

PULSE OF THE PUBLIC

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The neglected gateway to Sonoma

EDITOR: What a beautiful city our town is, our Plaza being the jewel. How sad and, actually quite surprising, to see the main intersection into town where Broadway ends at the Plaza to be flanked on both sides by dry, weed-filled corners. Recently, out-of-town visitors here for the Sonoma International Film Festival and the Authors Festival remarked on the neglected appearance of what is the gateway to our town.

Now that it's been brought to my attention, I can't help but see the unsightly areaseachtimeIpass.Dowehaveacity public works department, local garden clubs or local plant nurseries who could address the care of these areas?

Frankly, the two major banks, US Bank and Chase, whose entrances open to these blighted spots should sponsor and enhance not only for the community and visitors but for their own customers.

Take a look for yourself and you'll agree that once you see this sad spot... you can't "unsee" it.

Here's hoping that someone will step up to remedy.

Jill Matranga

Sonoma

Recollections of Sam Alito

EDITOR: I first heard the name Sam Alito in 1974 when I was teaching at Princeton. (He graduated from there in 1972.) Attending a football game in Palmer Stadium, I watched the Princeton marching band spell out "CAP" on the field at half-time, presumptively in honor of the group "Concerned Alumni of Princeton" that opposed the university's 1969 decision to accept women undergraduates for the first time.

I learned from neighbors in the stands that Alito was one of of this group's leaders. Then we roared with delight as the band members allowed extra space between their "C" and "A" and then some ran in to create an "R" between those two letters. This amusing event from five decades ago soared into my memory as

to do a complete reset on the future of the open space lands and historic campus in the heart of rural Sonoma Valley.

Following the court's order that the county redo its "vague, toothless and hopeful" environmental review, the Sierra Club is calling for a planning overhaul that fully defines and protects the wildlife corridor, seriously considers the climate crisis and recognizes the development plans to date as urban sprawl in the middle of a greenbelt in a severe wildfire threat zone.

To date, county and state officials have failed to provide the people of California with a bold vision for the developmental center property that reflects our environmental, climate and housing needs. The site plans pushed forward violate county, regional and state policies to reduce climate emissions, protect open space and biodiversity, and provide affordable housing in cities and towns.

The Sierra Club believes now is the time to correct course and work with community and environmental partners to create a bold vision that results in a proud legacy of conservation and climate protection for all. It's a perfect fit for the state's ambitions as a climate leader and goal of preserving 30% of state lands by 2030.

The starting point must be creating a science-based map that clearly defines and preserves the boundaries of the wildlife corridor, ensuring much-needed protection for wildlife and habitat. That means fewer houses, no hotel, no commercial development. Conserving the open space lands and historic campus with a minimum of development provides the highest possible climate dividend by keeping carbon emissions in the soil and trees. Reusing existing buildings instead of tearing them down provides huge carbon storage benefits.

These lands also provide easy and equitable access to nature and recreation for families living nearby in the Springs communities and beyond.

Urbanizing Sonoma Valley at the developmental center site will not solve our affordable housing needs as 85% of the proposed housing units would be market rate or above. Sonoma County and Santa Rosa, as well as other cities, have been making considerable progress in recent years creating new market rate and affordable housing in areas that are far less exposed to potential wildfire threats, provide evacuation alternatives and,

we learned of Alito’s despicable flag flying actions on top of his authorship of the decision to overturn Roe v. Wade and his latest ugly racist South Carolina decision. He has been an awful presence forever it seems.

David Morell

Sonoma

Thanks for the letters

EDITOR: Just a note to express how fortunate Sonoma is to have Carol Chaka Halpern (“In appreciation of freedom”) and Stephen Kyle (“Thoughts on ... Memorial Day”) as residents who share their experiences and thoughts with us. They make my life richer and better. Thanks, Carol and Stephen.

Ed Shoop

Sonoma

Reset needed at SDC

EDITOR: Now that a Sonoma County Superior Court judge has issued a decisive ruling over the proposed mega- development of the historic Sonoma Developmental Center campus, it’s time for the county and state

hopefully, offer affordable insurance. Our future demands homes that are transit-oriented, connected to existing transportation infrastructure and near employment centers. In short, smart growth versus continuation of sprawl and more road building.

The current Sonoma Developmental Center plan is a perfect example of what happens when politicians and planners put profit above people, the environment, and the climate crisis. Instead, let’s conserve these lands, not ruin them forever. Create a plan that honors and

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Corners on both sides of the approach to the Plaza are in need of gardeners.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

Pulse

Sierra Club Redwood Chapter.

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enhances the lands, wildlife and legacy of one of the most beautiful valleys in California.

Let’s start over and do it right this time.

Teri Shore, Dan Mayhew

Teri Shore is Conservation chair of the Sierra Club Redwood Chapter. Dan Mayhew is chair of the