

Interview with

Philip (Phil) Cosby

conducted by Julie Solomon

for the “Understanding the History of Housing in Mountain View: Stories of Racism, Anti-Discrimination, and Movement towards Inclusion” project by the City of Mountain View’s Human Relations Commission,

in collaboration with Senior Lecturer Michael Kahan and team from Stanford University.

Mountain View Historical Association
Mountain View Public Library

Conducted on June 30, 2022

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of “Understanding the History of Housing in Mountain View: Stories of Racism, Anti-Discrimination, and Movement towards Inclusion” is to document the history of discrimination and efforts to fight discrimination in housing in the city of Mountain View, California. Some of the information collected was shared with the public at an event sponsored by the Mountain View Human Relations Commission, held on July 26, 2022. In order to make the interviews available to researchers and members of the public, they will be added to the historical collection of the Mountain View Historical Association (MVHS) and/or the Mountain View Public Library (MVPL) and made available for public use. They may also be shared with other libraries and collections, including those at Stanford University.

BIO

Julie Solomon, PhD, has served as a Commissioner on the City of Mountain View Human Relations Commission since 2016, and she has been a resident of Mountain View since 2003. Julie is a program evaluation consultant in the health sector, by profession.

ABSTRACT



Philip (Phil) Cosby is a current Belmont resident that moved to Mountain View in 1975. He has been involved with the Cafecito at St. Athanasius Church and PACT-SJ diligently collaborating and supporting low-income, Latinx residents of Mountain View in their struggles for fair and affordable housing. Specifically, he speaks about the demolition of 2005 Rock Street, a previously affordable housing complex that was demolished to build luxury row houses, and how many residents were evicted.

Date of Interview: June 30, 2022

Interviewer: Julie Solomon

Interviewee: Phil Cosby

Julie Solomon: 00:00

Okay wow, oh!

Phil Cosby: 00:10

Well, are you going to ask me questions? Or do you want me to run through sort of the history of trying to have adjusted housing here in Mountain View?

Julie Solomon: 00:23

Well, I think we're going to do some of both. How would you like to start? And by the way, the way you started...

Julie Solomon: 00:30

It depends on what you have planned, so why don't you sketch out what you have planned? And then And then I can do what I feel comfortable with.

Julie Solomon: 00:39

Okay. Kamilah do you have thoughts? Because I had one thought, but go ahead.

Kamilah Arteaga: 00:46

No, I just think maybe we should since we started recording, maybe we can like to state the purpose of the project, introduce ourselves. And then we can start the questions.

Julie Solomon: 00:55

Thank you. Thank you for reminding me about that. So yes, I have a little script here that I believe I'm supposed to read. My name is Julie Solomon. And I'm an interviewer working with the City of Mountain View's Human Relations Commission in partnership with the Mountain View Historical Association, on a project entitled, "Understanding the History of Housing in Mountain View: Stories of Racism, Anti-Discrimination, and Movement toward Inclusion." And Kamilah, would you also like to state your name?

Phil Cosby: 01:42

Your audio, it was inaudible.

Kamilah Arteaga: 01:46

Can you hear me now?

Phil Cosby:

Yes.

Kamilah Arteaga:

Okay. Sorry. My mic was just far away. I'm Kamilah Arteaga. And I'm the research assistant for the project. I'm a Stanford student for the summer. I'm the Research Assistant. Yes.

Julie Solomon: 01:57

Thank you. So the purpose of this project is to document the history of discrimination and efforts to fight discrimination in housing in the city of Mountain View, California. Some of the information collected will be shared with the public event sponsored by the Mountain View Human Relations Commission, and that event is scheduled for July 26, 2022. Today is June 30, 2022. If I've got that, right. I'm interviewing, we are interviewing, excuse me, Phil Cosby. And because of the ongoing COVID 19 pandemic, we're conducting this interview via zoom from our respective residences. I believe I'm in my residence in Mountain View. And I believe that covers our intro. So thank you very much. And Phil. Two things. One is I'm excited by what you were sharing on the screen let's talk about that. And also, you started the last time we spoke you started off saying something about your own experience in which buying a residence was a certain number of times the cost of your annual

Phil Cosby: 03:23

We could go over that.

Julie Solomon: 03:24

Great. Take it away Phil.

