

Saïd Nuseibeh

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Planning Commission Mtg.

MAY 03 2017

Agenda Item #

84

May 1, 2017

Jason R Hade, AICP

Planner III

Napa Country Planning, Building & Environmental Service Dept.

jason.hade@countyofnapa.org

Dear Mr. Hade,

I am writing to communicate my alarm over the proposed Major Modification Use Permit #P15-00111 by Flora Springs Winery and the inadequacy of the proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration. While I have nothing but praise for the neighborliness of the Komes' and Garvey families over the past 39 years, the quality of that relationship was built on a minimal commercial impact to the neighborhood. Use Permit after Use Permit have explicitly restricted tours and tastings at the Winery. Suddenly, that delicate balance between our calm, quiet, isolated and rural lifestyle on the one hand, and the congested, hazardous, noisy, commercial activities along Highway 29 is being threatened by the Winery's ambitious marketing and visitation goals.

I beseech you and the Planning Commission to take into consideration the local residents' quality of life along Zinfandel Lane when you deliberate the proposed Use Permit modifications.

My specific concerns fall into two categories: a) the dangers of increased traffic congestion; and b) the negative impacts to our quality of life along the Lane.

Dangers of expanded tours and tastings:

- Non-residents, oblivious of the local rural character of the neighborhood, frequently speed up and down the Lane intent on their destination at either end: the Winery or the Highway.
- A dramatic increase of traffic (cars, vans and buses) represent more physical threats to pedestrians, joggers, and pets along a Lane which is narrow and has no sidewalks. Traumatically, my Mother lost a dog before her eyes to a stranger's car speeding on the Lane. Now my wife and I fear for the safety of

our 7-year-old daughter who wants to play on the Lane as I did in my childhood.

- Visitors who have been imbibing alcohol at tours and tastings —noon and night— pose an obviously increased and prolonged threat to passersby.
- The intersection at Highway 29 currently represents a hazard with increased collisions and restricted ability to merge into traffic at present congestion levels. The proposed increase of traffic to and from the Winery will only exacerbate a difficult and dangerous situation.
- Residents enjoy a low crime rate in the neighborhood because we are off the beaten path. The proposed marketing and increased visitation activities will necessarily compromise the anonymity of our lives and increase our risks.

Adverse effects to quality of life with expanded tours and tastings:

- A great part of the charm of our neighborhood is strolling the Lane and getting to know one's neighbors and chatting with familiar workers in the vineyards. Increased anonymous tourist traffic will disrupt and discourage such familiarities.
- Escalating tourist traffic along the Lane will dramatically change the neighborhood character from a residential & agricultural to an increasingly commercial environment. The proposed increase of employees and visitors per day will surpass the number of local residents.
- The proposed expansion of vehicles, hours and days of tourist activity at the Winery reduces the respite residents currently enjoy from traffic and tourist activity at the winery. The Winery has already and recently been found in violation of existing Use Permit visitation regulations and now the County is in a position to reward those violations by enshrining increased marketing activities and visitation privileges. I hope not.
- The proposed changes to the Winery's marketing activities and visitation numbers will adversely transfer some of the already unbearable traffic congestion on Highway 29 to our little Lane for the sole benefit of one commercial enterprise.
- The proposed substantial increase of visitors through the neighborhood will just amplify intrusions into our privacy.

Neighbors have gone on record as far back as 1989 stating that the " 'Tours and Tasting by Appointment Only' has already placed a burden on the property

owners of W. Zinfandel." The neighborhood petition opposing tasting and tours by Flora Springs Winery (Received by the County May 30, 1990) and signed by 33 people explains, "... this has always been a quiet residential area that represents in microcosm the natural beauty and serenity that long time residents of Napa County cherish." The proposed Use Permit Modifications directly and indirectly threaten the beauty and serenity of which we are custodians. As much as I respect and value the owners and employees of Flora Springs Winery, their business acumen and collective success... I cannot stand silent in the face of the proposed intrusive and hazardous marketing and visitation changes that will negatively impact every resident on the Lane.

The Winery built a dedicated facility for tours and tastings moments away on Highway 29 and I want to argue that that is where tours and tastings should remain. The commercialization and, arguably, the Disneyfication of Flora Springs Winery represents a momentous change for the worse.

The Use Permit modifications requested by Flora Springs Winery will reduce the security and quality of our lives on the Lane, immediately and far into the future. I urge the Napa County Planners and Commissioners to deny the proposed Permit modifications.

Sincerely yours,

-Saïd Nuseibeh

Frost, Melissa

Subject: FW: Comments re Flora Springs Mitigated Negative Declaration and proposed Use Permit Modification
Attachments: Comments_Flora SpringsPermit Mods_20170501pdf.pdf

-----Original Message-----

From: Said [<mailto:saidn@sonic.net>]

Sent: Tuesday, May 02, 2017 10:40 AM

To: Hade, Jason

Subject: Comments re Flora Springs Mitigated Negative Declaration and proposed Use Permit Modification

Dear Jason,

Per our discussion yesterday, kindly see and submit the attached written comments.

If you have any difficulty opening the PDF document... please let me know immediately.

Respectfully,
-Said Nuseibeh

707.963.2936

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