**Selected Letters published in the Press Democrat**

July 3, 2018

**Chanate Development**

EDITOR: The city of Santa Rosa’s recent neighborhood meeting regarding Bill Gallaher’s proposed development of the Chanate Road campus was simply a fishing expedition for him to anticipate the challenges during the planning and entitlement process (“Strong reaction to housing plan,” June 26).

We were presented half-truths and half-baked enticements in this thinly veiled attempt to appease us regarding his over-the-top development. Does he think a dog park, an amphitheater and a speculative Oliver’s Market will make this poorly designed development more palatable?

Supervisor Shirlee Zane seeks to label opponents of the 867 high-rise apartments and thousands more vehicles along Chanate Road as NIMBYs. We are not NIMBYs. We just want a sensible development that fits the neighborhood. We want an explanation of how increased traffic will flow when it already gridlocks, and we want a realistic plan demonstrating safe evacuation in case of another disaster such as last October’s fire.

This development built downtown, rather than making a car a necessity, would allow people to walk to work, shop, dine and take public transportation. Two thousand more people living downtown would certainly help with the stated goal of revitalizing downtown, instead of unnecessarily and adversely impacting the diminishing open space and wildlife along Chanate Road.

**PETER SCHINDLER**

June 27, 2018

**Taking issue with Zane**

EDITOR: I have to take issue with the statements quoted from Supervisor Shirlee Zane regarding the Chanate Village project and the signage she decried (“Chanate housing gets hearing,” Monday). The fear is real and was experienced by those trying to evacuate the area during the fires. Chanate Road was gridlocked, and fire personnel were hampered by long lines of residents fleeing the fires that threatened and burned their neighborhoods.

I have one question for Zane. How dare she accuse residents of her own district of using scare tactics and intimidation of fire when we are fire victims? We were all subjected to evacuations, fires in our neighborhoods and devastation/loss.

Those of us fortunate enough to have not lost our homes are truly concerned about an overreaching development on an overused, narrow road. For Zane to accuse her constituents, whom she purports to represent, in such a manner is insulting, provocative and nothing short of an attempt to distort concerns regarding their personal safety now and in the future.

She represents all residents of the 3rd District and needs to listen to them accordingly; not disparage those who are legitimately asking to be heard, especially when there was no public input regarding the development of this site prior to the meeting on Monday night.

THERESA WOLOWIC

Santa Rosa

January 11, 2018

**Building in fire zones**

EDITOR: We now have the costliest wildfire in U.S. history because past Santa Rosa City Councils knowingly approved multimillion dollar subdivisions in a high/very high fire hazard area. Hazard mitigation plans forewarned that area was likely to burn again.

Because cities keep approving new developments in fire-hazard zones, wildfire experts advocate that cities reimburse 100 percent of state and federal firefighting costs. As state Insurance Commissioner David Jones said, state and federal aid “ultimately falls on the backs of taxpayers.” Santa Rosa has to reimburse only 25 percent of the cost. The loss of property tax, sales tax and other revenue is the consequences of gambling on dense housing in a hazardous area.

The City Council is asking for millions in aid, while simultaneously contemplating 237 new houses on burned property on Round Barn Boulevard. The council seems oblivious that people died trying to escape the fires as well as to the insurance nightmares for those who lost homes, including the challenge of finding affordable coverage in Fountaingrove going forward.

Councilman Jack Tibbetts’ comment — “If it’s not one disaster, it’s another” — confirms the disregard that half the council has for residents (“Santa Rosa rejects housing project in burn zone,” Dec. 20). Council members deserve to face the same economic difficulties that fire victims are facing. The city shouldn’t be entitled to a taxpayer bailout if it continues with poor land-use decisions.

KAREN SANDERS, Santa Rosa

**November 21, 2017**

**Name calling**

EDITOR: Boy, name calling is certainly catching on these days, even trickling down to county government. As a Friend of Chanate, I am being called an “elitist segregationist” by Supervisor Shirlee Zane (“Chanate project foes forge ahead,” Nov. 13).

Apparently there is no room for disagreement or discussion. For Zane will always sleep well at night, unlike those that if they thwart her plan will be forever “accountable to their own conscience.” A fitting punishment in her mind for those who oppose her idea of what’s best. I’m tempted to think of an equally disparaging name for a supervisor who doesn’t value any differing opinion from her constituents, but I’ll hold my tongue.

