



# 2022 Mayoral & City Council Elections Candidate Questionnaire

## **Topic: Sonoma-Marin Fairgrounds Lease Extension**

Issued by the Friends of the Sonoma-Marin Fairgrounds

*The candidates elected in the 2022 Petaluma Mayoral and City Council elections will make decisions that have the potential to dramatically impact the future of the Sonoma-Marin Fairgrounds. The Friends of the Sonoma-Marin Fairgrounds do not endorse candidates, but we believe Petaluma residents deserve to know where candidates stand on the key issues surrounding the future of their Fairgrounds.*

*Please respond thoroughly to each of these questions. When you finish, please send your responses to [friendsofsmfairgrounds@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofsmfairgrounds@gmail.com) by **September 5, 2022**. Your responses will be shared on our website and with the greater community.*

**Candidate Name:** Karen Nau

**District/Seat:** City Council District 3

- 1. What does the fairgrounds mean to you and your community? A place to come together and enjoy the benefits of living in Petaluma.**
- 2. What are your favorite and least favorite aspects of the fairgrounds? I love to see the many students every day enjoying their education, the weekend activities, where visitors, families and friends spend time together watching a Circus, race cars, or celebrating a wedding. It makes me sad to see the many Fairgrounds buildings need repairs and new paint**
- 3. Describe your understanding of the history of the fairgrounds and how important it is to protect the history, heritage and traditions the fairgrounds has contributed to the community over the past 112 years? This is very important, I have looked at photographs of the Fairgrounds first years, the freeway being built behind it, the mini golf course, restaurant and other Community events that took place before I was old enough to enjoy the activities ie. Showing animals as a 4-Her, staying in the dormitories, going skating at the Skate Rink, playing at the Arcade, attending celebrations, taking my children to Preschool, doing my students teaching and teaching on the campus for the past 6 years.**
- 4. What is your vision for the future of the fairgrounds over the next 50 to 100 years? I want to see the school building upgraded along with other buildings including the Fair Office. Clean up the Maintenance area and Care taker's home and make better use of the space, I would like to see the Main building improved to be rented for Trade Shows etc. The outside parcel of land beyond the Airporter parking lot to be used to build a modern 4 story Petaluma Police and Safety dispatch center.**

5. What are the positives and negatives associated with the 4<sup>th</sup> District Agricultural Association (a state agency comprised of local state appointees) managing the fairgrounds property? Positives include a Fair Board appointed by the Governor's office with lots of assets. Negative is that the City of Petaluma doesn't have full control.
6. The city has hired *Healthy Democracy* to engage the community in shaping the future of the fairgrounds. How should the city use the information gained from this expensive and lengthy process? Listen to the Panel participants insights to the Fairgrounds and Speedway as they represent the feelings and commitments to keeping the Fairgrounds as an asset to the Community.
7. At what point should the future of the fairgrounds be determined by an official vote of the residents of Petaluma? If any of the Fairgrounds parcel is to be sold or the lease not renewed.
8. The 4<sup>th</sup> DAA represents all of Marin & Sonoma Counties. How much input should the extended community from outside of Petaluma have on the fairground's future? Both counties, Sonoma and Marin should be able to add input the Fairgrounds future.
9. How do you see the 4<sup>th</sup> DAA and the City of Petaluma working together to shape and protect the fairgrounds for future generations? Have monthly joint meetings with a Fairgrounds plan in place for the future uses etc. Examine the Fairgrounds uses, expenses and income, so that both are current on the subject.
10. Currently there are 9 permanent tenants and dozens of interim renters leasing fairgrounds property 52 weeks a year. These include schools, public services, non-profits, private businesses, raceway, farmers market, etc. Where do they fit into your vision for the fairgrounds and what obligation does the city have to mitigate negative impacts caused by an uncertain future and this lengthy outreach process? All the tenants should be given a monthly update on the process, so that they are not caught by surprise if something was change to cause them to relocate.
11. Should the footprint or orientation of the fairground's property change and why? Yes, there is small portions that need to be used for 24/7 community safety needs, a section of the Maintenance area that needs to be clean up and the Care Takers home rebuilt, so it is livable.
12. Since 1961 the Petaluma Speedway has operated in the fairground's grandstands on roughly 25-30 nights a year. What is your vision for the Petaluma Speedway over the next 50 to 100 years? As a teenager, I watched a movie being made at the Speedway, attending the racing events and as an adult, I want to be able to take my grandchildren to watch. The future could include more activities at the Speedway.
13. At times of natural disasters and public health emergencies, the fairgrounds serves as the cities largest and most flexible public safety resource. Should the city decide to end the lease with the 4<sup>th</sup> DAA and change the properties use, how should the city account for these lost public safety services for people and animals? It would be a great loss to Petaluma to lose the Fairgrounds and have to find another location for emergencies.

- 14. Knowing a secure future is essential for long-term financial investment into any property, if you are in favor of a lease extension for the 4<sup>th</sup> DAA on the existing fairgrounds property, what length of lease would you advocate for and why? The process for the renewal was so complex and expensive for the City of Petaluma this time, I would suggest 25 year lease, so that the City and DAA could be partners, avoiding this at the end of 25 years.**
- 15. Is there anything else you would like the community to know about your views on the fairgrounds? Agriculture needs to be supported, creating a year round learning opportunity for the community, to understand where our supply of food comes from. Beverly Wilson Hall has a commercial kitchen and I used it for a Farm to Fork cooking demonstration event using local Chefs. This should be done monthly, teaching locals how to prepare local foods.**