

Letter to Sonoma County Supervisors in response to 6.6.2017 Chanate Complex Notice

Tom Brown
3368 Parker Hill Road
Santa Rosa, California 95404
707-975-1605
TomBrownTBB@gmail.com

20 June 2017

Chairwoman Shirlee Zane
Supervisor James Gore
Supervisor Susan Gorin
Supervisor Lynda Hopkins
Supervisor David Rabbitt
Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

Caroline Judy, Director
Department of General Services
County of Sonoma

Via email

Re: Chanate Complex
6/20/17 Board of Supervisors Hearing
Disposition and Development Agreement

Dear Chairwoman Zane, Supervisors Gore, Gorin, Hopkins, Rabbitt and Ms. Judy:

Chairwoman Zane: I respectfully request that you declare a 90 day suspension of the vote to adopt the Disposition and Development Agreement ("DDA") as agendized for June 20, 2017 on the Board of Supervisors' agenda..

Chairwoman Zane, Supervisors Gore, Gorin, Hopkins, Rabbitt: I respectfully request that you address and respond to following issues in advance of any decision or to transfer the entire Chanate property (exclusive of the defined Water and Open Space properties) to a private developer/investor.

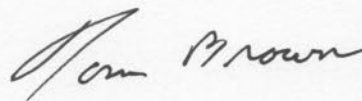
1. Financial Projection. Sonoma County has failed to provide the public any evidence of having or using a long term (30 year), year-by-year projection and comparison of this project's revenue from developer-paid fees and property taxes with the expenses of derivative public infrastructure construction, maintenance and staffing. The creation and use of such a practice is a standard and required for public solicitations of investment and borrowing from banks. Even the smallest of private businesses and charitable institutions need and use such tools to make informed management decisions and cash flows.
 - a. Such a projection is clearly appropriate and necessary for competent County governance and public resource management in general and specifically for public and interagency exposition and discussion.
 - b. Such a projection is particularly important given the complexity, size and nature of the Chanate property.
2. Quality of Public transparency and the Negotiation Process: As individual Supervisors you appear to believe that the deal you have worked out in private negotiations with the developer will provide the housing you want and yield a largely continuous positive cash benefit to the County, the City of Santa Rosa, the Santa Rosa School District and, on-average, to every other impacted public agency county-

wide. However, the projections you have developed appear to be inadequate, uncertified and hugely dependent on uninformed beliefs and opinions regarding the cost of building, maintaining and staffing public infrastructure.

- a. If your beliefs and opinions prove wrong, if public infrastructure expenditures related to this project exceed your income from developer fees and property taxes, the County and your sister public agencies will be forced to make up the difference.
 - b. Balancing income and expenditure cash flows year-by-year within each impacted public agency in the County will necessitate some combination of tax increases, public acceptance of new bond proposals and reductions in public services.
 - c. None of these outcomes will be popular with countywide tax payers, residents and businesses who expect and demand better roads, quality schools and a comprehensive and proactive investment in providing adequate public shelter, nourishment and medical services that make Sonoma a great place to place to live, work and visit.
 - d. Your development partner appears to have negotiated a deal in which he has little or no obligation to make up any part of such a difference. It appears that the developer can exit this deal if he does not get what he wants. You, however, will have sold him 82 acres of irredeemable public land with no claw back provision should the developer fail to meet his obligations.
 - e. Development of affordable housing is a worthy investment for the County and county-wide taxpayers but who knows at what cost? You don't know because you don't appear to have or applied an adequate cash plan. No one else knows because you have chosen to pre-maturely end public presentations and feedback.
 - f. The last public meeting regarding this site was held in October, 2015 and attended by some 200 people showing substantial public interest. In the 17-month interim you appear to have done everything possible to promote potential project benefits while failing to adequately project and present the related costs.
 - g. In my opinion, dumping 191 pages of complex material in a remote section of the County website without mailing notices and adequate projections of tax impacts to every impacted property owner constitutes a major violation of public trust. Emailing notice of the availability of these 191 pages primarily to those who requested such notification just 14 days before voting to sell this very large and unique public property also constitutes a major violation of public trust.
 - h. It appears from the posted plans and terms of agreement that you will have sold the property cheap with no affordable option for returning that property to public ownership while simultaneously foisting most of the burdens difficult public hearings and annual budget shortfalls on other public agencies.
3. Alternative Development Options:
- a. It may well be substantially less expensive for the County to retain public ownership of this site and narrow project scope to 160 affordable housing units and relevant amenities. I see no evidence that you seriously studied or priced this option.
 - b. From the evidence at hand it appears that you disqualified competing development proposals based on the number of units their developments would provide without evaluating their rationale. In particular you did not seek or apply independent third party professional evaluations for the differing rationales, including statements related to traffic and on-site seismic restriction.
 - c. You also appear to have opted for the developer promising the highest number of housing without any qualified and independent assessment of public infrastructure design and unrecoverable expense would be required.
 - d. From the evidence at hand it appears that your selected development partner helped you establish your priorities the writing of the RFP. Such help is not unusual or illegal and may indeed reduce public expense at the onset. However, such help from a highly experience has a very high potential of unduly influencing your understanding of the technical and financial issues inherent in this large and complex project.
 - e. What is unusual and totally unacceptable is your apparently willful blindness to exposing yourself or the public to the fact that the resulting RFP would most certainly admit only the Gallaher proposal and would unduly subsidize his private profit at unknown and undue public expense.
 - f. An 80% smaller project with ample public visibility and discussion qualified structural, CEQA and financial projections would have laid the proper foundation for contracting with well-

