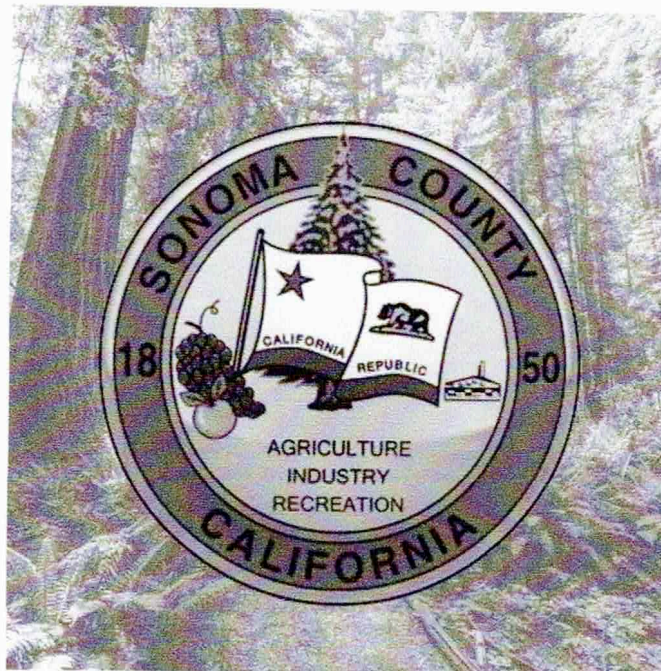


Former Sonoma Developmental Center Site Plan Riddled With Nepotism

californiaglobe.com/articles/former-sonoma-developmental-center-site-plan-riddled-with-nepotism/

Adina Flores

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Over the past several years, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors has held discussions regarding the preservation and future usage of a historically controversial site, the Sonoma Developmental Center. The 945-acre Glen Ellen property has been at the epicenter of concern for local environmentalists who seek to protect open space.

According to CBS News Bay Area:

“The final plan for the former site of the Sonoma Developmental Center has been approved by the county’s Board of Supervisors after a protracted process between the county and community.”

“Sonoma County had been grappling with how to develop and preserve the site that formerly housed a state hospital. **The state took an unusual step in allowing the county to determine how the land would be used before it ceded the property to them.**” As of April 4, 2023, the State announced that a development team led by The Grupe Company

and Rogal & Partners will purchase and redevelop the Sonoma Developmental Center. The developer will be required to follow the regulations set forth by the Sonoma Developmental Center Specific Plan.

The approved plan will include the protection of 700 acres, an enlarged wildlife corridor that removes current development from the northeast corner of the former main campus and an expanded setback to preserve the Sonoma Creek area. Plans for 620 units of housing will be subject to the county's affordable housing goals.



Governor Gavin Newsom

April 3, 2023

NOTICE OF SELECTION
[Request for Proposal No. AMB 2022-05-17]

In accordance with Request for Proposal No. AMB 2022-05-17 (the "RFP"), while reserving all rights reserved in the RFP, the State is hereby providing notice of the selection of The Grupe Company and Rogal & Partners as the Selected Buyer for the developed portion of the campus.

If you have any questions, please contact DGS, Asset Management Branch, Attention: Branch Chief, MS-501, 707 3rd Street, West Sacramento, CA 95605.

According to his LinkedIn profile, Keith Rogal is the current owner of Rogal & Partners and Partner to Rogal + Walsh + Mol. As indicated on the Permit Sonoma webpage, **"the Sonoma Developmental Center represents the first time the California Legislature has delegated land-use planning responsibility to a local agency for the redevelopment of a state psychiatric facility."**

