

**Dry Creek Valley Citizens Advisory Council
Zoom Meeting Minutes
January 16, 2025
Meeting held in person and online**

Call to Order

The meeting of the Dry Creek Valley Citizens Advisory Council was called to order by Chair Alex Harris at 6:10 pm.

Roll call was taken. Present were Art Murray, Dani Price, Nancy Bevill, Richard Kagel, and Alex Harris.

Swearing in of New Councilmember—Dani Price

Jenny Chamberlain, from Supervisor James Gore’s office, handled the swearing in of our newest councilmember, who is filling the vacancy left when Elaine Foppiano resigned.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the 10-17-2024 meeting were approved with corrections on a motion by Arthur Murray, and a second from Richard Kagel. Passed on a voice vote 5-0.

Public Comments on Non-Agenda Items –

No comments.

Correspondence: We received several new letters in regards to the referral on this agenda. They will be attached with the Minutes.

Councilmember Announcements and Disclosures: NA

Referrals from Permit Sonoma County –

File Number: UPE24-0048

Applicant Name: Robert Mauritson

Owner Name: Robert Mauritson

Site Address: 3319 Dry Creek Road, Healdsburg

APN: 090-150-041

Project Description: Request for a Use Permit for a new 100,000-case winery on a 20.45-acre parcel including: construction of a new 16,264 sq. ft. production facility, including a 9,130 (TYPO) sq. ft. tank storage room, 2,304 sq. ft. barrel room, 2,304 sq. ft. goods storage room, an a 2,493 sq. ft. tasting room with approx. 1,400 sq. ft. outdoor porch/patio area; construction of a 4,608 sq. ft. covered crush pad; 24 agricultural promotional events and 6 industry wide event days with a maximum of 50-300 guests; removal of an existing barn and two water wells; expansion of existing on-site access road and driveway entrance. Zoning: LIA B620, RC50/25 SR VOH

The hearing on this referral was deferred from October 17, 2024. The applicant and his team amended their application and are here to present the changes and answer further questions.

Jean Kapolchok started the presentation and introduced Corn Munselle, Civil Engineer; Dalene Whitlock, Traffic Impact Analyst, and Ken Lafranchi, the project architect from Lafranchi of Lafranchi Architecture and Development. Jean stated that the parcel conforms to our Guidelines, the traffic conforms, the water use conforms, parking conforms, noise conforms, food service conforms, the local focus of 80% of the grapes coming from Sonoma County is on point. The hang-up on this referral seems to be the aspect of “rural character”--which is not mandatory--and “concentration”. They consider both of these preferences rather than requirements.

Jean asked what the impact of locating a 80,000 case winery would be on this site? She reiterated that there is a 200 ft. set back from the scenic corridor. The parking has not changed. The events have not changed. She also indicated that the access remains the same. Traffic will be slightly more than there is currently—the bulk of that will be at harvest, so it will increase for a limited time.

It was asked what would happen if this project does not go forward. It was indicated that we had received some letters in support of the project. **Bob Mauritson** mentioned it would be an advantage to be able to crush grapes at will, as the valley's wine grapes are a perishable commodity. He indicated it would give both himself and others a local place to crush, allowing them extra time to sell. The plan does include the next generation. Jean stated that this project supports Sonoma County agriculture.

Dalene Whitlock—Traffic Consultant—stated that most of a winery's traffic is due to visitors. Production of wine does not produce as much traffic. Traffic impact does not change much based on the size of the winery. There is a limit to how many grapes can be processed at once, so daily traffic will not change much. The change from 100,000 to 80,000 cases will reduce the number of days required for crushing. Visitation numbers will not be impacted. Visitors are not a single purpose trip. She reminded everyone that there were no adverse traffic effects identified in the study and that any impacts should be less with a reduction in case production.

Jean asked the council if they would like to walk through the architectural design again. Arthur asked for a review and if anything had changed. The team reminded the council that one old barn will be removed, and there is a house that will remain. Also, the site was chosen as no grapes are grown there currently and the ground is already compacted. It is currently used as a staging site. The winery is designed to be an agricultural looking building. Nothing has changed from the previous presentation. She read a portion of the letter received from Mike Saini.

Cort Munselle—Munselle Civil Engineering—addressed the circulation pattern. The exit and entrance are the same. He highlighted the parking area and circular traffic pattern around the facility. He mentioned septic needs and facilities had already been covered, that storm water was addressed. It will be retained, and slowly allowed to infiltrate the soil. There will be no parking on Dry Creek Road.

Arthur asked about using access from Gallo/Frei Brothers Road. The team replied that Gallo's position is not known, but that Gallo's access is one way, so access to this proposed winery facility is safer and better.

Questions from Council

Richard referenced the Guidelines document. He mentioned that the DCVCAC has not had as many referrals and permit requests, as it did when the Guidelines were developed. There was talk, at that time, of a moratorium on winery permits and also about how to deal with bad actors who had been granted permits. The general feeling was that our valley residents were a bit fed up and feeling like we had enough wineries in the valley. Richard asked how the grape growing and winery business had changed since then.

