



filed via e-mail

June 12, 2023

Planning Commission
c/o Permit Sonoma
County of Sonoma

Re: DRH21-0010-Appeal from DRC Action 05-31-23

Dear Chair Deas and Commissioners,

The Valley of the Moon Alliance (VOTMA) files this Appeal from the Design Review Committee's (DRC) action on May 31, 2023 approving 1) the design, landscaping and, implicitly, submission of a new fire evacuation plan for the Kenwood Ranch Winery (to also apparently be applicable to the Kenwood Ranch Inn/Spa/Restaurant), and 2) an Addendum #2 to the 2004 Final Environmental Report (FEIR) in PLP01-0006 (Winery Phase), both as recommended by Permit Sonoma Staff.

The DRC's action addressed the design review for a winery project site that has been dormant for more than 15 years and that was severely burned during the 2020 Glass fire. In conjunction with its design review, the DRC was tasked by Permit Sonoma (PM) staff to approve and then did approve, without questions, an addendum (Addendum #2) to the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the two phased projects addressed in PLP01-0006 (Inn/Spa Restaurant; Winery). Addendum #2 covers the Winery phase of the unified projects. Addendum #1 addressed the Inn/Spa/Restaurant was adopted in conjunction with DRH16-0006.

VOTMA appreciates that applicant Kenwood Ranch (KR) undertook the effort and analysis that resulted in the preparation of the Initial Study (I/S) and Addendum #2. That action appropriately recognized that proceeding now with DRH21-0010 required a review of the environmental impacts associated with the revised proposed design. This is especially important here considering the long passage of time since the FEIR was certified for the KR project, and because of

the severe impacts of the Glass Fire on the winery project site.

While the I/S and Addendum #2 effort was a noteworthy one, those documents do not fully or adequately capture the extent to which the changes in the surrounding area over the last 20 years and the experiences learned from the Tubbs and Glass fires combine to significantly change the impacts that the 2022 Winery project will have on the conditions as they exist in the Sonoma Valley project impact area today. VOTMA requests that the Planning Commission (PC) review the I/S and Addendum #2 with that background in context. The Design Review Committee's efforts in that regard were not substantively grounded, since its preview extends specifically to design review issues.

VOTMA's appeal for a closer look by the PC at Addendum #2 and the associated discussion in the I/S and its attachments focuses primarily, but not exclusively, on three areas—1) the existing traffic and transportation context in Sonoma Valley today vs. as assessed in 2004; 2) the proposed 2022 Winery project evacuation plan and the impact that evacuation of the Kenwood Ranch project will have on evacuation by others in Sonoma Valley, and on the emergency response within the project impact area; and 3) the cumulative impacts of the 2022 Winery project as viewed in conjunction with other pending or planned projects in the Sonoma Valley, including the Elnoka project, the Sonoma Developmental Center Specific Plan project, and the Hanna Center project. VOTMA will comment on each of those areas in turn.

Traffic and Transportation Impacts

Addendum #2 and the associated I/S take the position that the significant traffic and transportation impacts identified in the 2004 analysis remain applicable to the 2022 Project, and that no new impacts would result from the changes to the project. It rejects any requirement to put the 2022 project through the Vehicle Miles Traveled and GHG screens. As a result, the Addendum and supporting I/S conclude that no LOS traffic/VMT assessment is required to be performed to gauge the impacts the 2022 Winery project will have on Sonoma Valley's already fragile and overextended road system. This approach seems inadequate as a planning matter for a project that has slumbered for the last 20 years. If for no other reason than to provide context and analytic support for testing the impacts of the new proposed evacuation plan, the PC should require a County compliant traffic study to daylight the full impacts of the 2022 Winery project in the light of today's traffic patterns and loads.

Proposed Evacuation Plan

Although the Fehr & Peers (F&P) *Evacuation Travel Time Assessment* (Appendix V to the I/S [att. 22 to att. 5]) approaches the wildfire evacuation issue with an admirable rigor that the SDC SP could have benefitted from, there are three shortcomings to the Evacuation Plan and thus the travel time assessment in turn. First, the numbers of evacuating persons used for the evaluation in a max case for the combined Inn/Spa/Restaurant and Winery at 816 persons ignores both the guests (friends, relatives, etc.) of the Inn patrons who might well be lounging

at the pool, and completely ignores the capacity space available for use in the two meeting rooms on the bottom floor of the Inn. Those rooms could hold a considerable number of meeting attendees who would also need to be evacuated in an emergency.

