

This time, neighborhood fears didn't stop cohousing project



Members of Fair Oaks EcoHousing hope to begin construction for the project on 3.7 acres near New York Avenue and Fair Oaks Boulevard. It's a cohousing development -- a small residential community with shared spaces.

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After three tries, a group trying to establish a cohousing community is ready to begin building one in Fair Oaks.

Early next year, members of Fair Oaks EcoHousing [hope to begin construction](#) for the project on 3.8 acres near New York Avenue and Fair Oaks Boulevard.

[Marty Maskall](#), a project manager, investor and future resident of the project, said one version of the project faced significant neighborhood opposition. Two such efforts -- in Orangevale and Folsom -- foundered before the current project launched.

Cohousing involves developing a small residential community with shared spaces, making it neither a single-family subdivision nor a condominium project.

“People don’t like change, and when it’s right in your backyard, it’s hard to face,” she said. “We all fear the worst.”

Fair Oaks EcoHousing’s investors – almost all of them planning to live there after it’s built – did considerable outreach and made site changes to allay those fears. Maskall said she especially stressed that the project would include a community clubhouse available to neighbors as well, and project residents who’d watch out for everyone.

“It’s so much better than doing big fences and walls,” she said. The extensive outreach and communication appeared to pay off when the project went before **Sacramento County’s** Planning Commission this week and got approved without a dissenting voice or vote.

Ultimately, Maskall believes Fair Oaks EcoHousing will improve the neighborhood. Her group will give site tours on April 25 and May 9, with construction expected to take about a year.

Ben van der Meer covers real estate, development, construction, transportation and the business of sports for the Sacramento Business Journal.