305.02
Tract Number	10174	Topography	Rolling/Hilly

**TAX INFORMATION**

APN	5768 001 004	Tax Area	7516
Exemption(s)	Misc	Lot	26
% mproved	71%	Water Tax Dist	San Gabriel Vly
Legal Description	TR=10174 FOR DESC SEE ASSES SOR'S MAPS		

**ASSESSMENT & TAX**

Assessment Year	2021	2020	2019
Assessed Value Total	\$3,953,137	\$2,832,062	\$3,007,426
Assessed Value Land	\$1,140,800	\$1,129,103	\$1,106,964
Assessed Value mproved	\$2,812,337	\$1,702,959	\$1,900,462
YOY Assessed Change (\$)	\$1,121,075	\$175,364	
YOY Assessed Change (%)	39.59%	5.83%	

Tax Year	Total Tax	Change (\$)	Change (%)
2019	\$16,014		
2020	\$19,988	\$3,974	24.81%
2021	\$16,655	\$3,333	16.68%

Special Assessment	Tax Amount
Safe Clean Water83	\$430.01
Sgv Mosquito&Vcd80	\$14.30
Trauma/Emerg Srv86	\$2,108.12
Cnty San Dist 1556	\$6,078.27
Flood Control 62	\$4,490.43
<b>Total Of Special Assessments</b>	<b>\$13,121.13</b>

**CHARACTERISTICS**

County Land Use	School Private	Total Baths	4
Universal Land Use	Private School	Full Baths	4
Lot Acres	12.092	Year Built	1960
Lot Area	526,726	Building Type	Type Unknown
Building Sq Ft	49,720	# of Buildings	5
Gross Area	49,720		

**SELL SCORE**

Value As Of	2022 06 26 03:59:22
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**LAST MARKET SALE & SALES HISTORY**

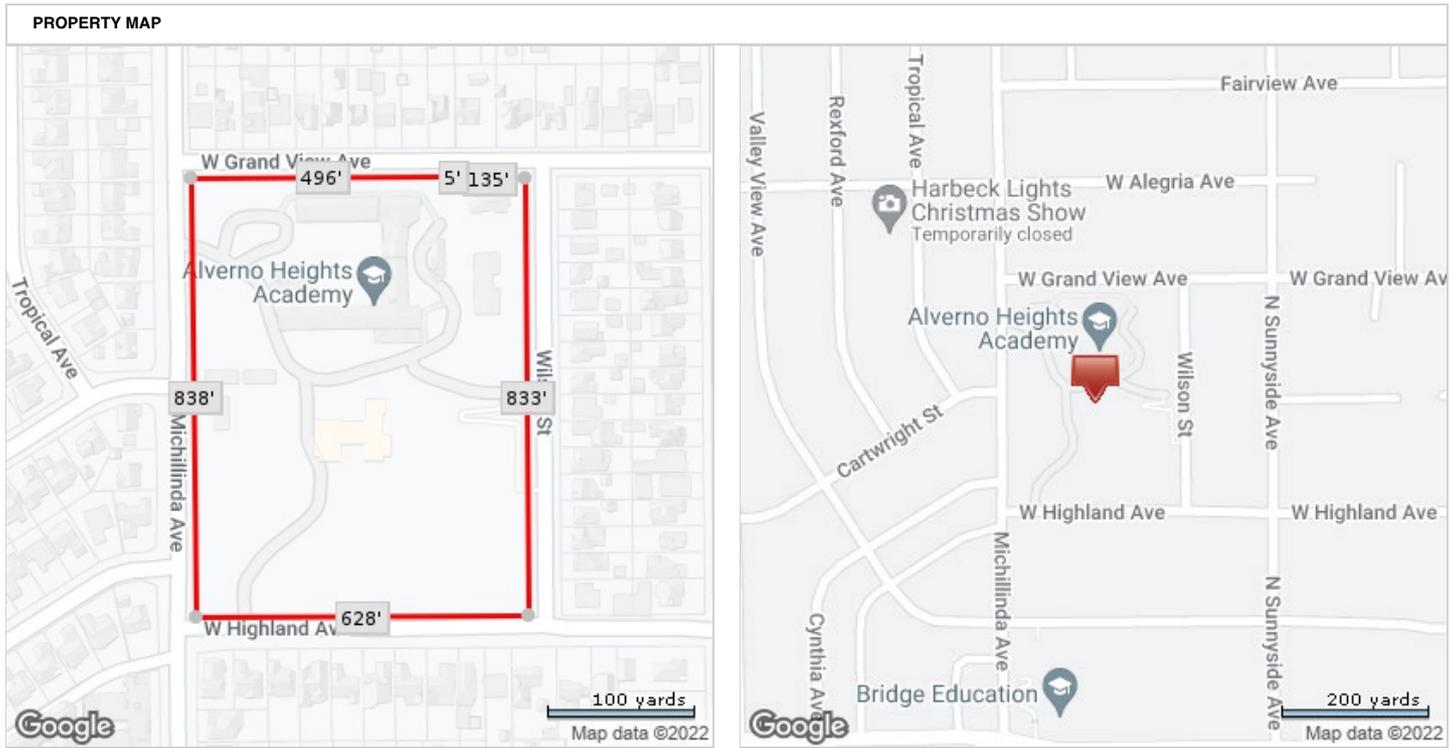
Recording Date	01/05/1979	Sale Type	Full
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Sale Price	\$700,000
Price Per Square Feet	\$14.08
Document Number	16695

