

Healdsburg Tribune, January 15, 2020

Commentary

A fresh look at the city-owned properties

The Healdsburg City Council will take up an important issue regarding the future development of our community: How to use four public properties and make sure that they serve the community in the best possible way.

Healdsburg 2040, a group of interested citizens advising the city on the implementation of the SDAT report, has studied the topic extensively. Here is what we know:

A city-hired consultant, Economic & Planning Systems in Oakland (epsys.com) will provide a utilization analysis of four city-owned properties as possible affordable housing sites. These properties are:

1. 3 North Street, the Cerri Building
2. 155 Dry Creek Road, the 3+ acres behind Big John's
3. Montage, 14 acres adjacent to the resort in Parkland Farms
4. 1557 Healdsburg Avenue, the Community Center

We expect that the city council will initially focus on the use of the Cerri Bldg. (3 North St.), the former site of Purity Products, across from and east of the city hall.

We are aware of several proposed uses for 3 North that expand the possibilities:

1. Three years ago the city retained TLCD Architects (tlcd.com) and completed a design for an event and community gathering space and a permanent home to the farmer's market, at an estimated construction cost of \$6.5M. (ci.healdsburg.ca.us/798/Phase-2-Schematic-Design). A broad base of the Community was in support of this project when it was presented and continues to be so. Now we understand that there is a philanthropic donor coming forward to fully fund this project which might be a unique opportunity to bring to fruition this long anticipated, community designed and Council approved Farmers Market / Community Events venue.

2. An alternative idea is to relocate the library to a new, multi-story building at this location, that would include affordable housing atop the relocated library. As we understand it, there has already been a closed-door City Council meeting before the Consultant's report was received, and (without the benefit of public access and input) where the Council was made aware after-the-fact of preliminary discussions between the city and Burbank Housing regarding partnering in the library/affordable housing project.

3. In addition, there is an idea to move the SMART train station to the 3 North St. site, through a "land swap" with SMART which would place the current train station property (on Hudson St.) under city ownership. This option raises the question of whether there is adequate parking for commuters, when or even if SMART may actually reach

Healdsburg. An optimistic assumption is that SMART will reach our town in perhaps ten years. We must also examine how the train will not just serve visitors, but also Healdsburg residents and workers.

Healdsburg 2040 has questions about the process.

Should we as a city focus on “maximizing“ affordable housing? Do any of these proposals address the housing shortage of “missing middle”/workforce needs of the community? Would one of these sites be the location for a new Healdsburg Hospital? And most importantly: Why is there no Master Plan in place to guide the city’s and developer’s decisions? The discussion of the above alternatives demonstrates in our view, that the city lacks a long-term strategic plan for a truly diverse economy and a cohesive approach about a future with profound challenges to our well being due to climate change and the housing crisis (lack of housing opportunities for all incomes).

Healdsburg 2040 urges all interested community members to make time in their schedules to attend the City Council meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 21, 2020 at 4 p.m. to make your voice heard. If you cannot attend, we suggest you email your ideas, thoughts and concerns directly to members of the Healdsburg City Council. They can be reached at:

Mayor: Leah Gold, lgold@ci.healdsburg.ca.us

Vice Mayor: Evelyn Mitchell, emitchell@ci.healdsburg.ca.us

Member: David Hagele, dhagele@ci.healdsburg.ca.us

Member: Shaun McCaffery, smccaffery@ci.healdsburg.ca.us

Member: Joe Naujokas, jnaujokas@ci.healdsburg.ca.us

Thank you for your participation.

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