



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 by **September 5, 2022**. Your responses will be shared on our website and with the greater community.*

Candidate Name: Patrick Flower

District/Seat: Mayor

- 1. What does the fairgrounds mean to you and your community?**
 - a. The Petaluma Fairgrounds is a vital part of Petaluma history and cultural and needs to be maintained, if not expanded upon**

- 2. What are your favorite and least favorite aspects of the fairgrounds?**
 - a. Favorite: Just that we have a place for such events.**
 - b. Least Favorite: The fairgrounds is vastly under utilized.**

- 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?**
 - a. Pass: The fairgrounds is a valuable asset to the city.**

- 4. What is your vision for the future of the fairgrounds over the next 50 to 100 years?**
 - a. Possible Uses: Regional Theater, Regional Sports Center, Regional Conference Center**

- 5. What are the positives and negatives associated with the 4th District Agricultural Association (a state agency comprised of local state appointees) managing the fairgrounds property?**
 - a. Association with any state agency restricts the fairgrounds potential.**
 - b. I have limited knowledge of all that's been done, however as a citizen, the utilization of the fairgrounds by 4th DAA seems unimpressive.**

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?
 - a. I believe this is a complete waste of money, but we should try to extract some useful data
7. At what point should the future of the fairgrounds be determined by an official vote of the residents of Petaluma?
 - a. Official Vote: Unclear
 - b. Additional citizen input post Healthy Democracy for sure.
8. The 4th DAA represents all of Marin & Sonoma Counties. How much input should the extended community from outside of Petaluma have on the fairground's future?
 - a. It is my understanding that the fairgrounds belongs to the city of Petaluma, period. I'm certainly open to being corrected.
 - b. I would certainly want to take into consideration the needs of the extended community. Some of the things in item 4 certainly impact the extended community.
9. How do you see the 4th DAA and the City of Petaluma working together to shape and protect the fairgrounds for future generations?
 - a. I would welcome such a collaboration.
 - b. 4th DAA would need to share it's vision on the future use of the fairgrounds.
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?
 - a. That is too large of a question to answer here.
 - b. The fairgrounds is huge and certainly can continue to accommodate some of these ventures. And they are important to the city.
 - c. I by no means think that when the lease is up.... It's up.
11. Should the footprint or orientation of the fairground's property change and why?
 - a. Probably: There seems to be a lot of wasted space.
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?
 - a. It is my understanding that the speedway is profitable.
 - b. I also think the speedway is a part of Petaluma culture.
 - c. Are there ways to minimize noise... perhaps race earlier.... Use the speedway for more events. Those things could be looked at.
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 4th DAA and change the properties use, how should the city account for these lost public safety services for people and animals?
 - a. Public Safety should always be a primary consideration for the use of this asset.

b. This would be paramount for any use of the fairgrounds.

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 4th DAA on the existing fairgrounds property, what length of lease would you advocate for and why?

a. I really need to know more about the terms of the existing lease and any proposed lease.

15. Is there anything else you would like the community to know about your views on the fairgrounds?

a. Not a single square inch of the fairgrounds should be sold. Especially to pay off existing debt.