



## Letters to the Index-Tribune editor, Oct. 15, 2021



The Eldridge Trail in the wilderness area behind Sonoma Developmental Center is part of the ecologically sensitive fabric of the area. (Alvin Jornada / The Press Democrat)



October 14, 2021, 4:00PM



## SDC proposals have serious gaps

EDITOR: Sonoma Land Trust has been involved with the disposition of the Sonoma Developmental Center since 2012 and was instrumental in ensuring that the property's 750 acres of wild land will be transferred to expand both Jack London State Historic Park and Sonoma Valley Regional Park. Crucially, we have also been actively working to safeguard the regionally critical and narrow wildlife corridor in which SDC sits. The core of our concern is nothing less than the health, functionality and future of the entire Sonoma Valley ecosystem.

Troublingly, the preliminary proposals for redeveloping SDC's 200-acre historic campus do not sufficiently address how this vital habitat corridor between the Mayacamas and Sonoma Mountain will be protected. The Land Trust supports equitable and affordable housing development within the existing built envelope; however, it is critical that major housing development be sited in a way that does not impact the north side of the campus area by Sonoma Creek. Damaging the wildlife corridor will isolate Sonoma Mountain's ecosystem and lead to its eventual decline, with cascading consequences that will be felt across the region.

SDC's land sustains habitat connectivity for native plant and wildlife species. This is necessary for providing key ecological benefits to humans as well, such as forest health and water resources, and to help moderate the effects of climate change on our region. Habitat fragmentation, often caused by poorly planned development, is the major cause of extinction today and is considered by many scientists to be the largest threat to preserving the world's biodiversity. We believe that a comprehensive and transparent planning process that incorporates the latest ecological science and research will result in much better outcomes for both people and nature.

Sonoma Land Trust stands ready to help shape alternatives that result in affordable housing while taking full account of the challenges of a landscape beset by drought and wildfires. We believe that a vibrant SDC community can be achieved in conjunction with a thriving well-protected wildlife corridor. Both are possible. Both are essential.

*Marie Andel*

*Board chair of Sonoma Land Trust/ resident of Sonoma*

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## Cribb not fit for City Council

EDITOR: In a letter to the editor, Sue Simon wrote she was “struck by the dismissive and aggressive tone two (Planning) Commissioners took with an applicant.” She’d seen that behavior at previous Planning Commission meetings, where “we’re witnessing a public dressing down ... rather than an objective review of the project at hand.”

Immediately, I thought of her spouse and City Council candidate James Cribb, who as chair of the Planning Commission in 2017 dressed down a room full of people exercising their rights as citizens. During a well-attended meeting to discuss the perceived merits and shortcomings of the SAHA housing project on Broadway, before anyone involved uttered a single word, Cribb singled out a specific group of folks and spoke to them as though they were barbarians at the gate who were ready to rumble.

I refer to a subset of a larger neighborhood group who were there to express concerns about the unexplored impacts of the proposed high-density housing project. Speaking directly to members of that subset, Cribb expressed his sharp disapproval of the neighborhood’s activism

and wrongly framed its ideas as “opposition to affordable housing.” This not only created palpable tension in the Council Chambers, but also set up an adversarial environment and gave tacit permission to those who did not share the neighborhood’s concerns to hurl insults and call their fellow citizens names. Cribb’s management of the meeting was shameful and his behavior had little in common with the council’s recently created “core set of values.”

Of course, James Cribb can’t sit on the City Council: He can’t separate people from the problem; he launched personal attacks and assigned blame; he couldn’t separate interests from positions; he did not use objective criteria to measure options and solutions; and he did not listen carefully for the purpose of understanding different viewpoints.

*Lynn Fiske Watts*

*Sonoma*

## **Vote for Mike Nugent**

EDITOR: When casting your ballot for our next City Council member, I urge you to vote for Mike Nugent.

I have known Mike for over 30 years and believe he will make a stellar City Council member. Unlike many of our past council members, Mike has actually lived in Sonoma for over 40 years. In addition to raising a family, running his own financial company, he found time and energy to spend many of those years devoted to helping our local nonprofits as a volunteer. He has been a volunteer firefighter, chairman of the board of the Sonoma Valley Health Care District, president of the Vintage Festival and has played a major role in keeping the doors open and lights on at our own Sonoma Valley Hospital. As a two time heart attack survivor, I am most grateful for his success in keeping our local hospital open and great doctors available for me when I needed it on May 26.

He is a thinker and a doer, asks the right questions, and listens to people. As a member of the Sonoma City Council, his agenda is simple: formulate decisions that help Sonoma and its citizens prosper in the years ahead, keep our local health care system financially sound and doors open, and to work with local input to create new housing solutions for all.

Mike Nugent will make a fine member of the Sonoma City Council. He knows Sonoma.

*Stephen Kyle*

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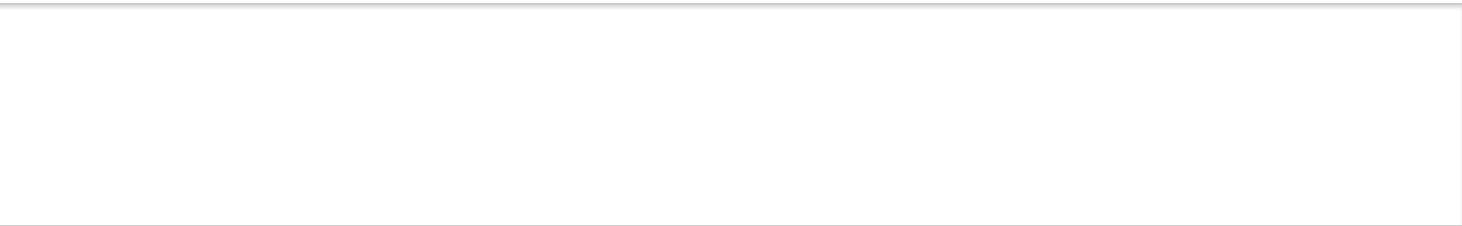
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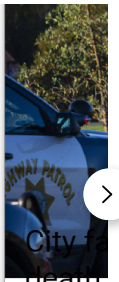
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