Deed Type	Deed (Reg)
Owner Name	Mt Alverno High School

Recording Date	01/05/1979
Sale Price	\$700,000
Buyer Name	Mt Alverno High School
Document Number	16695
Document Type	Deed (Reg)

MORTGAGE HISTORY					
Mortgage Date	12/03/2020	12/24/2019	04/02/2019	03/03/2017	01/05/1979
Mortgage Amount	\$10,000,000	\$5,500,000	\$4,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$700,000
Mortgage Lender	Farmers & Merchants Bk/Lng Bch	Secured Income Fund I i LLC	Secured Income Fund I i LLC	Community Bk	
Mortgage Code	Conventional	Conventional	Conventional	Conventional	Conventional



Lot Dimensions are Estimated

**BUILDING 1 OF 5**

CHARACTERISTICS			
County Land Use	School Private	Gross Area	49,720
Universal Land Use	Private School	Total Baths	4
Lot Acres	12.092	Year Built	1960
Lot Area	526,726	Building Type	Type Unknown
Building Sq Ft	24,455		

**BUILDING 2 OF 5**

CHARACTERISTICS			
County Land Use	School Private	Building Sq Ft	15,758
Universal Land Use	Private School	Gross Area	49,720
Lot Acres	12.092	Year Built	1926
Lot Area	526,726	Building Type	Type Unknown

**BUILDING 3 OF 5**

CHARACTERISTICS			
County Land Use	School Private	Building Sq Ft	1,586
Universal Land Use	Private School	Gross Area	49,720
Lot Acres	12.092	Year Built	1927

Lot Area	526,726	Building Type	Type Unknown
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**BUILDING 4 OF 5**

CHARACTERISTICS			
County Land Use	School Private	Building Sq Ft	3,506
Universal Land Use	Private School	Gross Area	49,720
Lot Acres	12.092	Year Built	1926
Lot Area	526,726		

**BUILDING 5 OF 5**

CHARACTERISTICS			
County Land Use	School Private	Building Sq Ft	4,415
Universal Land Use	Private School	Gross Area	49,720
Lot Acres	12.092	Year Built	1968
Lot Area	526,726		

## Amber Tardif

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**From:** Philip Yao [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 14, 2023 2:01 PM  
**To:** Public Comment  
**Cc:** Alexander Arrieta  
**Subject:** Trail Maintenance/Parking, Huntington Beach Lawsuit, Sierra Madre 2022 Home Sales Statistics, and Meadows Development Statistics

**CAUTION:** This message is from an EXTERNAL SENDER - be CAUTIOUS, particularly with links and attachments.

Attention City Council,

I want to bring up a few items to your attention:

