



# 2022 Mayoral & City Council Elections

## Candidate Questionnaire

### Topic: Sonoma-Marín Fairgrounds Lease Extension

Issued by the Friends of the Sonoma-Marín 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-Marín Fairgrounds. The Friends of the Sonoma-Marín 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: \_\_\_\_\_ Dylan Lloyd \_\_\_\_\_

District/Seat: \_\_\_\_\_ Petaluma City Council District 1 \_\_\_\_\_

1. What does the fairgrounds mean to you and your community?
  - a. The fairgrounds mean a great deal to me and our community. It holds a very important place in my heart since my twin sons went to Happy Hearts Pre-School for 3 years and it's still, to this day, one of their favorite places in the world. It's an important central place for our community and all the organizations that operate there that do so much for our community every day. It also means a place where the community can gather for events like the Sonoma-Marín Fair and the Petaluma Music Festival, as well as a safe place for the community in times of need, when it becomes an evacuation site for people and animals during emergency situations.
2. What are your favorite and least favorite aspects of the fairgrounds?
  - a. My favorite aspect of the fairgrounds is the sense of community that I get when I go to the events there. People love gathering at the fairgrounds and those events need to stay and continue to grow in the future. The schools that operate daily on the fairgrounds have large hearts and care for the children that are a part of their schools. For example, Happy Hearts Preschool provided a magical play-based experience for my children that could only be found in that location on the fairgrounds.
  - b. My least favorite aspect of the fairgrounds is the lack of investment into the facilities. I think the community should invest more time and money into the fairground facilities. We should be making sure it is a beautiful and safe place for the community to gather by investing in the buildings that are there now, as well as the infrastructure in the fairgrounds. By investing in the facilities and infrastructure of the fairgrounds, we can continue to gather there and use it for more events and gatherings as we progress as a community.

3. Describe your understanding of the history of the fairgrounds and how important it is to protect the history, heritage and traditions the fairgrounds have contributed to the community over the past 112 years?
  - a. My understanding of the fairgrounds is that it has been a central part of Petaluma for the past 112 years and I believe it should stay that way. It is important to protect the history, heritage, and traditions there but also make sure we integrate those into the future of the fairgrounds and how the city should use that space. I understand that the fairgrounds provide a central place in the agricultural roots of Petaluma and we need to make sure future generations share in that, just as past generations of Petalumans have.
4. What is your vision for the future of the fairgrounds over the next 50 to 100 years?
  - a. My vision for the fairgrounds is to make sure we keep the fairgrounds so future generations can experience the same things that past generations have. We need to make sure the entire community understands our history. I think the fairgrounds should stay as a central gathering place for our community which includes the fair, the music festival, and all the other events that happen there as well as the schools, organizations, and other businesses that operate there. We should invest in the fairgrounds, fix the infrastructure that needs to be upgraded and make sure it can continue as a gathering place for the community. I think these investments could make it even more important to us as a community that progresses forward but always remembers our roots and history.
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?
  - a. I think the positives are that it has done an amazing job making sure the history and the present-day agricultural core of the community continues. It has also brought in and supported the schools, organizations, and businesses that operate there. The 4<sup>th</sup> DAA has made sure that the community has continued to have the fair and other events. It has made sure the speedway and its fans have a place to spend their time with one another. It has also provided a safe location for people and their animals during emergency evacuation situations in the surrounding areas. These are very important things in our community that must continue for us to remember our roots but also continue to progress us into the future.
  - b. I think the negative is that the 4<sup>th</sup> District Agricultural Association, through no fault of their own, have not had the funds to invest in the infrastructure of the fairground's property. I think we need to find a way to invest in the buildings, the roads, and the property so it continues to be an amazing place for the community. It also needs to make sure that all the organizations that operate there continue to operate with the infrastructure they need to support their operations.
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. The city should use the information gained from this to re-enforce the fact that the community wants to keep the fairgrounds and invest in them to make sure they

continue to be accessible to all future generations. I believe this data now shows without a doubt that the community wants and supports the fairgrounds.