Phil Cosby: 03:28

Well, thank you, Julie. So nice of you to invite me to give this. As I've said I moved to Mountain View and 1975, I bought a one bedroom condo on Rengstorff and pretty much devoted my time to working as a scientist at Stanford Research Institute doing research, coming and going home. Going to church went to St. Athanasius on Rengstorff also, and pretty much being oblivious to whatever else was going on in Mountain View. The nice thing about the condo was it was pretty close to 101. And so I could actually get there from work pretty easily and leave to go to work pretty easily. So not too concerned with what was going on. I remember at that time, there were a few farms over on the other side of 101 where there is now Shoreline Park. People had horses and gardens, and stuff like that. And somehow all of that disappeared over a few years, to create this beautiful Shoreline Park that we have now. So as I was saying, I wasn't too concerned with what was going on, until about 1998. We were getting reports from the people in our parish, that they were being priced out of their homes, that rents were jumping up, or the landlords were evicting them, because they found that they could get much higher rents. And ordinarily that wouldn't have mattered, except that by that time I was myself a landlord. I bought a house in another city and I was renting out my little condo to a retired schoolteacher. And I knew that my

rental expenses for the condo were not going up by the 20, or 50, or 100% rent increases other people were experiencing. And so that's what actually got me involved. And one of the first things that I went to was this community meeting in 1998 that they held in the basement of St. Joseph's Church, where they had invited Mountain View Mayor Ralph Faravelli. What they were asking was, and you can see it here [referring to p. 1 of presentation], a specific program which will create new affordable housing each time housing is built. That's the BMR ordinance. They were asking for 10% of the new housing to be sold at a price below market rate that would be affordable to moderate income people. And also, when new commercial property is built, to collect a fee that could be used to build affordable housing. And that's the Commercial Linkage Fee that we have today. We wanted the Mayor to introduce these on the city council's agenda so that the Council could consider doing these things. And at that meeting, you know, he was very, very much sad that people were being priced out of their homes, but he was very adamant about not burdening the busy city council agenda by taking up these things that he felt the city really had no business doing. Well, that's where it started. We disagreed with that. We followed up with a number of us going to city council meetings and speaking. Eventually the Council did put it on their agenda. And the BMR ordinance was enacted the next year, in 1999. But the Commercial Linkage Fee was not. It took a lot more actions. We had one in 2000 at St. Joseph's School where we gathered hundreds of people to talk about the need for, not just having more affordable housing, but also doing something about the ability of landlords to just double or triple the rent in the blink of an eye. We had all six of the candidates for city council at that meeting. And of those candidates, only Nancy Noe¹, who is right here in this photo [referring to p. 5], agreed that the city should study the possibility of regulating rent. Well, let me tell you, she was the only sitting Councilmember that didn't get reelected that Fall. Also, during this time, there were efforts within both Santa Clara County and San Mateo County to get the counties involved in building more housing. At that time, Santa Clara County, in particular, was saying: "it's not the county's job. The county deals with jails, and it deals with hospitals, but not housing." And so we managed to gather first 1000 people at Gunn High School in 2000, and then in 2002, almost 2000 people at the Fox Theater in Redwood City, where we had both sets of county supervisors present. From these we finally got a commitment from the supervisors to actually try to do something about the housing shortage. In particular, to use some of the redevelopment money [they had won a lawsuit and had millions of dollars] to use some of that for affordable housing. And it was also out of this that the Santa Clara County Office of Supportive Housing was established. [In San Mateo County, the Housing Endowment and Regional Trust was created.] We still have these today. But in Mountain View, there was considerable resistance to doing anything for renters. We saw part of this on the previous slide: Candidates Forum in 2000. No one wanted to do anything for tenants. And in fact, there was great resistance to just doing the nexus study for the Commercial Linkage Fee. And it continued on into 2004. We were still building more offices and very, very little housing.

¹ From Phil Cosby: Nancy Noe was Vice-Mayor of Mountain View in 2000 and was running for re-election to the City Council. Of the six Council candidates at the Forum, she was the only one who stated that she was open to the city studying the possibility of using rent stabilization to address the very large rent increases that were occurring within the City. She was also the only incumbent who failed to get re-elected that Fall, should have been mayor in 2001 had she been re-elected.

