

Caitlin Schafer - Fwd: GP_2019-2019-0002/R_2019-0003

From: PBS PBS
To: Caitlin Schafer; James Feenan; Susan Summerford
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Subject: Fwd: GP_2019-2019-0002/R_2019-0003

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 **Case#: GP_2019-0002/R_2019-0003**

October 15, 2019

Michael Owen and Sarah Kennedy Owen
1600 Sanford Ranch Rd.
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To: County of Mendocino, Department of Planning & Building Services
860 N. Bush St.
Ukiah, Ca 95482

CC: Carre Brown, Chair, Supervisor Mendocino County
John McCOWen, Supervisor, Mendocino County

Regarding Case # GP_2019-0002/R_2019-0003, Rezoning and General Plan Amendment Request:

The Planning Department is considering a rezoning request by Mr. Lucchesi, who we admire for his management of this beautiful vineyard which has been there for close to 80 years. The vines are also that old, still productive, and may produce grapes that are even more valuable than those grown on younger vines, as the flavor of the resulting wine from older vines is considered better. Researching on the internet, it is said that wines from grapes grown on 80 year old vines sell for between \$15.00 to \$50,00 a bottle. The vines may also be immune to diseases other younger vines are subject to.

Because of the value of this vintage vineyard, it seems unreasonable to rezone it when the General Plan has been in place all along and **no deviation from the General Plan has ever occurred. In other words, the Board of Supervisors ruled once in 1982 that there was no encroachment and nothing has changed since then. According to your September 12 notice, that 1982 decision was final.**

We have lived at the same address on Sanford Ranch Rd. since 1979, and were part of the neighborhood group that united to stop development in 1982. Since we have been here there has been no effort by the county to build parks, playgrounds, or any other recreational areas. That leaves us with almost nowhere to safely walk or for children to play due to unregulated speeding on our streets. The same is true for Rogina Heights which is an even more dangerous place to walk (or play) than Sanford Ranch Rd. The General Plan at least gave the illusion of protected open space, and now that, too, is considered being denied.

The Planning Department is responsible for these oversights, which indicate a careless attitude toward the residents of Sanford Ranch Rd. and of Rogina Heights. So far there has not been a word about a park to accompany this new plan to destroy ag land. There is no discussion of walking areas or any other improvements for the current residents who will have to deal with the pollution, noise and danger from over approximately 100 new residents.

It may be that Mr. Lucchesi is already permitted to build a limited number of houses on the now cleared pear orchard land. Why not include, with these few houses, a "green zone" instead of dozens of new houses? Why not include walking areas and bike lanes for the community? Mr. Lucchesi should not pay for this, the county should! It is long overdue. It seems like a much better investment for the community than the large amounts of blacktop the county may have to pay for to accommodate this plan.

Speaking of blacktop, environmental problems are also glaringly evident. More rooftops, pavement, and exhaust fumes will add to environmental concerns such as pollution and global warming, as well as possible flooding. It will also further heat the local environment, which is already prone to fire. Add to this concern for the wildlife that coexists in the vineyard and along the creek. We don't see anyone looking into the health of the creek or the welfare of the wildlife and have not seen concern from the Planning Department or the county staff for the 40 years we have been here and have been paying taxes to help cover the salaries of these employees.

The Planning Department/County has been neglecting our area and now considers overturning a 40-year-old General Plan for no reason except that Ukiah needs new houses. We wish to see more action on the part of the county to serve the Sanford Ranch area by improving walking trails, creating nature areas or parks, looking after wildlife and the natural surroundings, and helping lift the area out of the abysmal traffic problem we have had here for over 40 years. Instead of helping, you are now talking about adding to the problem without resolving anything.

The Planning Commission Staff Report says: "There is a mix of small scale residential interspersed with agricultural uses in the vicinity of the parcel that has been slowly expanding to encroach on the remaining agricultural uses." **This is incorrect.** There is only one residential area that has been called "encroachment" and that was in 1982 in the Eunice Court area. This "encroachment" was used as the reason for the applicant's first request in 1982 to rezone, and was **denied by the Board of Supervisors**. Therefore the precedent has been set that Eunice Court is not encroachment. Any other houses (2) that have been built are on legal lots and permitted by the Planning Department. They are also very close to the street, not in the vineyard.

The notice you sent September 12, 2019 said the "Board of Supervisor's decision is final". We trust this also applies to the 1982 decision which said no unpermitted development would be allowed per the General Plan. Nothing has changed since then. We are surprised that this issue has come up again considering this rule, which declares the decision in 1982 was final.

Here are a few reasons why this is not feasible:

1. It defies the General Plan.
2. It encourages similar requests for development.
3. The traffic from so many homes will cause problems on Sanford Ranch Rd., a rural, 25 mph road .

4. Will this development require a sewer system since it is in a flood plain? In that case current residents would be saddled with that cost.
5. It detracts from recreational use, which has been woefully neglected by the county for at least 40 years.

When the request for rezoning was first made in the 80's, one grower stood up during the hearing and asked, "Are we going to grow grapes or build houses? That's all I want to know." That sums up the **General Plan** aspect of the question. Also, to call this a "county" area and do nothing to improve it besides create an even bigger problem is intolerable. The area is protected under the General Plan and nothing has happened to change that. We trust this will be considered seriously and with respect for neighbors, citizens and community.

Yours Truly,
Michael Owen and Sarah Kennedy Owen