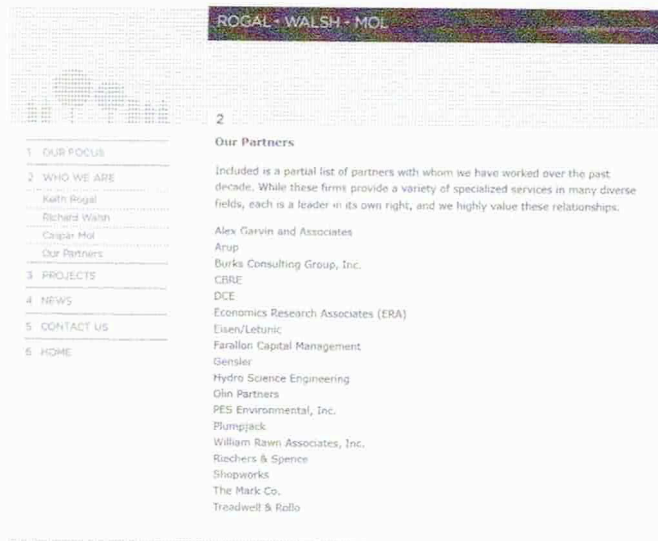
Through Mr. Rogal's involvement at Rogal + Walsh + Mol, he has collaborated directly with the Plumpjack Group to provide specialized services. According to Plumpjack's website, Governor Gavin Newsom is the Founder of the corporation: "In 1992, Gavin Newsom opened his first business, PlumpJack Wines, combining his passion for wine and his driving entrepreneurial spirit. Over the next decade, the PlumpJack Group began to grow under his leadership to include many of the restaurants, wineries, and retail establishments in the current portfolio."

A 2004 article in SF Gate reported, "PlumpJack Group, the wine, restaurant and real estate company founded by San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom, has added the Carneros Inn in Napa Valley to its roster of upscale properties, the company said...PlumpJack will take over management of the 96-cottage resort and spa from Carneros Holdings LLC, the developer that opened the resort in November 2003."

Deeann Graffigna, Plumpjack's current Vice President of Human Resources, worked as the Director of Human Resources for The Carneros Inn for more than 12 years. As indicated on the website for William Rawn Associates, Architects Inc; The Carneros Inn was a 2003

project of Carneros Partners. A 2010 article from the LA times states “PlumpJack Group also owns two wineries, the Carneros Inn, the Squaw Valley Inn and restaurants in Northern California.”

Mr. Richard Walsh is the founder and general partner of Rogal + Walsh + Mol. As stated in his company bio, “he formerly served as the chief operating officer of Carneros Partners, the development entity that brought Carneros Inn to life. Richard was a partner with Keith and Caspar in the creation, development and operation of The Carneros Inn, with a particular emphasis on finance and operations”.



Mr. Rogal holds an impressive library of corporate filings including Carneros Partners, LLC, KRDH Holdings III, LLC, Lagora Noca, LLC, Rogal & Associates, LLC, RSS-Stanly Ranch, LLC, and SRDT Holdings III, LLC. He also possesses excessive tax liens with the Franchise Tax Board (FTB). This may raise skepticism regarding his ability to successfully navigate the full spectrum of business operations of a large state approved agreement.

A state tax lien of \$40,640.91 with the FTB was recorded in 2015; a small business, federal tax lien for \$114,821.03 has been extended to 2024; and a former federal tax lien of \$65,541.00 was released in 2011. In addition, a judgement for \$17200.27 was recorded with the Sonoma County Superior Court case #MCV223077, CREDITORS TRADE V I PREFERITI. Given Mr. Rogal’s concerning financial hiccups and external business endeavors with Governor Newsom, the state’s selection of Rogal & Partners could be seen as a conflict of interest under the regulations set forth by the Fair Political Practices Commission.