GREGORY SCHERER, Santa Rosa

November 18, 2017

**Zane’s name-calling**

EDITOR: So, Sonoma County Supervisor Shirlee Zane has pigeonholed me and hundreds of other Chanate area residents as “elitist segregationists,” based on letters and emails she received embracing arguments “right out of a segregationist handbook” (“Chanate project foes forge ahead,” Monday).

It is unconscionable for our elected representative to negatively broad-brush opponents of her favored projects in a classic attempt to denigrate the opposition and devalue their opinions.

In all of the printed and spoken opposition to the Chanate project, I have heard nothing to suggest segregation. I have heard legitimate concerns about traffic density, propriety of the sales agreement and campaign donation issues.

Failure to acknowledge legitimate concerns is a glaring weakness for Zane as a supervisor. Name-calling should be beneath her when describing her constituents.

DONALD ROWELL

November 2, 2017

**Fire, roads and homes**

EDITOR: The recent fires in northeast Santa Rosa should cause all of us, including the Board of Supervisors, to rethink the plan for building 800 housing units at the site of the old Sutter hospital on Chanate Road. It’s reasonable to think that the folks living in those units would have at least two cars each. If one does the quick arithmetic, that’s 1,600 additional cars dumped onto a two-lane road.

In normal times, traffic is a major problem during commute hours, contrary to claims by Supervisor Shirlee Zane. Add a raging fire being pushed along by 80 mph wind gusts, and one has to ask what plans the supervisors are offering to move traffic during a panic. One need only look at the street map of the area to see several large neighborhoods with a single exit road, namely that two-lane road. Add 1,600 cars, and it isn’t difficult to see a disaster in the making.

The stories of congestion and panic in the Coffey Park and Sleepy Hollow neighborhoods at the height of the fire ought to give pause. Keep in mind this is the second time a fire like this ran through the area.

TIM McFARLIN, Santa Rosa

August 18, 2017

**Chanate housing**

EDITOR: Of course, the inevitable NIMBY letter to the editor must be written and accuse the heartless “Friends of Chanate” who nowhere ever said they were opposed to having the Chanate Road campus developed for needed housing (“Blocking sale,” Letters, Monday). Somehow that part was just assumed.

That isn’t the issue. It is the scope (800 rentals) and also the question of why the land was sold so cheaply to the developer, which will in the long term cost all Santa Rosa taxpayers. How has “affordable housing” automatically become “rental property,” with little discussion about the pros and cons?

I wrongly thought there would be affordable homes for Santa Rosa families wanting to put down roots to buy (under market value) a place to call home rather than an apartment for a few years.

How does this “match the surrounding neighborhood” as promised at the first and only open public discussion in October 2015?

GREGORY SCHERER, Santa Rosa

August 17, 2017

**Chanate ‘giveaway’**

EDITOR: The sale of the Chanate Road property should have been by open bid (“Chanate land sale ends up in court,” Friday). The price of $11.5 million equals $140,000 per prime acre. Divided by 800 units, that’s a per-unit cost of $14,375. If that’s not a giveaway, I don’t know what is. Backroom politics?

STEVE EDWARDS, Santa Rosa

**Not a NIMBY issue**

EDITOR: This is in response to Nancy Todd’s letter calling people who live around the future Chanate Road development NIMBYs (“Blocking sale,” Monday). I support the lawsuit against Sonoma County that Friends of Chanate has filed.

The Friends of Chanate lawsuit is based on how the county gave the property away for a pittance of its value — and behind closed doors, with minimal community input, to a developer who not only is taking advantage of the county supervisors, who are weak in the knees over promoting their own agenda, but also Sonoma County taxpayers.

I live in the area around the proposed development, and my neighbors and I are for affordable housing, free rooms for veterans and appropriate and respectful use of the space. That includes continuing medical facilities, bird rescue, the Sloan House and space for wildlife. It’s the developer who worked a sweet deal for himself at everyone’s expense. And our elected officials went along with it, hook, line and sinker.

If Todd wants to be ashamed, she should be ashamed of the supervisors, who are giving away Sonoma County taxpayers’ money.