7. At what point should the future of the fairgrounds be determined by an official vote of the residents of Petaluma?
  - a. I think this needs to happen as soon as possible. I believe in the power of democracy and the community. We also need to make sure all the organizations that operate there understand we support them. We need to remove the burden of the organizations operating there of having to worry about what's next for them and the people they serve. I also think citizens have the opportunity this November to elect city council and mayoral candidates that support the fairgrounds.
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?
  - a. Many people that use the fairgrounds live outside of the city limits and their voices were not able to be part of the Petaluma Fairgrounds Advisory Committee. I think that the greater area community loves and uses the fairgrounds just as much, or even more than the Petaluma city limits residents. I feel that these people have a right to have input into what happens with their community resource. The fairgrounds are bigger than just Petaluma city limits, and it stands for something that the entire surrounding area around of Petaluma has enjoyed for years and they should be able to have just as much input into what happens as Petaluma city residents.
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?
  - a. I see a future where whomever controls the fairgrounds invests the time and energy into the infrastructure there to make it even better than it is today. Make it into a place where we can have more events and come together even more than we do today as a community. I envision the city and the 4<sup>th</sup> DAA working together to make this happen. We could have a partnership where the Parks and Recreation Dept. is working with the 4<sup>th</sup> DAA to make sure the fairgrounds is treated just like any other park and is maintained in such a way, for example, the purple pipe could be feeding reclaimed water there to make sure the grass continues to get watered. It is my hopes that we have someone maintaining the infrastructure while the 4<sup>th</sup> DAA does what it does well and makes sure the events, the fair, and the businesses continue to flourish as they do today. There are many creative ways we can partner to make sure the fairgrounds are preserved and upgraded for current and future generations to enjoy.
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. In my vision none of these go anywhere and they all continue to operate as they do today. They would all get infrastructure upgrades to make sure they can continue to operate in the future. As I said earlier, my twin sons went to Happy Hearts and it is one of the most amazing places I have ever seen for children, and I know all the other schools, non-profits, and other tenants do great things for the people they help,

educate, and entertain all the time. I don't think we are at the point where the city must mitigate anything, but I do think the city should assure all these organizations that their place on the fairgrounds is not going anywhere ASAP.

11. Should the footprint or orientation of the fairground's property change and why?
  - a. I don't believe it should change at all, I think it should stay the same and it should be invested in to make sure the infrastructure continues to support the many wonderful things the fairgrounds offers the community today.
  
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. My vision for the speedway is to keep it but invest in it. The speedway is another example of an important piece of Petaluma's history. Generations have come to the speedway to watch family members race through the years. I would like to see a speedway that continues to operate as a speedway but can also be a place that we can upgrade and install more seating and continue the races, but also have concerts and other events that the entire community can enjoy. This would also help give us the opportunity to raise the money to invest more in the fairgrounds.
  
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?
  - a. In my opinion no matter if the lease is with the 4<sup>th</sup> DAA, the city, or another entity controls it, the fairgrounds should stay and continue to be used for public safety services for people and animals. I believe with climate change we are going to have more and more events where we need the fairgrounds to be there for these events to help people and animals, and I don't think the city has another plan or a way to account for these public safety services without 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 4<sup>th</sup> DAA on the existing fairgrounds property, what length of lease would you advocate for and why?
  - a. I think if the city leases the property to any entity, then it would have to be for a lengthy time and that time would have to be between 20-50 years at a minimum. I think there are many ways we can tackle this. If we did lease it back to an entity, then I would want to make sure there are requirements that the entity will invest properly into the fairgrounds to make sure the correct infrastructure upgrades that are needed are put in place.
  
15. Is there anything else you would like the community to know about your views on the fairgrounds?
  - a. I think I have laid out my visions and views very clearly in this document and I am looking forward to sharing them in person at the event on September 14<sup>th</sup>.