1. The first item is the Mount Wilson trail and Bailey Canyon trail parking. The fact that these are enjoyed is great! But the parking by these facilities on the weekends are horrendous. In addition, the Sierra Madre Community Foundation and Fletcher Trail Maintenance Fund are in need of money to maintain these trails that are severely damaged by the recent storms. Funds are obviously needed. One way to address both is to implement paid weekend parking via self-serve parking kiosks. Of course, Sierra Madre residents with a radius of two blocks will have to be issued paid parking exemption stickers for their automobiles.
2. The second item is the lawsuit against the State filed by Huntington Beach. I admire and I'm sure many Sierra Madre citizens also admire what Huntington Beach is doing to preserve their community against unreasonable high density housing mandates by the State of California.
3. The third item is the Webb Martin 2022 Sierra Madre home sales statistics that was published in the 2/4/2023 Mountain View News. Please review against what has been proposed for the Meadows.
  - a. Single-family – 92 sold and average 2,254 square feet.
  - b. Condos/townhomes – 19 sold and 1,484 square feet.
4. Lastly, I called a number of Sierra Madre residents to let them know that there will be a Special Election for Measure M on May 9, 2023. One whom I left a message for called back saying that I'd misrepresented the size of the proposed Meadow's houses. To clear that up, I contacted Mr. Joshua Wolf, Sierra Madre Assistant Planner, and got the following:
  - a. The Meadows project consists of:
    - i. 42 houses.
    - ii. Minimum lot size 7,800 square feet.
    - iii. 74% will be 2 story (31 will be two 2 story and 11 will be single story).
    - iv. 17 will be 3,775 square feet, 15 will be 3,650 square feet, and 10 will be 3,200 square feet; City Council, through the Specific Plan, allowed the Meadows

houses to exceed normal lot coverage, 50% lot coverage which exceeds normal lot coverage of 40%.

v. Median of 3,650 and weighted average of 3,594 square feet.

b. Houses adjacent to the proposed Meadows project:

i. 50 houses adjacent to Mater Dolorosa/Meadows.

ii. Median lot size 9,216, average lot size 11,044.

iii. 5 are 2 story (11%) and 45 are single story.

iv. Median house size 1,918 and average house size 2,008.

Items 3 and 4 show how bad a project the Meadows is.

Regards,

Philip Yao

## Amber Tardif

---

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 14, 2023 2:00 PM  
**To:** Public Comment  
**Subject:** Alverno agenda item for tonight's meeting my public comment

**CAUTION:** This message is from an EXTERNAL SENDER - be CAUTIOUS, particularly with links and attachments.

Dear Honorable Mayor and City council of Sierra Madre,

In review of the 2011 meetings and that CUP my family is wondering why no one is talking about the tennis courts that were approved? What happened to the tennis courts that were in the plans to be relocated by the field? The portables should never have gone where the Multipurpose building is slated for. The sport court could be where that tennis court was approved for. No one is saying Alverno can't pray or play or both but there is nothing that prevents them from moving these activities to a more appropriate location. Last week the field was the site for all the recess and play. I walked by. It was the same kids but the lower and soft foot print of the field and the baseball diamond made it so much less noise than Michillinda. The kids were also much farther from the neighboring homes.

Prior to the 2010 expansion the courts were unusable. And so were the basketball and volleyball courts sited along side the East side of the Villa hedges. Alverno has been using offsite facilities for well over a decade. Check the neighbor meeting minutes or listen to us. If the high school leaves then please insist the school bring their k-8 CYO teams to practice and play there or anywhere else but next to our home.

Alverno didn't use the parking lot when their courts were falling apart and they asked the city to allow them to expand in 2005 and then they came back in 2009. My family sent our girls in the 90's. Alverno is no longer that school. True they had basketball and volleyball courts but they were decrepit. The courts ceased being worthy of play prior to that final CUP. Everyone agreed that the gym building was a great idea in my family AND it had a condition to shut the doors during use PLUS it had to be built to not send noise across the street.

Alverno told us neighbors that the massive sports building would go along Michillinda. Some of our girls left for other schools like La Salle and Westridge. Alverno administration was full of promises that did not materialize. I can't believe Alverno still hasn't built that gym or the tennis courts along the field. They have for years gone off the grounds for practices and to host home games. Alverno has said at one commission meeting they were using AGBU and we know for a fact we attended a practice at St. Philips of the Apostle.

Is the sport court still to be built?

Vegetation is not a practical sound mitigator. *"Trees and shrubs can decrease highway-traffic noise levels if high enough, wide enough, and dense enough (meaning it cannot be seen through), but are often impractical. It would take at least 100 feet of dense vegetation to provide the same benefit as the smallest feasible noise wall. Trees do provide a visual shield because they need to be laced to allow for proper growth and to prevent disease. They provide some psychological benefit. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has not approved using vegetation for noise abatement."* Neither should the City Council expect the city staff to

What will mitigate the sound? Will there be a sound wall? Will there be a future building? When? Because in the meantime the noise along the western side of campus will remain unmitigated from what I see as an even bigger lower school.