- qualified developers and rental managers. That choice would be consistent with the Chanate site's 143-year long historical purpose and use.
- g. That choice would also minimize the risk of exposure to potentially enormous unfunded public infrastructure expenditures associated with putting an additional 640 market-rate units on this site.
 - h. It is my contention that these 640 additional units will most assuredly overburden the current 2-lane Chanate and Parker Hill Road corridors now heavily used as a short cut for cross town commuters.
 - i. The proposition that a traffic circle and on-site amenities will mitigate this problem is astonishingly bold, unsupported and enormously enriching of a private party.
 - j. Widening the Chanate Road and Parker Hill Road major portals to this development to 4-lanes will require eminent domain proceedings on the many adjacent residential properties along the narrowest stretches. These widenings will require the purchase and destruction of these home as well as extensive grading and construction of high concrete walls, concrete revetments, new storm water systems and accommodation of all existing public and private utilities. The Parker Hill portal reconstruction would likely require putting that stretch of Paulin Creek in a concrete culvert and the reduction of the existing and popular pedestrian and bike passage to a much narrower passage immediately adjacent to a busy 4-lane road.
4. Character of communication with the Public:
- a. Chair Zane has publicly declared that she does not value outside reports and does want to pay for such reports.
 - b. Your Board, individually and collectively, have done little or nothing to formally inform County taxpayers, citizens, residents and businesses of alternative project options and their related costs. Chair Zane has instead made every attempt to use the press to win popular support of an inadequately informed public while simultaneously denigrating any possible opposition. You refer to possible opponents of your plans as NIMBY, rich and/or uncaring of our needy elderly, vets and other struggling citizens. Chair Zane consistently chooses to demean those coming to address Board regarding this project. Chair Zane does this through a consistent pattern of talking down to them, gratuitous limitations on time, sorting groups to reduce the number of speakers and cutting individual speaker time because their words are beginning to challenge her vision for the Chanate property. This pattern of behavior is readily verifiable in the video library of public sessions.
 - c. Chair Zane has publicly declared that preserving any of the existing publicly owned and managed Chanate Complex property unduly benefits the wealthy at the expense of seniors, vets and others of modest income. Chair Zane has provided no more than her own anecdotal observations in support of this declaration. She has presented no hard evidence of adjacent family incomes and assets. There are indeed high-value neighborhoods, including very high-end housing developed by Gallaher and his associates, to the north and west of the Chanate Complex.
 - i. My personal experience with friends and neighbors throughout Sonoma County tell a quite different story: many families are worried and struggling to get by and wondering when they might outlive their savings. At first glance at the Chanate project many imagined retiring to a Chanate Complex rental apartment. Now more and more are realizing that they can never retire, afford the proposed market-rate apartments, or leave their current homes because they need to house and support adult children, parents or others who cannot support themselves. Chair Zane regularly expresses care for senior citizens but, from my perspective, her actions convey no real interest in listening to them or in responding to their needs.
 - d. Chair Zane is not fulfilling her obligations as a representative and guardian of the peoples' interests. This failure is costly, unduly enriching of private parties and is serving as terrible role model for our youth and those who might consider following her into public service.

Very truly yours,
Tom Brown



Cc: Santa Rosa City Council
Santa Rosa Planning Commission
David Guhin, Santa Rosa Director of Planning & Economic Development
David Gouin, Santa Rosa Director of Housing & Community Services
Sonoma County Housing Advocacy Group
Accountable Development Coalition
Sonoma County Transportation and Land Use Coalition
J.D. Morris
Kevin McCallum
Paul Gullixson