

January 26, 2021

Dear Board of Supervisors, SDC PAT Members, and County Staff,

This email responds to the letter sent out by Peter Zibblatt, Robert Upton, and Victor Gonzalez yesterday (January 25, 2021) and is provided in the interest of advancing the discussion. I am also a PAT member for the SDC Specific Plan process. There are several points that are important to be considered.

1) I fully support the Sonoma Land Trust position outlined in their January 22, 2021 letter to the Board and am deeply disturbed by the notion that land use compatibility should be completely ignored in the development of the Specific Plan, as asserted in the Zibblatt letter. As a seasoned land use planner and public policy professional who has worked on many Specific Plans, it baffles me that this most basic, recognized principle of good land use planning would be rejected up front as something that “handcuffs” the process. To claim that new development at SDC “cannot possibly be compatible” with surrounding land uses is abandoning the planning process before it even starts. The Specific Plan process is one that addresses the scale of proposed uses within the site’s existing location and constraints and strives to strike a balance between economic gain and land use compatibility. Isn’t that the purpose of the PAT – to work together to come up with a plan that is at least somewhat compatible and acceptable to all the stakeholders? It would be extraordinary to have a defensible Specific Planning process that ignores land use compatibility.

2) While the plan must be economically feasible, it should not be solely about maximizing profit at the expense of the existing community and open space resources. Glen Ellen is being asked to make compromises and sacrifices, yet there is no mention of compromises that must be made on profit margins. It is too early in the process to know

what resources may be available to revamp the infrastructure the state allowed to deteriorate.

3) The previous use of the site as a hospital/institution WAS compatible with Glen Ellen and was integrated with the community. The onsite uses minimized impacts on surrounding lands; the many residents there did not detract from community character or quality of life; the uses did not clog the roads with vehicles, or otherwise create impacts on land uses or biological resources. The residents enhanced our community character and quality of life by being the very foundation on which a culture of care was built.

4) The best interest of the state should also include the best interest of the community, not just the best interest of a third-party developer. The letter's premise is that the state's primary interest is "to ensure that the future SDC Specific Plan will reduce the development uncertainty and increase the land values at SDC to the point where the property can attract the interest of third-party purchaser." This does not recognize the state's parallel commitment to a community driven process, which has been reaffirmed numerous times by state and local politicians.

5) Yes, the Specific Plan will amend the General Plan for the SDC site but existing General Plan policies for surrounding land uses will remain in place. These existing policies for Glen Ellen are intentional to preserve the rural village. It is clearly not an urban growth area.

6) SDC is not a clean slate – there are cultural, historic, open space, biological, transportation, and, yes, land use factors that all need to be considered in developing the Specific Plan.

7) Maximizing development at the expense of the constrained wildlife corridor and open space resources seems contradictory to the State's commitment to protect the open space. Furthermore, the legislation

states that housing must be “deemed appropriate” for the property, which implies consideration of land use compatibility.

In summary, we need to take a balanced approach that does not abandon fundamental land use principles. I hope we can work together in the coming months to strike that balance.

Regards,
Vicki Hill, MPA