And so this is how it went, you know, really fighting to try to get the city to do something about making housing more affordable. And eventually it did. I think in about 2004 they finally did do the nexus study and enacted the Commercial Linkage Fee, although with rates that were, you know, like 10% of what was recommended, and even smaller fraction of what the nexus study actually supported. But nevertheless, you know, affordable housing money started to be accumulated. So as we go on, we went through another period, just before the dot-com bust in 2008, where the rents were going up and up and up, we were trying to get Mountain View to at least do what the City of Palo Alto had done: to give the tenant the option of a one year lease. And to have a policy of mandatory mediation. Mediation is, as you know, a voluntary thing. But what was happening in Mountain View was that the tenant would ask for mediation, the mediator would get involved, and then invite the landlord to come to a mediation session, and the landlord would simply ignore it. So we wanted some mechanism to at least have the landlord come and listen to the tenant. But even that was impossible. And this continued on, all the way up to 2014. And in 2014, yet another big surge in rent increases. It was such that we had people- and they were largely Hispanic people in our parish, that were getting rent increase notices like every few months. People were afraid to get up in the morning and open their door because they didn't know whether there would be another rent increase notice waiting for them. I mean, it was that bad. And a one year lease would have helped them. At least with the lease, you could only raise the rent once a year. But this triggered us with various groups in Mountain View to call a candidates forum for the next city council election[referring to p. 7]. And ask: "What should we do about the large rent increases?" "Shouldn't the city at least study what they might do?"; And "what should we do about the homeless and underserved?"; And "what should we do about the small commercial linkage fee when we're building so many offices?" And so we had that session. And all of the candidates except for Greg Unangst said they didn't even want to consider rent control. Greg Unangst was the only one that said "Yes, I think it's important enough that we should study it. Even people like Pat Showalter; she didn't want to study it. Lenny Siegel; he didn't want to commit. You know, that type of thing. So rent control was not anything that most people wanted to deal with. And so what we wound up doing was, we had some of the members of our parish who had experienced this surge of rent increases and evictions, actually go to the city council. [interruption of narrative here while going to p. 12 and orienting on its timeline] And let me scroll down and bring the timeline. I don't know if you can actually read that.

16:42

Wow. Yes. Even without my glasses, I can.

Phil Cosby: 16:46

Okay. So, so this, we have this candidates forum at Trinity United Methodist Church. And with regard to the question of researching rent stabilization in Mountain View, Greg said "strongly agree"; Pat and Lisa and Jim Neal said "strongly disagree". And then Ken, Lenny, Ellen, and others said, "undecided". So I'd gone to the [Council Priorities and Goals] study session in April to try to get this on the council's priorities for the year. And to develop renter protection solutions that included rent stabilization with a Just Cause Eviction component. And the council said, "it is not a priority." And so that's the beginning

of 2015. So we have research meetings with the at Showalter. Another renter protection meeting at Trinity United Methodist Church, research meeting with Kevin Rosenberg, and with Lenny Siegel. [end of interruption - previous narrative continues] And then in desperation, we actually had the people in the community go and, during Item 5 [public comment on items not on council agenda], comment at the council meeting. Get up there and speak in Spanish to try to get the point across to the council members. And, I thought this was a blessing, that people actually got up out of the audience to help translate for them --this wasn't something that the city actually provided translation for. And so Celerina, Concepcion, Hilario, Francisco, and Leticia really stuck their necks out for that. But do you think the council did anything? No! And they broke for the summer. So it was during their summer break that we decided, okay, this [only a small number of people going to Council] is not going to work. And so we started off with gathering small groups of neighbors [referring to top photo on p. 9]. It actually started off with Leticia Rios, right here, inviting a couple of her neighbors into her home. "Let's sit around a cup of coffee and just talk about the problem", you know, the problems that each of their families was experiencing. And then they went out and talked to others that were neighbors, and then the first actual Cafecito² took place [referring to top photo on p. 9]. I've labeled it Ortega Park- it's actually called Klein Park today, at the corner of Ortega and Latham.

Julie Solomon:

Latham.

Phil Cosby:

And then we held this every week. By August 6, we're holding it at that little park outside of Castro School. The number of people had grown [Referring to yet more people in the unseen portion to the right in the August 6 photo on p. 9]. And then by August 8, in Rengstorff Park. And then August 30th, again at the Castro School Park. Until on September 8 [referring to the photos on p. 10 of the plaza and chambers at City Hall], we actually were able to bring out 500 people. And this is the rally for the first city council meeting after the break--500 people. Gathered outside, there were so many people they couldn't get into the chambers. These are people, you know, just in the hallway, watching the proceedings on the TV. And in the council chamber [showing every seat filled and] people standing along the wall. And then three hours of testimonies during Item 5. And fortunately or unfortunately, that did not move them. We had to go back... [referring now to the timeline on p. 9 at the 9/8/2015 entry]- so I'm sorry. Let's go back to here. And so that meeting was on the... I can arrange myself... the sixth.

Julie Solomon: 21:53

The eighth, that's the rally.

Phil Cosby: 21:56

² Cafecito Con Aroma de Justicia; taken from their Facebook page in 2022 (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/164696707425124/>): "Cafecito invites our Community to share their Concerns and Find a way to Develop our voice for Justice with Compassion and Passion in a Safe environment."

You can read it. I can't.