JOANNE THOMAS, Santa Rosa

August 16, 2017

**Chanate land deal**

EDITOR: I read with interest the article about the sale of the county property on Chanate Road in Santa Rosa (“Chanate land sale ends up in court,” Friday). The article stated that developer Bill Gallaher’s team “agreed to pay $6 million in cash for the land, planning for at least 400 units.” If I did my math correctly, that is equivalent to $15,000 per lot in the highly desirable Fountaingrove area. A review of my property tax bill lists the value of my lot in the low-lying JC area as $100,000. I hereby formally request that the Board of Supervisors and the county assessor lower the assessed value on my lot to the value offered to the developer of the Chanate property. I thank you in advance.

DEEPINDER SEKHON, Santa Rosa

July 19, 2017

**More than ‘infill’**

EDITOR: The Oxford English Dictionary defines “infill” as material that fills or is used to fill a space or hole. To describe the hotly debated Chante Road property as infill is an insult to the sensitive ecology, historically significant cemetery and rich tradition of providing health care for underserved citizens at that site.

I am not opposed to development. As a neighbor, I would welcome well-planned, authentic affordable housing nearby. However, the scale of Bill Gallaher’s proposal (800 rental units) would overtax the land and infrastructure, including the already overburdened two-lane road. Why not compromise with a smaller, more respectful development?

All open space is not the same. The Chante Road land isn’t simply infill.

JEANNE MILLER, Santa Rosa

July 14, 2017

**Quake concerns**

EDITOR: I’ve been following the articles about the proposed Chanate Road area housing development, and as a state-registered geotechnical engineer, I have some questions about the proposed 800 residential units planned for this site.

The California state fault map shows that the active Rogers Creek fault passes right through this site where a local developer wants to build extensive housing. The two magnitude 6-plus earthquakes that greatly damaged Santa Rosa in 1969 had epicenters right in this area. Because this old county hospital site is in an active fault zone, the housing will likely be subjected to more strong shaking and major damage in the next seismic event.

My questions are, how will the development be designed to keep the housing safe from ground fault ruptures, and will the developer fully warn folks who buy or rent there about the risk of damaging earthquakes?

If this risk is not addressed, the losses to the public could be serious.

ED MARGASON, Santa Rosa

July 11, 2017

**Hospital site history**

EDITOR: Press Democrat articles published over the past several months featuring the old Sonoma County hospital make little reference to the history of the hospital and its neighbor, the former Oak Knoll Sanitarium. Both were constructed in the 1930s and are listed on the Living New Deal website.

A 2015 cultural resources survey found many of the Sonoma County medical complex structures appear to be eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources and recommends that they be formally evaluated should future development impact them.

Information about this property’s architectural and cultural history is available at the Sonoma County Archives and the Sonoma County History and Genealogy Library. Resources include original documents pertaining to issuance of Public Works Administration funds used for both the hospital and sanitarium and correspondence between the county and the architect and building contractor. Paulene Goddard’s master’s thesis, “The Impact of the Works Projects Administration in Sonoma County,” can be found at the library as well as historic photographs and information related to the old Sonoma County poor farm and cemetery.

Library staff are happy to assist anyone wishing to access these materials.

KATHERINE J. RINEHART, Manager, Sonoma County History & Genealogy Library

July 8, 2017

**Traffic impacts**

EDITOR: I’ve become very weary of all the city planners and county supervisors trumpeting the Chanate Road property as the grand opportunity for Santa Rosa to help solve the housing shortage without one peep about the often-congested two-lane road where the proposed 800 future residents would be driving to and fro.

I find their silence on this issue stunning. So far, it’s been all about the wonderful opportunity we have before us. But without this problem addressed, there would be a deterioration of the quality of life for all present and future residents along Chanate Road.

This is a special area, a treasure, but the lack of supporting infrastructure will negate its uniqueness.

G.J. SCHERER, Santa Rosa

June 29, 2017

**A tale of two sales**

EDITOR: I read that the Board of Supervisors is considering selling the 7.5-acre Sonoma County Water Agency property for $4.2 million (“Apartments eyed for county’s SR site,” June 20). Comparatively, how can the supervisors think about giving away the Chanate property (82 acres) for $12.5 million? It’s ridiculously low, and with all the controversy, there is no reason they can’t postpone the decision and revisit this potential give-away.

DONNA CHERLIN, Forestville

June 25, 2017

**A below-market deal**

EDITOR: Why is the Chanate Road land being sold to developer Bill Gallaher for approximately $140,000 per acre? A quick check of land for sale in Santa Rosa reveals the average price per acre is $500,000 and up.