Which brings me to how did Alverno get to violate their current TUP or CUP for keeping the k-8 student body to 200 but admits they are up to 253? The high school option has been rumored for closure since 2010. I feel for the way the administration handled telling the staff they are letting go, the poor girls and their families. And now Alverno is talking about bringing it back?

Alverno needs to accept they have put the cart before the horse and concede to something as we are sick and tired of the parking lot sports and other use noise, the playground, the parking congestion, the traffic hazards, and then their film and other Villa wedding rentals. They are acting like they are entitled when it is they that need a permit to run a school and their ever annoying Villa rentals. How can the city let Alverno use the parking lot? It has no walls or roof like the gym. My family and I can't believe how ludicrous this current use has come about without a valid study. If the city council can fix this, please do.

Sincerely, Ms. Rosadella

## Amber Tardif

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**From:** Martin Ericks [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 14, 2023 2:48 PM  
**To:** Public Comment  
**Subject:** Item # 3 public hearing regarding Alverno

**CAUTION:** This message is from an EXTERNAL SENDER - be CAUTIOUS, particularly with links and attachments.

Dear Sirs and Madams,

We have been patiently waiting to see and hoping that this new expansion will eliminate the noise from the Michillinda parking lot use along with the ever expanding unpermitted and not studied impacts of the playground. Instead, Alverno is making a war of it and that is not very Christian thing to do.

It is a conflict of interest for the city to have a contract with the school. It was a conflict of interest to be on the board of trustees a decade ago. The relationship between city staff and the school continues to be incestuous so I am not buying the staff insertion of religious entitlement argument. Religious entitlement doesn't mean free reign on the land. What are we back in the ages of the missionaries again? It's OK to plunder and claim divine right if it's under the name of God? No There is a definition to this and I looked it up because I don't think our city Council city attorney is fully informing of what RLUIPA really means as usual. He will slant it towards the interest of Alverno like he always has. It's maddening that we can't rebut except to send this.

What Alverno is doing is right out of the la salle high school's playbook. Build it then say oops when neighbors call them out to the city. Pasadena then says well they already have it. Sierra Madre cares about their residents this blatant misuse and building should not be rewarded even if Alverno now tries to claim religious entitlement.

The court in the parking lot is a few striped lines. The hoops and nets are temporary and easily moved. Move it. The residents do not believe this school which is not even under the diocese should get special privileges or rewarded for their lack of consideration of where they chose to put this k-8. Get the cars off the street like last Thursday. NO student activity took place on it and well before 3PM cars were lining up in it as they should be.

I couldn't get past the first two pages of tonight's agenda. City staff is not paid to favor applicants but apparently every time Alverno has an application it is so obvious. They are favored by the city and we do not understand what is going on. What about your residents? Chopped liver? We pay taxes, Alverno doesn't. We do just the same amount of volunteering and more in Sierra Madre without boasting about it. We support our public schools. There are too many private schools all claiming the same thing. We care just as much if not more than this school about our neighborhood, our city, our resources. Alverno is serving a handful of Sierra Madre families the rest are coming from out side of town enjoying but not paying for our infrastructure.

Why did we sign a contract with the city attorney's firm when they don't even understand land-use law, and sequ. Unfortunately, residents like me can write these letters and try and open the eyes of our city counsel as it did nothing to educate the Planning Commission. We all know you have talks outside of these meetings which we cannot be privy to. I call foul on having discussions outside of the appellant so the city and alverno can get on the same page. I think for one these discussions with the school and staff should be public, they are supposed to be recorded in some manner. Where can they be found?

Please consider that throughout this latest expansion that Alverno has never come to the table to actually discuss the use of the parking lot, except to say they wouldn't change it or even consider alternatives. They failed to meet with the neighbors. Sure they did the prescribed meetings with the neighbors that they ran and they controlled the narrative. They didn't even want to talk about the parking lot. Ken Farfsing admitted to not bringing the plans with the sports court at the first one. We asked others who attended because we couldn't meet their ridiculous entry requirements. Our neighbors attended. They were there to talk about the "expansion" plans Alverno refused to discuss it. Alverno even left some neighbors comments off their minutes and changed the wording of others. Knowing this, please listen to us since Alverno will not.