Aside from his involvement with Rogal & Partners, Mr. Keith Rogal is also currently serving as Board Vice President for Generation Housing (Gen H). Gen H has received a tremendous amount of funding from the County of Sonoma:

- 9/27/2022 Sonoma County Board of Supervisors Meeting: Agreement with Generation Housing for Prohousing Designation (PHD) Advocacy and Technical Assistance
- 3/1/2022 Sonoma County Board of Supervisors Meeting: Disbursement of Fiscal Year 21-22 First District Community Investment Fund Grant 2022-0095 Awards

Gen H appears to be a rent seeking organization rather than a group providing a legitimate service to the community. They are considered a project of Tides Center, a 501(c)(3). The Tides Center charges each agent for which it is a fiscal sponsor a cost allocation which is equal to 9% of the project's gross annual revenue. As reported in The Washington Free Beacon, this group primarily acts as a liberal dark money arm to promote social justice movements such as Black Lives Matter (BLM). Gen H is not registered as a DBA in conjunction with Tides Center ("doing business as"), but they are asking for all checks to be made directly to their organization.

Last year, I inquired as to how and why the Gen H project was initially approved by the Tides Center. Executive Director Jenni Klose is an attorney and former President of Santa Rosa City Schools (SRCS) who is currently under investigation with the FPPC due to her financial omissions (case #2022-00643).

At the time Ms. Klose applied for project approval with Tides Center, she possessed nearly \$85k in outstanding tax liens. Last year, I reached out to the Tides Center's human resources department to inquire about the standard evaluation process. I asked if it was common to award such a project to an individual with numerous tax liens tied to a small business, as this shows administrative and financial negligence. The Human Resources Director, Aida Landaverde informed me that she would circle back with me in a week. After nearly 10 days passed, I emailed/called Ms. Landaverde as she had not responded. After calling a second time, I realized that Ms. Landaverde had completely blocked my phone number. I left a voicemail to inform the organization that I would be organizing a protest if they refused to provide the requested information.

Later that week, I received a threatening phone call from the federal government. I was informed by the United States Park Police (U.S. National Park Service) that the Tides Center is located in the Presidio, San Francisco, CA. Therefore, the office location is housed on federal property. Detective Steven Smith, Badge #586 informed me that he had not listened to any of my voicemails or read any of my emails. I then inquired why I'm being threatened based on complete hearsay. I initiated a formal complaint regarding this matter with the United States Park Police which legally requires a response from law enforcement. To this date, the federal agency has not responded. The United States Park Police falls under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of the Interior. As of 2017, The Tides Foundation and

affiliated Tides Center received \$395,319 from the Department of Interior. This agency of the federal government has provided financial assistance to The Tides Center and affiliates for many years which presents a conflict regarding my unanswered inquiries.

The funding partners to Gen H have been the focus of great media controversy in recent months. Mr. Rogal is considered to be a “diamond” level generating member. Silicon Valley Bank (SVB) was a gold level “catalyzing” member. SVB just experienced a full collapse, the second largest bank crash in history. The First 5 Commission of Sonoma County is listed as one of the main founders of Gen H. Sonoma County Supervisor James Gore currently serves on the First 5 Commission. The general public may find it is a conflict of interest for Mr. Gore to allocate taxpayer funds via Board of Supervisors Meetings to Gen H being that he may be attributed to their establishment. Mr. Gore’s wife, Elizabeth Gore, holds deep connections to Mr. John China, former President of SVB. Ms. Gore is the Founder of Hello Alice, an organization which supposedly offers minority grant assistance and has been previously funded by former Board Member John China.

Ms. Klose is a Partner at Functional Zero Partners, Inc., a company which supposedly develops supportive housing. According to their website, Ms. Jenni Klose and Mr. Akash Kalia “came together to transform the Palms Inn, a budget hotel in Santa Rosa, California, into a permanent supportive housing community for 120 previously homeless veterans and vulnerable individuals.” Given that there was a recent murder and unfathomable living conditions at this privately owned but taxpayer-funded housing facility, the oversight of Functional Zero Partners, Inc. is problematic. The housing group has been suspended with the California Secretary of State since 2021. Their name does not appear in the City of Santa Rosa’s online business license search, nor the County of Sonoma’s fictitious business name search. This creates inquiries surrounding the initial project approval surrounding the inn conversion.