If the supervisors are so willing to move forward with a sale, then make the sale for what it is worth — $500,000 for 82 acres is $41 million. Who came up with $6 million? Why is he getting this deal?

Please enlighten the public.

JULIE PEACOCK MEYER, Santa Rosa

June 22, 2017

**Failing the smell test**

EDITOR: Supervisor Shirlee Zane’s angry response to those who question the land sale (giveaway) says a lot (“Stakes high for project,” Sunday). In her Close to Home column (“Chanate sale offers rare housing opportunity,” Saturday), she asserted that an invitation to enter bids on the sale and development of this property went out to more than 500 developers, and only two responded. Does that sound plausible?

Think about that: 82 acres of prime real estate in the heart of suburban Wine Country, some of the hottest real estate in the country being sold for $11 million. What viable developer would not want to get their hands on a deal that could reap more than $100 million? (Do the math on sales of more than 800 units.)

And then, lo and behold, the winning developer is a major contributor to her and other supervisors’ campaigns. Hmm. Sorry, but as a U.S. senator said to Attorney General Jeff Sessions during his testimony, this doesn’t pass the smell test.

And then to dismiss all the public outcry as NIMBY whining is just a clear indication that she isn’t listening and is determined to ram this project through on the fastest track possible.

STEVE O’ROURKE, Santa Rosa

June 20, 2017

**Reasons to postpone**

EDITOR: Why did Sunday’s Chanate complex article (“Stakes high for project”) include Supervisor Shirlee Zane’s “very sad” quote and fail to mention the reasons that her “so many bright, educated people” are opposed to her deal as negotiated?

— The last public hearing, on a significantly different vision, was in October 2015. The supervisors then spent 16 months in closed sessions designing a 190-page project description and terms of sale that they posted 14 days before today’s vote.

— Bill Gallaher’s potential gain is enormous. The refurbished 495-unit Enclave property in Petaluma recently sold for $144.5 million. The Gallagher project might be valued at $300 million-plus in the international market for well-located and politically safe income property.

— Taxpayers countywide will pay more and lose public services. Supervisor David Rabbitt told us that Petaluma loses money on its median-priced $550,000 houses; a $1.1 million house is a break-even for city finances. If the county, schools and other public agencies receive too little in permit fees and property taxes, they will be forced to reduce public services. Development that is subsidized by the taxpayers at the expense of road maintenance, eroded school budgets, reduced public health care and lost sales tax revenue is a bad deal.

A 90-day suspension of today’s vote to commit to the sale of this property isn’t too much to ask.

TOM BROWN, Santa Rosa

**Ignoring traffic**

EDITOR: After reading Sunday’s article about the former Community Hospital site on Chanate Road, I’m thinking here we go again. This is about what has been described as in-fill — developing vacant land throughout cities without taking into account the already chronically overburdened road system, which has not kept up with growth over the 27 years we have lived here.

I was looking for any mention of upgrading Chanate Road to accommodate the heavier traffic load. But there was none. Better sooner than later, the city of Santa Rosa will have to face the fact that we have a serious traffic congestion problem that needs to be dealt with.

ROB MILLER, Santa Rosa

**Make a better deal**

EDITOR: This concerns the mostly detailed article on the sale of the Chanate property for much needed rental-housing. I say mostly because Staff Writer J.D. Morris made only a single mention of a huge concern by many in our community, “a group of medical professionals is deeply worried about losing the health care facilities on a site that was the epicenter of such services in the county for decades.”

The 175-member group, Health Care Professionals for Equality and Community Empowerment, is advocating for the Board of Supervisors to slow down the decision-making process. The group has valid concerns: the low sale price, the speed at which the sale is being pushed through with limited public input, the eviction of a battered women’s shelter, the bird rescue center and the wellness center and that two county buildings, the morgue and the public health lab, will be leased back from the developer.

The supervisors need to be engaging the community, health care professionals and neighbors in deciding what to do with the largest and most valuable parcel of land that the people of Sonoma County now own. Let’s plan for the future and negotiate a better deal on behalf of taxpayers and our county’s public health needs.