Alverno's behavior tells you something. Alverno has things to hide just like they withheld the closing of the high school until it was too late for kids to find other high schools and enrollment was closed.weird. We are not the only neighbors asking for one thing - move the parking lot we don't want to fight over this but Alverno seems to have the money to do it. We already know there's going to be parking lot noise. We already know there is noise. We heard the softball last week and it's way across their

property. We have maybe a half an acre, they have 12. Alverno can move the activity and make it a parking lot for their family, deliveries and guests.

As I said, it isn't quiet even when the school is not in session. On Saturday we could feel the bass from their party rental, and a bus sat in the parking lot idling not once, but it came back and it was here after 10 o'clock, so we continue to ask you to consider the cumulative usage of the school and their business for profit run out of the Villa to be a part of the overuse of this Michillinda parking lot.

The Villa use should be combined with the school and not have a whole separate CUP so it looks like we are only dealing with school noise. Since 2020 or early 2021 the K-8 has been constantly outside. Alverno moved everything for the k-8 to this parking lot.

I thought I would be writing a note of thank you for balancing your difficult job, and seeing that we still have a village atmosphere, like the rest of the city. Do not cowtow to the city staff and attorney who clearly loves Alverno. This institution has been trading on a reputation of what they were 30 years ago. This is a brand new school. This K-8 has only about 2 years of reputation and it's unsavory.

Pulling out the religious rights reference is a slap in the neighbors faces. Alverno has been written up more than once in the news for bad behavior. Alverno can't say they are religious or else they are the most corrupt religious school I've ever encountered. For far too long, they've been trading on that old reputation of what was once a great school. Since the addition of the K-8 they did nothing when there was a bullying incident between the Asian and African-American students. Instead, they expelled the family who wanted something done about it. That didn't make the problem go away there are still issues and racial tensions regardless of what they put in there handbook about not tolerating. Their new principal was fired from St Ritas and stole the student rolodex to start the K-8 and bring staff. That is not a very christian behavior.

Trying to steal vaccines from the poor and elderly in Long Beach, when neighbors warned the school of several films that they had on site were being done without all of our signatures (they didn't stop the filming but they could have), their film and rental employee embezzled at least 6 figures from them, and there's more but these are documented and what they have been caught doing. There are CUP violations that have been reported and we get no response. Even calling out the police we are told that an Alverno staffer says this or that violation is OK.

Alverno cares little to maintain any control over the noise and traffic so please do it for them. Move the parking lot games anywhere but where they are now. Deal with the violation of the K-8 student count. Fix the traffic since the staggering condition is useless. Thank you.

Yours,  
M. Ericks

**Amber Tardif**

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 14, 2023 2:59 PM  
**To:** Public Comment  
**Subject:** item Number 3 alverno

CAUTION: This message is from an EXTERNAL SENDER - be CAUTIOUS, particularly with links and attachments.

When will the portables be moved since the High School will be closed?

When will the parking lot stop being used by the K-8?

Please do not accept the argument that neighbors are strangling Alverno's religion. We are not. This use was never around int 2009 - 2021 and it shouldn't be grandfathered in now. Alverno has many places to move these activities Please do not allow any use that was not in their original project description.

No one is saying don't play that can't be mitigated right next to the homes that cannot be mitigated

Thank you

## Amber Tardif

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**From:** Jenna Karvunidis [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 14, 2023 3:00 PM  
**To:** Public Comment  
**Subject:** SUPPORT for Alverno Lower School

**CAUTION:** This message is from an EXTERNAL SENDER - be CAUTIOUS, particularly with links and attachments.

Hello,

I wish to express support for Alverno and any expansion projects they have. Our family moved to the area to be near Alverno school, so we are well aware of both the "pitfalls" and benefits of being near a school. Any neighbor who buys a home near a school had actual or constructive knowledge of these some issues and the price they paid for their home reflected the circumstance of a school benign nearby.

It is heartbreaking when my child comes home after school and says she can't have any fun at recess because they must be quiet. This example shows though that Alverno makes considerable effort to mind their manners. I wish the neighbors did the same.

Jenna Karvunidis