

## Fuller, Lashun

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**To:** Morrison, David; Frost, Melissa  
**Cc:** Anderson, Laura  
**Subject:** RE: For distribution to APAC - please

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**From:** Ginna Beharry [<mailto:ginna.beharry@sbcglobal.net>]  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 21, 2015 7:46 AM  
**To:** Morrison, David  
**Subject:** For distribution to APAC - please

Dear APAC members,

At the APAC meetings, we hear from those who say the 40 acre minimum will stifle the young, entrepreneurial winemakers who are the font of creative winemaking in Napa. Where are the facts? What is "innovation" in winemaking and is it truly dependent on parcel size, youth or family history? Although this non-fact based argument helps us cling to the romantic notions of the early days of Napa's pioneer winemaking families, those days are long gone. Land prices, grape prices and marketing plans have taken those notions out of play.

The last two winery applications related to small parcels that have been before the Planning Commission tell a less romantic tale. The first was for a small (for now) 10,000 gallon new winery on an 11 acre parcel. The parcel required use of a shared well, a "hold and haul" waste disposal system and a variance of 435 feet from the 600 foot setback standard. Additionally, some have questioned the validity of the lot line adjustment used to bring the parcel up to minimum size for a winery. This application was recommended for approval by the Planning Department and approved by a 4 to 1 vote of the Planning Commission in spite of public opposition.

The second example, an expansion application for the pre-WDO Bell winery in Yountville, involved an increase from 40,000 gallons to 60,000 and an increase in visitation to 16,000 per year. All of this on a 7.9 acre parcel. In spite of fact-based arguments from two Commissioners and the public that these visitation numbers were on the liberal side for any 60,000 gallon winery, let alone a winery on 7.9 acres, based on the Planning Department's recommendation of approval, the Commission voted 3-2 in favor. I never heard a discussion as to whether the increase in production was appropriate for the site. Nor was the concept of source shifting discussed to my knowledge. The neighbor's concerns were acknowledged and then ignored.

FACT: the increase in minimum parcel size will reduce by half ( from about 5,000 to 2,500) the number of parcels available for winery development.

I will be the first to acknowledge that this constraint alone will not solve the issues and protect agriculture. However, this increase, coupled with other constraints such as on site fruit production and limits on visitation and events, may help us approach a sustainable balance among commerce, environment and community. These constraints may also help to limit the "corporate" approach to wineries on the larger minimum parcel size. Another overdue constraint: serious consideration of the impact on neighbors' quality of life and property values along with neighborhood/community character and cumulative impact. In my experience attending Planning Commission meetings these past few months, these concerns are given little or no weight in the approval process. Please remember the attendance and comments at the March 10 meeting if you doubt the citizens's frustration in this regard.

FACT: personnel changes are inevitable; planning staff, appointed and elected officials will come and go.

We cannot rely on "soft" recommendations to current policy makers to protect our limited and dwindling resources. In my opinion, even should the heavy biases toward business interests and development begin to show some retrenchment, there will always be pressure from business interests to expand. Only strict guidelines that may be legally enforced have any hope of stemming the tide of inappropriate development for successive generations of Napa's.

Some of those who currently own parcels between 10 and 40 acres will inevitably try to protect their private interests. Indeed, there may be members of the APAC who fall into this category. But is not fine wine made from high quality fruit by talented winemakers, be they consultants or winery owners? Parcel size does not enter the equation. I believe we can have great confidence in the continued quality and innovation of winemaking in Napa because the quality of the fruit will continue to attract talented, innovative winemakers. This is the agriculture that APAC (Agricultural Advisory Protection Committee) is supposed to protect. It is not the Winery Protection Committee.

A data-based analysis, such as that performed by Bruce Phillips, shows that the County has already permitted capacity that meets the current supply of grapes and casts doubt on the need for any more winery capacity. Further, Napa seems to have limited potential to expand vineyard development for quality fruit without creating a serious impact on the watersheds as evidenced by recent controversial ridgetop-to-vineyard conversion proposals. We, the citizens, look to you as civic and industry leaders to connect the winery permit process to the realities of the limitations that confront us - available fruit, the environmental considerations, and the preservation of Napa's rural character.

Respectfully,  
Ginna Beharry

Sent from my iPad

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