ANILA ROBERTS, Cotati

**A reasonable request**

EDITOR: It saddens me that Supervisor Shirlee Zane thinks that the “bright, educated” people requesting a buffer zone as part of the Chanate development don’t want to share their neighborhood. In fact, it makes me angry, and I feel somewhat insulted. How dare she?

Most of us actually voted for her. Maybe we’re not so bright. I don’t mind sharing my neighborhood, and neither do my neighbors. We have a reasonable request — that multi-unit housing not be built up against our backyards. Would it be such a horrible thing to honor that request? The buffer zone could be part of a trail system through the development.

On a slightly different note, what will happen to the cemetery across from the old hospital? Does anyone know?

SHELLEY FITCH, Santa Rosa

June 17, 2017

**The other bidder**

EDITOR: Regarding the Chanate land sale, what happened to the bid by Curt Johansen, the developer of an eco-friendly community in the Central Valley, a town that also has a community college and a progressive downtown?

Johansen provided the community with modern low-income housing with solar power and drought-resistant yards, as this builder is interested in providing environmentally responsible places for people to live. Well, isn’t that what we want in Santa Rosa?

If the Chanate land is sold (still a questionable choice), Johansen’s smaller plan must be revisited. The supervisors who received campaign money from Bill Gallaher should be excused from the vote due to conflict of interest. The past difficult working relationship between the developer and the city of Santa Rosa should be enough for the Board of Supervisors to reject the Gallaher proposal.

DONNA BLEY, Santa Rosa

June 15, 2017

**A housing opportunity**

EDITOR: I have procrastinated enough. I must add my voice to the discussion. The Chanate Road land is an amazing and rare opportunity for Santa Rosa to lead in providing affordable home ownership to our teachers, caretakers, social workers and adult sons and daughters returning from college or training schools ready to contribute to this community and start fiscally responsible lives.

Why not set aside 80 percent to 100 percent of the Chanate land for new housing committed to this cause? What could be the down side? The developers would definitely make a profit. Maybe it wouldn’t be a killing, but, really, do they need to make a killing off of our middle-class public servants and newly graduated children?

Build townhouses and condominiums with shared groundskeeping fees for, dare I suggest, $250,000-$300,000. Why not go in this direction? Santa Rosa would become a model destination for the best and brightest, if not the richest. Santa Rosa would shine in an otherwise dreary landscape of greed and what’s-in-it-for-me-ism.

JEAN SMITH, Santa Rosa

June 14, 2017

**Suburban nature**

EDITOR: I woke up Monday and raised the bedroom shades. Sunshine was illuminating the redwoods and oak trees. Mockingbirds were flying about catching food for their newly hatched. Over by the Bird Rescue Center, some deer were contentedly browsing the new, green shoots. When I opened the window, I heard the plaintive cries of quail talking to their broods. How glorious it was.

The thought of exchanging the views, smells and sounds of nature for buildings, cars, street lights and barking dogs is depressing. No, Supervisor Shirlee Zane, we aren’t selfish NIMBYs because we want to maintain nature within this suburban setting. We love the bountiful “backyard” that is the county portion of the Chanate Court/Meadow Glen zone.

Please explore with us ways to modify the draconian destruction of our neighborhood environment that the development plan envisages.

PHIL WEIL, Santa Rosa

June 12, 2017

**Chanate land sale**

EDITOR: The proposed sale of the 82-acre Chanate property to developer Bill Gallaher for between $6 million and $12 million seems like an incredible giveaway. In this environment of uncontrolled campaign financing, the specter of campaign contributions swaying the vote of Sonoma County supervisors is concerning, particularly with the history of the large donations a member of the Gallaher family in support of Santa Rosa City Council candidates and the lawsuit by Gallaher and his son-in-law against The Press Democrat after reporting about these contributions.

I am impressed by the Health Professionals for Equality and Community Empowerment and their efforts to shine light on this potential sale and their commitment to the health of this community (“Doctors fighting sale,” May 30).

KEVIN MILLER, Fort Bragg

June 10, 2017

**More scrutiny needed**

EDITOR: Thank you for the informative articles about the impending sale of the Chanate property. I am dismayed that the sale to a local developer could go through so swiftly and with so little discussion. There has been little public input and transparency in this process. The most recent public forum was in October of 2015. This isn’t the way to proceed with the county’s largest sale of land in recent history.