Julie Solomon: 21:59

Summer break. Yep.

Phil Cosby: 22:04

...and do it again at the next council meeting [9/15/2015]. And finally! They scheduled a study session to be held in October. And so we continued with the Cafecitos, we continued with the research meetings with the council members, we had a presentation by this lawyer friend from Stanford, Juliet Brodie on what legal steps we might be taking, and had prayer services for the affected families, et cetera, et cetera. Until we got to this October [10/19/2015] study session meeting, which was held in the Senior Center. And that was largely dominated by testimonies from landlords. They had lined up hundreds of landlords. And so, of the city council members at the end of that study session, only Lenny and Pat wanted to do something. But the consensus for the whole council was "no rent control". And so this continued for a few more meetings until one was actually organized as a voter referendum to put rent stabilization on the city charter. And that passed the following year [on 11/8/2016]. And so that was this [referring to p. 11].

This is the Community Stabilization Fair Rent Act, Measure V. And an urgency ordinance for Just Cause evictions to prevent landlords from kicking people out before the Act actually fully took effect. And so the thing became effective, you know, basically more than a year after that study session, in December of 2016. And thankfully, we have that today. So, we're pretty good here in Mountain View with regard to rent stabilization. We're getting better with regard to BMR, we seem to be building more. And for the collecting linkage fees to build more housing. But as I mentioned before, you know, it's only now that any of those programs really have given access to people whose primary language is Spanish. And thankfully, now they are starting to translate things. But it took 20 years. 20 years. So in addition to this, we started finding in 2018 that buildings were being torn down. This 2005 Rock Street complex had 20 units with 70 residents, largely Hispanic. There were two Anglo families there. Everyone else was Hispanic. And we got a few of them to come to our Cafecito meeting, to try to organize to do something [referring to bottom photo on p. 13]. In fact, we were able to get quite a few to come in December of 2018. But it didn't come from meetings like this [referring to the center photo on p. 13 of a Cafecito meeting in the parish hall of the church]. It came from us actually going there in the winter and having them come to a carport, you know, to meet in the evening [referring to photos on p. 14]. And it was through that they were able to get enough participation, to at least have the city make attempts to stem the demolitions. But it wasn't until California passed SB 330 that demolitions are pretty much on hold. Because SB 330 requires that when you tear down affordable housing, you should be replacing it with new units of affordable housing. Prior to that, for this case of 2005 Rock Street, it's 20 units were replaced with 15 townhomes, each one going for about \$1.5 million and up. And so in this particular case, there was far less housing. And it was far more expensive. And all of these guys [referring to the 70 displaced family members], each of them had jobs, and families and school, and all had to go find

some other housing. Fortunately, we've got a few that are still in town. But a lot of people had to leave. So that's my story. It's still, you know, a struggle. There's still efforts to dilute the CSFRA, there's still efforts to, you know, to dilute the linkage fees. But by and large, it was through these community efforts, that we do have a fairly just housing system here in Mountain View.

Julie Solomon: 29:16

This is amazing. How long have you had this visual presentation? Is this something that you've updated over time or that you've put together for a specific event or?

Phil Cosby: 29:29

I mean, the timeline I put together in 2015, because we were starting to organize this for the (Measure V) ballot initiative.

Julie Solomon: 29:47

Yeah. What would you say - so you're principally working with Cafecito on housing issues, now, is that how you would describe it? Or are you also affiliated with other groups?

Phil Cosby: 30:04

I attend PACT [People Acting in Community Together] in San Jose. I attend their housing meetings. We are not formally members of that, but I try to keep abreast of that. And with regard to the Cafecito, basically what it is, is having a Zoom meeting every Monday night at 7:30. Depending on what people want, we might have different things at the meeting. On Monday, we had, let's see if I can remember, we had you, Julie Solomon, talking about doing interviews. And the week before that, it was someone else. But it's actually a forum where people can come together, to get information, but also to share the problems that they're having. Most of our meetings, over the past few years, involved problems in getting the rent relief funds, or vaccinations, or tests. You know, the City will do something or CSA will do something [to help the community], but like most organizations, they had no idea what their effect on the community actually was. I'm sure they are diligent about trying to anticipate things, but they didn't fully understand. Like when people [CSA] email something, they needed at least a response to say, "Hey, we got it", because otherwise, they have no idea. [Laughs] And for the rent relief funds [the money the City allocated to help residents impacted by COVID to pay rent; CSA handled the applications and the payments to landlords], people sent applications in and then months and months and months and months would go by without hearing anything. They had no idea [of the status]. Here they owe money! [Laughs] They owe money [to the landlords] and they're worried about having no place for their family to stay, and they're not getting any feedback! Unfortunately, it didn't get a whole lot better when California took over the rent relief process. Deadlines were approaching and landlords are getting angry that they're not getting the money and it's still hard [for the public] to get information. So we've been fortunate that people [from these organizations also] come to our meetings. So [Cafecito] provides sort of a feedback [to them] into what's going on in the community--what could these various

organizations that are providing support do better? But basically [Cafecito is] just a safe environment for people to share their concerns.

