

Tuolumne Heritage Committee

Sonora, California 95370

September 8, 2026

Tyler Summersett,
Community Development Director
City of Sonora
94 N. Washington St.
Sonora, CA 95370

Re: Open Space parcel at the intersection of Old Wards
Ferry Rd. and Sanguinetti Rd.

Tyler:

I was a member of Citizens for Responsible Growth when it sued the city over how the Lowe's project was processed. What little mitigation we got in the form of the above-referenced parcel accepted by the city was zoned open space so that there would be at least a small portion of the Sanguinetti Ranch to preserve a natural landscape. Official maps show that it is only 1.17 acres in size, but in an area that has been urbanized with shopping centers, fast food restaurants and other examples of progress, the parcel remains as a tribute to the Sanguinetti family which established a ranch there in 1880. The following are my thoughts on what the city council is being asked to support:

1. Maps on file in the Assessor's Office (see enclosed) clearly indicate that what your report identified as "Parcel 1" and "Parcel 2" exist only to show the proposed land division. There is no legal description of two parcels at the Assessor's office which confirmed that the railroad easement across the property does not automatically create two separate and individual parcels, one that the city would retain as Open Space and the other rezoned to General Commercial. If this project proceeds as it is currently proposed, the city would surrender all of the land now zoned Open Space as there is no legal division into two parcels.

2. I believe that changing the zoning of "Parcel 1" from Open Space to General Commercial would require an amendment to the city's general plan. I was unable to find mention of this in legal notices in the Union Democrat or in staff reports.

3. To date there has been no mention of any compensation the developer would pay the city for acquiring "Parcel 1". A rezone as is contemplated would considerably elevate the value of "Parcel 1" which, if you look at the fine print on a map supplied by the developer, would indicate a Chipotle fast food restaurant is planned for the Open Space, if the city goes through with its plans to transfer some of the Open Space to the developer. The Old Wards Ferry entrance to the shopping center is already congested and such a use will only exacerbate that situation.

4. If the city continues to believe that the railroad easement

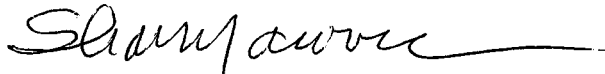
divides the 1.17 acres into two legal parcels it could jeopardize the issuance of title insurance since what the city proposes to abandon is really just a part of the whole property which was deeded to the city in 2009 by the Ray A. Sanguinetti Land Company.

5. It would seem that in the council's rezone of the property to open space in 2010 that the city would be responsible for maintaining it in its natural state or as landscaped on "Parcel 1". At the planning commission hearing last month the developer was quite pointed in his criticism of the city's stewardship of the property and seemed to imply that developing it would clean it up and eliminate perceived problems at the site. That precious little spot of open space is maintained by the city as it maintains other properties such as parking lot landscaping, Woods Creek Rotary Park and Coffill Park.

6. "Parcel 1" and "Parcel 2" are considered scenic landscapes and "Parcel 2" is actually a cultural resource as it is the end of the East Sonora ditch which likely provided water for the Sanguinetti Ranch. Rather than abandon "Parcel 1" to development, the city should consider a commemorative plaque with information not on the monument on Mono Way at Greenley Rd.

The plan to dispose of an Open Space area, an area specifically zoned that way in accordance with a settlement agreement in the Citizens for Responsible Growth's lawsuit against the city, would be a violation of the agreement reached by both parties to the legal action. It sends the message that the city is not living up to its promise to preserve this scenic and cultural site so that a Chipotle fast food restaurant can be built there. Open Space serves many purposes and there needs to be a compelling reason to wipe it out. Where there is a public benefit to Open Space zoning it should remain in place. Construction of a Chipotle restaurant in a shopping center that has multiple vacancies is not a compelling reason.

Sincerely,


Sharon Marovich, Chair
(209) 532-1733

cc: Chris Gorski, CAO
City of Sonora