Governor Newsom also holds close working relationships with the County of Sonoma Board of Supervisors. Sonoma County Supervisor James Gore was previously appointed by President Barack Obama’s administration as Assistant Chief of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA’s) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). He serves on many boards and commissions throughout the state including his role as Second Vice President to the National Association of Counties (NACo), immediate Past President to the California Association of Counties, Former Chair, NACo Resilient Counties Advisory Board, Appointee, **FEMA National Advisory Council**, Co-Chair, North Coast Resource Partnership (7 county/30 tribe consortium) and **Gubernatorial Appointee, California State Wildfire and Forest Resiliency Task Force**. Mr. Gore’s spouse, Elizabeth Gore, is the First Resident Entrepreneur to the United Nations, former Vice President of Global Partnerships to the United Nations Foundation and former President/CEO of the California Partners Project. The California Partners Project was co-founded not only by Ms. Elizabeth Gore, but by First Partner Jennifer Siebel Newsom as well. This questionable nonprofit has been

under fire lately due to its ties to Silicon Valley Bank and other nefarious matters. As stated in The Intercept, "in 2021, Silicon Valley Bank gave \$100,000 to the charity founded by Siebel, the California Partners Project, at the request of Newsom. John China, president of SVB Capital and responsible for SVB's funds management, is himself a founding member of the California Partners Project's board of directors." Based on Governor Newsom's ties to both Sonoma County Supervisor Gore and Rogal & Partners, the general public may have concerns regarding the state's decisions surrounding the Sonoma Developmental Center.

There are a multitude of conflicts with real estate development that have taken place in California regarding Mr. Newsom. Mr. Darius Anderson is a powerful man within the California legislature and tight knit colleague of Governor Newsom. Mr. Anderson is also the Owner of Sonoma Media Investments (Press Democrat, Sonoma Gazette, North Bay Business Journal, etc.), Platinum Advisors Lobbying Firm and Kenwood Investments. A 2004 article by SF Gate highlights a specter of conflict regarding Mr. Newsom and Mr. Anderson in relation to the Treasure Island Deal:

"Darius Anderson, who is seeking the redevelopment deal through a partnership called Treasure Island Community Development LLC, hosted a fund- raising reception at his Sacramento office Tuesday while Newsom was in the state capital lobbying lawmakers to reduce budget cuts directed at San Francisco and other city and county governments. Anderson, a lobbyist and long-time fund-raiser for Democrats in California, invited lobbyists, state Democrats and others to make contributions of \$100, \$500 or \$750 to Newsom for Mayor to attend the lunchtime event with Newsom. Government watchdogs said fund raising by Anderson for Newsom could raise the appearance of conflict of interest for the mayor's administration in its dealings with Anderson's partnership."

Following the tragic Tubbs Fire in 2017, a Sonoma County based "nonprofit," Rebuild North Bay, was founded by Mr. Anderson. As indicated in the articles of incorporation for this charitable organization (501c3), the premise was to support economic recovery and workforce development. Rather than supporting the initial mission and vision proposed, the organization spent approximately \$2M to lobby for PG&E in Washington D.C. alongside then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. According to the Pacific Sun, "the day after Christmas 2017, PG&E cut Rebuild North Bay a check for \$2 million; the utility's largesse accounted for 75 percent of the foundation's contributions in the ensuing months." Per the IRS' regulations, "in general, no organization may qualify for section 501(c)(3) status if a substantial part of its activities is attempting to influence legislation (commonly known as lobbying)." Mr. Anderson appointed Ms. Elizabeth Gore (Sonoma County Supervisor Gore's wife) as the President of the organization to lead these efforts.

Do these connections among our elected officials, lobbyists and contractors appear to be coincidental or intentional? Within the State of California, "no public official at any level of state or local government shall make, participate in making or in any way attempt to use his

official position to influence a governmental decision in which he knows or has reason to know he has a financial interest." Cal. Gov't Code § 87100.

A complaint has been submitted to the Fair Political Practices Commission regarding the above matters.