Julie Solomon: 33:41

It seems like from my experience in the meeting the other day, people share their concerns, and then other people in the group, offer a solution and say, I'm going to help you with this, or I'm going to connect you with someone who can help you with this, or we're going to get you know, we're going to contact the city or we're going to contact another organization, is that how things generally work?

Phil Cosby: 34:05

Yeah, ideally. Plus they can get suggestions from, you know, just the ordinary other people in the Cafecito: "I faced that problem two months ago, and I did such and such."

Julie Solomon: 34:26

So what would you say are the most important issues right now related to discrimination and housing? What are the key issues now?

Phil Cosby: 34:41

Well, I mean, you have to appreciate that I don't experience discrimination, I'm seeing it from the outside. There seems to be a sense that Spanish-speaking tenants are looked down upon. Whether that's true or not, but certainly that's how they're feeling. There's also a sense that it's really hard for a lot of them to access services, because accessing these requires computer skills or computer equipment, things that I take for granted, you take for granted. But, we shouldn't be assuming that [these are available to the general community]. You know, how many people have scanners to upload documents? I've got one. And I know I can go to Best Buy and get one for \$99. But most people don't. Even I have technical challenges. On my phone, I can take a picture. But how do I get that picture into the text message or into the email? So the user interface on the phone's operating system doesn't really permit a whole lot of flexibility [for me]. It's a challenge to me of knowing where things are [on the phone] and how to move them somewhere else.

Julie Solomon: 36:39

So from what you've said, there's a sense among particularly Spanish speaking residents of Mountain View that they're being looked down upon. You mentioned earlier, a language barrier, although the city has been providing, in recent years, interpreting services, and you mentioned a tech barrier. Have you seen, do you feel the language barrier situation has improved? So for example, with the Rent Relief Program, have materials been made available in Spanish and or I don't know, if you're aware about for different languages,

Phil Cosby: 37:20

It's hard for me to tell. I know how it started out. And when it [the rent relief program] started out, we [Mountain View Housing Justice] actually had to set up volunteers at the church with computers, to try to help people figure out how to actually get to the website and how to apply. Much of the questions were in English at that point. And even for an English speaker, you have to know the tricks to do things. There's a real user interface hurdle that people have to be able to surmount. Sometimes we or others in the community can assist with that. But sometimes it's even too difficult for us.

Julie Solomon: 38:27

To what extent, from your perspective, has documentation status and, and racism been barriers to equitable housing?

Phil Cosby: 38:46

I can't really speak to racism. As I've said, I don't encounter it. Not to say that it's not out there, it's just that I can't speak to it. For the documentation... Within the community there is still a great fear associated with encountering city officials, or police officers, or anything like that. I think just stemming from their past experience in other countries, or maybe stemming from the way they're treated here. And the fear of being deported. So, it's one thing for me to say, "Oh, you just apply for an ITIN". All right, but that ITIN might send you and your family back to somewhere where you're going to get killed within a week or two. So, there's a lot that I can recommend, or others can recommend, but we can't guarantee safety in those recommendations.

Julie Solomon: 40:21

So how would you like to see the housing situation in Mountain View change moving forward? What would you like to see?

Phil Cosby: 40:32

Well, I am. I'm happy that Mountain View has done a lot over the years to try to address the housing imbalance. But it's still a struggle. You know, it's profit competing with the needs of the other people of the city, and profit usually wins. You know, in the short term, I think the city should be developing a policy with regard to stemming naturally affordable housing from being demolished without the replacement of that affordable housing. As I said, SB 330 [state law] does a pretty good job of that by requiring the one-to-one replacement, but that will sunset in a few years. And what we've noticed [in the current process to update] the housing element, that there's a real reticence on the part of the city staff, I think, in particular, to actually put something in the housing element [update] that would replace it: "they don't want to commit". They don't want to commit a future Council to having to do that. Whether that's a good policy or not. That [demolition replacement policy] is going to be something that we're going to have to struggle with over the next few years, hopefully, before SB 330 sunsets in 2027. And so, it's not like the city is full bore, supportive of building affordable housing, there's always this resistance.