Second, the evacuation timing estimate appears to ignore the additional ongoing normal congestion impacts of the Elnoka project (Burbank Housing, the new owner, is likely to propose a much denser project); the SDC project does not appear to be factored in quantitatively; and the Hanna Center was not factored in at all. As to the project impact area, the noted prior congestion south of Madrone on Arnold suggests that the Hanna Center should be included the project impact area as well.

Finally, there is no basis, and no permit history supporting, the proposal that an undeveloped road running from the Gray Ranch subdivision to Highway 12 with a driveway only 300 yards west of Campagna Lane, should be allowed to function as a prominent exit route for the 2022 Winery project, let alone the Inn/Spa/Restaurant. The F&P study hinges for its result of no significant impact on evacuation completion time using that narrower road, never identified as a 2004 Winery or Inn/Spa/Restaurant project road, to carry 40% of the cars exiting the Kenwood Ranch project. It bears noting that the suggested exit driveway is not within the middle turn lane zone that was required to be established for use of Campagna Lane to service the Winery and Inn projects.

At a minimum, the F&P study must be revised to 1) utilize a current traffic assessment that adds the meeting room and poll visitors, 2) incorporate a revised Elnoka project (similar to the 700 plus units previously the subject of an EIR), a SDC development of at least 750 units plus daytime visitors, a Hanna Center project of a similar size to SDC, and a revised project impact area that includes Hanna; and 3) reflect a recalculation of evacuation exit times from the Winery and the Inn/Spa/restaurant that utilizes the only authorized project exit road—Campagna Lane. The PC should have that revised study in hand to properly gauge the evacuation exit time impacts with the Winery in operation along with the other projects.

Cumulative Impacts

Addendum #2 and the I/S should be revised with respect to the mandatory findings of significance (Criterion 3.21) to address the forecast cumulative impacts of the 2022 Winery project together with the 2022 Inn/Spa/Restaurant, as well as the Elnoka, SDC and Hanna projects. Within the relatively small area running from Agua Caliente Road on the eastern side of Sonoma Valley to Melita Road on the western edge, there is an avalanche of development on the horizon. The collective impacts on water, sanitary, traffic, flood exposure, emergency exposure, noise, GHG, and other associated environmental impacts is hard to fathom. Some attention to that collective effect is required as a matter of responsible planning.

Permitting Issues Relating to the Use of the Gray Ranch Road for Evacuation and the Status of the Inn/Spa/Restaurant's Participation in the Evacuation Plan

As a collateral matter to the Winery project, VOTMA is unsure whether the new proposal for both the Inn/Spa/Restaurant and the Winery to use a yet to be constructed road on the adjacent Gray subdivision parcel, with an access driveway on to Highway 12, closely adjacent to Campagna Lane, as an integral part of the proposed emergency evacuation plan for both projects, itself constitutes a significant project change that requires an amendment to the existing use permits held by the Kenwood Ranch. That is a matter for Permit Sonoma and the Planning Commission to evaluate and determine. VOTMA does not believe that the existence, let alone use, of the Gray Ranch road was ever an issue addressed in PLP01-0006 as to the Winery and Inn phases. Campagna Lane was identified as the only access/exit project road to Highway 12 as applied to the Inn/Spa/Restaurant and the Winery. To that extent, and given the direct impact such use would have on any driveway proposed to be developed with a Highway 12 interface, VOTMA believes that the Planning commission should be evaluating that proposed plan and grant, deny or condition its usage for evacuation purposes, rather than leave that decision to be governed by a mutual easement among interested parties, as applicant proposes.

As to other issues, rather than restate them here, VOTMA incorporates by reference the issues raised during the May 30, 2023 hearing and in the comments VOTMA filed on the initial referral and in response to the agenda materials released prior to the DRC hearing. It is VOTMA's position that both the I/S and the proposed Addendum #2 do not fully address the severe impacts the Glass fire has had on the project site and the adjoining Inn/Spa/Restaurant site. The applicant's efforts to ring fence that assessment and limit it to the impacts of "project changes" from 2004 ignores the scope of the appropriate review when the conditions addressed in Public Resources Code Section 21166(c) and CEQA G/L section 15162 (a)(3) are present.

VOTMA requests that this appeal be set for public hearing and consideration by the Planning Commission on a schedule as it deems appropriate.

Respectfully submitted,

Roger Peters

Roger Peters
Valley of the Moon Alliance