Sloan House is another concern. This shelter for battered women and their children is slated for demolition as part of the deal. I understand that it is always filled to capacity and has a waiting list. If the sale proceeds what will happen to these women and children? To add insult to injury, the building was built with private donations only about 10 years ago.

It is essential that the Board of Supervisors gets community input and considers the impact of the sale of such a valuable property on the current occupants of the area and assesses the future needs of people and groups who have relied on this property for decades.

KAREN PREUSS, Cotati

June 9, 2017

**A chance to shine**

EDITOR: I have procrastinated enough. I must add my voice to the discussion. The Chanate complex land (“Deal would save meadow,” Thursday) is an amazing and rare opportunity for Santa Rosa to lead in providing affordable home ownership to our teachers, nurses, social workers and sons and daughters returning from college or training programs ready to contribute to this community.

Why not set aside 80 percent or 100 percent of new housing committed to this cause? What could be the down side? The developer would definitely make a profit. Maybe it wouldn’t be a “killing,” but, really, do they need to make a killing off of our public servants and newly graduated children?

Town houses, condominiums with a shared-grounds keeping fee for, dare I suggest, $250,000 to $300,000? Why not go in this direction? Santa Rosa would become a model destination for the best and brightest if not the richest. Santa Rosa would shine in an otherwise dreary landscape of greed and what’s-in-it-for-me-ism.

JEAN SMITH, Santa Rosa

June 2, 2017

**Chanate sale**

EDITOR: I sincerely appreciate the article about the local doctors who are advocating to preserve community health services at the 82-acre Chanate complex (“Doctors fighting sale,” Tuesday). For 140 years, Sonoma County wisely dedicated this land and its facilities to help the most marginalized of our neighbors.

In several instances, however, the article refers to the Sutter campus and Sutter Medical Center. The county leased the land to Sutter Health, which operated Community Hospital. The distinction is important: This isn’t a proposed sale between two private entities (Sutter and Bill Gallaher). Rather, this is the county practically giving away the people’s land to a private developer to build 800 housing units.

With basic health care for indigent and low-income people in jeopardy (thank you Donald Trump), our community needs this resource now more than ever.

MARYA GLASS, Cotati

May 31, 2017

**Undervalued asset**

EDITOR: By my arithmetic, selling the old hospital property on Chanate Road for $73,000 per acre is well below market value for a property of that quality in that neighborhood (“Doctors fighting sale,” Tuesday). The entire deal needs to be thought through again with multiple bidders, alternative and creative plans and public review. There are many more alternatives, and each would net the county considerably more money, which it surely needs. These also would be addressing the housing shortage.

JERRY GLADSTONE, Santa Rosa

May 10, 2017

**Paulin Creek meadow**

EDITOR: On Friday, The Press Democrat broke the news that Paulin Creek meadow will be preserved and the Chanate complex deal is being renegotiated behind closed doors (“Meadow gets reprieve”).

Supervisor Shirlee Zane was quoted as saying, “We trusted the county staff to do the research on these parcels. Apparently that didn’t happen. Now we have to go forward and make sure that (Bill) Gallaher gets a fair price with all of this …” What? Zane’s job is to make sure the people of Sonoma County get a fair deal. Suggesting that a wealthy developer should pay even less than the paltry $6 million-$12 million for 72 acres of prime real estate is outrageous.

This proposed sale betrays a 140-year history of using that public land and those public buildings to care for the sick and disenfranchised. There are many forces, both local and national, that will dramatically increase the rolls of the uninsured in the next 5-10 years. How will we care for them?

Join me and other health care professionals at a community forum on May 17 to discuss the future of health care in Sonoma County. For more information, see https://hpeacesonomacounty.wordpress.com

DR. JENNIFER C. FISH, Santa Rosa

April 25, 2017

**Kicking the can**

EDITOR: I wrote a letter to Supervisor Shirlee Zane, who is my board member, about the sale of the Chanate Road property and especially Paulin Creek Open Space Preserve Parcel J. She replied that the property will go through a review by the city of Santa Rosa, and I can comment to the city Planning Department.

Zane and other board members certainly have the authority to pull Parcel J out of the sale to Bill Gallaher and make it part of open space.

The Board of Supervisors chose to ignore common sense and kicked the can to the city, letting the city take comments about Parcel J.

The board needs to pull Parcel J from the sale and quit kicking the can.