Julie Solomon: 42:49

So it sounds as though from your perspective, the city, adding a component to the housing element that would address demolition of affordable housing units once that Senate bill sunsets, that that would be one step toward making Mountain View a more inclusive community. Is that correct?

Phil Cosby: 43:20

I was actually using that as an example of how there's, you know, sort of a resistance to going full bore and the idea of making and keeping this place inclusive. I mean, that would certainly help. It would. But of course, we all know what the policy is, that's something that needs to be legislated. There needs to be a discussion and the best solution to come forward.

Julie Solomon:

Absolutely.

Phil Cosby:

And the city has finally scheduled a study session to explore things like [their demolition policy]. That had been delayed for a couple of years, as other things that have higher priority needed to be addressed. I just think that it's important for the community to remain engaged and not rely upon their elected representatives to just go off and work in their best interest, even though that's the intent of the elected representatives. We really need to stay engaged with the people that are representing us because otherwise, how are they going to know what the effect [of their laws] is? It was the same way with CSA and the rent relief funds. They had the best of intentions, but they didn't know how it was actually working out with the people that are trying to get the benefits to. How would they know unless there's a feedback loop?

Julie Solomon: 45:24

What is so? So what are the best ways to have that feedback loop? What would you recommend based on your experience,

Phil Cosby: 45:31

To talk to each other. To be open to hear each other's concerns. And, as an individual within the city, I think to be willing to actually go to some effort to make things more than just for yourself. To not think that you can simply tell somebody else, rely on someone else, to do what's best for you. That's a lesson for all of us.

Julie Solomon:46:17

Yeah. Kamilah. Do you have questions, for Phil?

Kamilah Arteaga: 46:21

I do have a few. I think one of the first ones was how do you feel that Mountain View has changed over time? And is housing more or less fair than when you first got involved? Or when you first moved to Mountain View? Did you hear me, do you need me to repeat it?

Phil Cosby: 46:41

Yeah, you mumbled a little bit. And don't give me multiple questions. Give me one at a time. Unless they're related.

Kamilah Arteaga: 46:49

How do you feel Mountain View has changed over time? And is housing more or less fair than when you first came?

Phil Cosby: 46:57

Well, like I said, when I first moved to Mountain View, in '75, there were a lot of little affordable homesteads over on the other side of 101, on the Shoreline side of 101, that are no longer there, and I don't remember any big kerfuffle about them getting demolished. So today, at least when they go to tear down, --well, the city isn't tearing it down, the city is approving the demolition--such as [the demolition of] 2005 Rock Street in 2018, it's getting noticed. And even though we didn't actually get a policy that stopped it, at least it got the people that ever displaced a little bit of money to try to help them find another place. And it got the idea, at least in the city staff that now you know, maybe we should be thinking about policies to prevent similar uprisings from occurring in the future. So, yes, today I think it is more just. Is that enough?

Kamilah Arteaga: 48:43

Thank you, I appreciate that. Oh, another question. What first brought you to Mountain View? You said you first moved here in 1975, but what first brought you here and how did you find your first home?

Phil Cosby: 49:00

The condo had a washer and dryer in it. [Laughs] And having been in apartments, you know, when I was in graduate school and the army, and even then, in Sharon Heights. I was renting a condo in Sharon heights. I still had to go to the laundry room! And so when I was looking for a place, the only one available in Palo Alto was like in a big building with these hallways and things, and I really didn't want to live there. There was a two bedroom townhouse on Middlefield in Mountain View that would have been good, but they had converted the garage into living quarters. And I was in a family of one at the time. And I preferred a place for my car. And then there was this one bedroom condo which was actually a pretty big size, 990 square feet, in the Sierra Square complex on Rengstorff between old and new Middlefield. And that's the one I got--for \$35,000.

Julie Solomon:

Which time seemed like a fortune.

Phil Cosby:

And I was just hired as staff, I had been a postdoc. So I think I was now making \$15,000 a year. And it still felt like I was, you know, signing my life away to get a mortgage for 80% of \$35,000. That was about two and a half times my annual salary. And today I don't know, I mean, probably the condo would cost... well I sold it to my daughter. My daughter wanted a place to live. And so I sold it to my daughter in 2003 and used the proceeds to buy a duplex on Sylvan... but the condo, it's probably a million now. And divide that [\$1,000,000] by 2.5: you would have to make a pretty good salary!

Kamilah Arteaga: 52:09

Thank you. I only have two more questions. Should I go ahead and ask them?

Julie Solomon:

Absolutely.

Phil Cosby: 52:26

Or live in ignorance. One of the two.

Kamilah Arteaga: 52:32

You mentioned a few organizations that you're working with, like PACT and Cafecito, but are there any other organizations that are worthy to mention?

Phil Cosby: 52:42

In what sense?

Kamilah Arteaga: 52:43

Either that you worked with in the past, or that you're currently working with just like, is there like a list of organizations that you've ever worked with?

Phil Cosby: 52:52

Oh, for me, so when I started out in 1998, it was the local organizing committee at St. Athanasius of what was called Peninsula Interfaith Action, PIA, and was part of that same organization up until, gosh, maybe 2014. At that point, PIA merged with another PICO organization in San Francisco called the San Francisco Organizing Project, SFOP. So it became SFOP/PIA. And then, after a few years, that organization decided it should concentrate on San Francisco and San Mateo [County]. We were in Santa Clara. So at that point we explored joining PACT-San Jose. In fact, they were interested and did provide organizing assistance. But at the moment, we're not officially a part of it. So we're just sort of floating, floating in our virtual meetings. Now, other organizations that have been very helpful within Mountain View: the Mountain View Tenant's Coalition was essential for getting that charter amendment (Measure V) on the ballot. That's actually something that is difficult for faith-based organizing to do;

something blatantly political like putting something on the ballot. We can work for issues, but not for things that people want to vote on, like candidates. And then there's the [Mountain View] Housing Justice Coalition³, with Edie Keating, among others. And the Community Action Team⁴ (CAT)--that was Marilu Delgado, and Marilu Cuesta, and others. PIA had helped start that when parents were organizing to prevent the closure of Castro School. I forget the year, probably 2005 or something. These were largely [Latina] moms who had children in school, but were coming together to exert some influence on decisions that were being made. That [organization] petered out for a while as Marilu Delgado retired, but others more recently have brought the organization to life. They established the Solidarity Fund⁵, to provide help for Latino families during the pandemic. And that's continuing. Who else? That's pretty much it.

Kamilah Arteaga: 57:13

That's perfect. That's quite a bit. So thank you. Last two things I have are just one, do you think, would it be okay if you could send us the timeline and the presentation that you shared with us? Because that's like, materials like we don't have. I don't think any of us have seen pictures like that or seen the timeline. So that would be amazing, amazing to have on record.

Phil Cosby: 57:38

Okay, the file is like 60 megabytes.

Julie Solomon: 57:44

Do you have Dropbox or do you use Google Suite? Like a Google folder?

Phil Cosby: 57:56

We got a Google Drive.

Kamilah Arteaga: 57:58

Yeah, like Google, yeah.

Phil Cosby: 57:59

I could do that.

³ From MV Housing Justice website: "The purpose of the Mountain View Housing Justice Coalition is to promote the rights of tenants across all rental units, including mobile home spaces; to protect against unjustified rent increases and evictions without cause; to end the displacement of individuals and families occupying naturally affordable housing; to end arbitrary and discriminatory actions by property owners and their representatives; to protect vehicle residents against harassment and exclusion; and to advocate for the development of affordable housing in the City of Mountain View."

⁴ The Community Action Team (CAT) is a local neighborhood group that has been serving Mountain View, and especially the Castro neighborhood, since 2002. CAT focuses on safety, education and health by working collaboratively with communities.

⁵ <https://www.mv-voice.com/news/2021/06/07/to-help-mountain-view-residents-hit-hardest-by-the-pandemic-city-council-is-banking-on-new-grassroots-group>

Julie Solomon: 58:02

Or Dropbox.

Phil Cosby: 58:04

I don't have Dropbox. I do have OneDrive. But I haven't used it for years. That's Microsoft's thing. But yeah, I can do it. I'll create a folder on my Google Drive and, and put it in there.

Julie Solomon: 58:26

Yes, that would be amazing. Yeah. And then if you can share it with both share that folder with both of us that would be fabulous.

Phil Cosby: 58:34

Otherwise, you couldn't get to it, right.

Julie Solomon: 58:38

Exactly. We would know it was there. It was like, you know, that cookie jar? That's just out of reach.

Phil Cosby: 58:46

I don't know. Probably wouldn't even let you see what's in there.

Julie Solomon: 58:51

You would just know it's there.

Phil Cosby: 58:53

I'll give you the link, how's that?

Julie Solomon: 58:58

Okay, great. Thank you.

Phil Cosby: 59:01

Try to download it as I probably don't want to keep it there forever.

Julie Solomon: 59:05

Yeah. Yes, absolutely. Otherwise, it will take up a ton of space. Yes. So you live in Mountain View now in a house?

Phil Cosby: 59:18

Actually. No. I live in Belmont.

Julie Solomon: 59:22

Oh, I thought you still lived in Mountain View.