PETER FULKERSON, Santa Rosa

April 15, 2017

**Paulin Creek preserve**

EDITOR: I was cheered by Supervisor Shirlee Zane’s Close to Home column where she extolled the benefits of urban open space (“Open Space District needs public input,” March 8). Ten days later, I was alarmed when I read in another article that part of county-owned Paulin Creek preserve, an urban open space in Santa Rosa, was slated to be sold to a developer (“Meadow’s potential sale alarming neighbors,” March 18).

In this article, Zane was reported to have said she wasn’t concerned about the fate of Parcel J (paulincreek.org) in the proposed sale because the city of Santa Rosa would conduct an environmental review before development started.

On one hand, Sonoma County continues its impressive push to preserve open space. On the other hand, the same county is proposing to sell the geographic center of the 15-year-old preserve to a developer. That just boggles my mind.

The supervisors now realize that Parcel J of Paulin Creek preserve is included in the sale of the Chanate Road hospital complex. I implore the supervisors to take responsibility for making sure Parcel J is removed from the sale rather than passing that responsibility on to the city.

It may be legal for the county to sell Parcel J, but it isn’t right.

CRAIG OLSON, Santa Rosa

March 23, 2017

**Selling open space**

EDITOR: I don’t understand how it is possible for the Paulin Creek Open Space Preserve meadow to be included in the Chante Road property sale (“Meadow’s potential sale alarming neighbors,” Saturday). This open space allows the neighbors to enjoy nature and watch the many different animals who live in this area.

One of the many reasons I love where I live is the wildlife. Deer, turkeys, foxes and other animals come down from the preserve often. It makes us feel like we are in the country in the middle of town. Adding housing where the meadow at Paulin Creek is will destroy habitats, drop property values and create traffic issues.

Sonoma County is reneging on its promise from 2002 to keep this an open space preserve by including the meadow in negotiations with the developer. The meadow in the Paulin Creek preserve, or Parcel J, needs to be removed from the Chanate campus sale. I need my elected officials to honor their promise to protect open space.

I encourage everyone to visit the meadow in the Paulin Creek preserve to see what the county supervisors are deciding to eliminate from our community.

EMILY DUNNAGAN TODD, Santa Rosa

March 19, 2017

**Save Sloan House**

EDITOR: Creating homes for the homeless is difficult to accomplish with the limited resources available. With the astronomical rent levels prevailing in Sonoma County, we need to expand facilities, not destroy them.

So it is incomprehensible that the Sloan House women’s shelter in Santa Rosa is to be demolished to make way for an upscale housing development (“Keeping ‘restorative’ setting,” Wednesday). Built only 11 years ago, with predominantly state funding, in response to a lawsuit charging Sonoma County with shirking its housing and homeless obligations, Sloan House provides a calm and healing environment for women and young children. It has had minimal impact on the area.

Closing it will feed criticism that homeless programs are over-concentrated in central city neighborhoods such as Railroad Square.

The site off Chanate Road by Paulin Creek is unsuitable for residential or retail development. Why tear this down just to create a dog park for the well-to-do? It is a classic waste of tax dollars.

County supervisors and Santa Rosa planners should condition approval of the developer’s plan for this large site on preservation of this tiny corner of the proposed 82-acre development.

DAVID BRIGODE, Sonoma

March 2, 2017

**County hospital sale**

EDITOR: As a practicing doctor in Sonoma County since 1993, I’m concerned about the hospital site and associated property on Chanate Road in Santa Rosa. Why would the county sell this 82-acre community asset to a developer for only $6 million (with another $6.5 million contingent on approval of an additional 400 units)? Eighty-two acres in a desirable location in Santa Rosa is surely worth far more than $6 million. And why is the additional $6.5 million tied to approval of more units? That sounds more like an inducement to approve development than a land sale.

I’m also concerned about public services, including the Department of Public Health offices, the women’s shelter and mental health facilities, that are located on the Chanate property. Will they remain viable if they have to pay rent in the future?

The Healthcare Access Agreement, which requires Sutter Health to operate an emergency room, sponsor the residency program, provide women’s health and care for the poor will lapse in 2021. Won’t it be a shame if the county sells the Chanate property and functional buildings and then Sutter makes cuts to essential services after 2021?

The county should slow down and ensure that the best interests of the public are served.

DR. PANNA LOSSY, Cotati