Phil Cosby: 59:26

That? Well, my wife died in 1993 and I remarried in 2004. And unfortunately, the woman that I married lived in Redwood City, Redwood Shores, and was quite insistent, *quite insistent* on us living in her house, because her house was much closer to her job. And it wasn't too far from SRI. So I had to agree to that. Then we transitioned across the highway to Belmont. So I'm literally in Belmont, as we speak.

Julie Solomon:1:00:15

Wow. But you're still so active in Mountain View.

Phil Cosby: 1:00:19

Yes, I'm a property owner in Mountain View and St. Athanasius is still my church.

Julie Solomon:

Okay, you still go to that church? Okay.

Phil Cosby:

And actually that's the focus of all my organizing work-- through that.

Julie Solomon:1:00:34

Yes. Yes. So is there anyone else that you would recommend we reach out to to see about doing an interview with?

Phil Cosby: 1:00:50

I think Reyna Dominguez has the experience of going through this 2005 Rock Street issue, having her apartment demolished and needing to move to new quarters. And she can give you other names. I mean, she talked a little bit at the Cafecito.

Julie Solomon:1:01:18

Ah, that Reyna.

Phil Cosby: 1:01:21

She should have a long story. And then there are others: Angeles Anducho is another one of the 2005 Rock Street people still living in Mountain View. There are a lot of others, like Raul Peraza -- he actually prepared his carport each week for us to meet to organize the tenants. And at that time his wife had cancer and subsequently died. All of this going on as the home where they've lived for eight years or so, was being taken out from under them. You know, there's so many stories and so I would say those two

Julie Solomon: 1:02:42

What would be the best way or way for us to get in touch with Reyna or Raul? Or of this mentioned Angeles.

Phil Cosby: 1:02:55

I would give you the contact information for Reyna. She would be the best to give you the current contact information for the others.

Julie Solomon: 1:03:08

Oh okay. Do you think she'll be okay with either if Kamilah or I reach out like she saw some meeting? Or do you feel you should reach out to her first or what would be appropriate?

Phil Cosby: 1:03:24

I think if you called her up and in Spanish and say "Hi Reyna, Phil Cosby thought it would be a good idea for me to talk with you if it's okay with you".

Julie Solomon: Okay.

Phil Cosby:

And, and she had actually experienced two displacements. I think originally, she was living in Redwood City. And they tore down the apartment complex there and then she and her family moved to Mountain View, to the Rock Street apartment. And then they were there for some years until they tore them down too. So that's why this replacement policy is so important. Because ultimately, you know, you'll have complete gentrification within the city.

Julie Solomon: 1:04:33

Thank you, Phil. Kamilah, do you have any other questions? I have one other question for Phil that I'll pose after we turn off the recording, regarding Cafecito. Do you have any other questions for Phil from our list?

Kamilah Arteaga: 1:04:52

I think the only ones are some short demographic questions. But if not, then it's okay. It's voluntary.

Julie Solomon: 1:05:02

Yes, you're absolutely right.

Kamilah Arteaga: 1:05:06

Is that okay? Phil? Could I ask you some demographic questions?

Phil Cosby: 1:05:11

Oh, the ones that aren't okay, I would probably not answer

Kamilah Arteaga:

First, what would you say is your racial or ethnic identity?

Phil Cosby: 1:05:31

I guess, White. [Laughs]

Kamilah Arteaga: 1:05:33

Yeah, that works.

Phil Cosby: 1:05:35

Well back in 1628 my great grandfathers came from actually Ireland, but they were in Ireland because they had defeated the Irish.

Kamilah Arteaga: 1:05:54

Oh. Interesting.

Phil Cosby: 1:05:59

There was a, he came with his two little kids, his wife had just died. 1628

Kamilah Arteaga: 1:06:09

That's pretty far back. Very interesting.

Phil Cosby: 1:06:12

Just after the Virginia Colony was reverted back to the king. Before that it had been, you know, a charter of the Virginia Company, a corporation. I think it was two years after it went back to the crown that he ventured across the Atlantic.

Kamilah Arteaga: 1:06:45

Wow. That's crazy. Oh, I'm sorry. I was thinking about that question. What would you say is your gender identity?

Phil Cosby:

Male.

Kamilah Arteaga:

Okay, and would you mind telling us your age or age range?

Phil Cosby: 1:07:00

76 I think. 76.

Kamilah Arteaga:1:07:10

Perfect. Thank you so much. That's all I have.

Julie Solomon: 1:07:14

Thank you. Great. So thank you so much. I have one other question for you. I'm just gonna stop the recording. Right now.