He also asked about the entrance photo. He mentioned a previous concern about trucks entering the winery, as they would have to pull off the road to the shoulder before entering the driveway to the winery, and this might pose a danger to bicyclists. He also mentioned an existing power pole, asked where the entrance was in relation to that, and also mentioned the existing drainage ditch. There was also a discussion of the location of the power pole in relation to the 3 or 4 mailboxes that are along that stretch of road. He was told the power pole was just north of the mailboxes. In regards to the ditch, the applicant indicated there would be a culvert where there is currently a drainage ditch.

Richard again asked about business. Do they have a sense of what percentage of the 80,000 cases would be crushed for juice? Bob said that 64,000 cases—80% of the total production—would become juice and they would meet the 80% minimum number of grapes required to be from Sonoma County. He explained that the balance of 20%, or 16,000 cases, would be potentially be open to out-of-county fruit. He estimated that about half of the 64,000 cases of crush capacity would be from Dry Creek. Richard asked about what percentage would be headed to bulk wine. Robert answered that it would depend on the

crop and also their sales in the tasting room. He thought a majority at the beginning would be for bulk juice. Richard said that he understands that the business has changed in a major way, in that many wineries are delivering their product as bulk juice. The timeliness of the rushing of the fruit is important to growers. Bob assured the council that the 80% Sonoma County grapes promise was written into the permit.

Richard asked about the sound wall—specifically if it will be added to screen residences just north of the winery site. He asked about the letter from Trent Norris and asked for clarification of where their properties are located. **Bob** said that they are back quite a ways from the road but that their rental properties may be closer to the road and the project—he believes they are across Frei Road. Richard would like the applicants to discuss and clarify the sound mitigation measures with **Trent Norris** to address their concerns for their properties. **Jean** mentioned they have been trying to set up a site meeting with the, but it has not yet happened. They would like to address this again with the acoustical engineers. Richard addressed the idea of being a good neighbor and expressed concern about the lack of notice to these particular neighbors. Richard would like to see a negotiated settlement with them rather than a battle. He again addressed the case size and the change in the business model.

Alex asked about Bob’s personal prosecution. How much of their grapes would be beyond the 80,000 case limit. Bob stated that not all of his grapes go into juice.

Richard remarked that these questions need to be answered.

Questions from the Public

Questions from Public

Michael Verlander—2700 Dry Creek Road—Is there a tasting room? Is it for just their brand? Yes.

Bruce Lawton—asked Cort about groundwater and drainage and leeching system. Cort gave a recap of the soils report and said that soils are porous alluvial soils.

Michael Verlander –Question about zoning LLA. General purpose of County code. To protect... resources, etc. Zoned LIA—land intensive agriculture. From code: A to enhance and protect—permanent ag use, high production, to implement land intensive ag and policies. 20 acre parcel. Jean clarified there are 20.45 acres and they will be removing less than a ¼ acre of vines for the winery facility. The siting of the winery is on already compacted ground. There will be 18 acres of vines remaining. Bob estimated the land will produce 120 tons, plus or minus. He was asked for tonnage required for 80,000 cases. Bob estimated 1,200 tons; approximately 60 to 66 cases per ton. About 10% will be off that property. They were asked if the winery size is appropriate based on size of property. Michael mentioned this project and winery seem to be more of an industrial site, not just promoting the agricultural use of this property. Does the scale fit the existing wineries in the Valley? Can the proposed buildings accommodate 80,000 cases? His experience was not with bulk wine. Consistency with LIA addressed by Jean. Michael did not feel the policies were written to have a winery per parcel. Jean said the guidelines talk about the local area and Sonoma County--she did not believe the rules were written with the notion that a winery would have to be sized only with consideration of the size of parcel. There has been talk about processing of grapes within the local area, but the policy for Sonoma County grapes is not written. It was clarified that the Guidelines document suggests emphasis on local and Sonoma County grapes.

Mike Price--4705 Dry Creek Road—He doesn’t think anyone wants to be able to stop anyone from doing what they need to do to support their business. He asked if this is the most appropriate place for this use. He believes it should be in a more industrial area, rather than in the middle of vineyards. He personally

has 30 acres with about 16 acres of vineyards. They had thought about building a winery and tasting room. They looked at maxing out at 30,000 cases. He wouldn't have bought his property if he wanted to do 100,000 cases.

Nicole Litchfield--3232 Dry Creek Road, Healdsburg--stated she is in favor of improvement to the property. Her concern is scale of the industrial size facility behind the tasting room. Basically it is a two-lane highway with a 50 mph speed limit and no passing lane. She acknowledged her previous letter. She was interested if any neighbors wrote in with support, saying she thought all neighbors were concerned with scale. She feels that the size tips the balance. They are in support of family wineries, but this is not the right place for a project of this scale.

Councilmember Arthur Murray addressed her question about neighbors, stating we had received a letter of support from Dan Teldeschi, who is a neighbor just north of the Dry Creek Store.

Rich Masino--3280 Dry Creek Road--He wants to support agriculture, but his concern is traffic safety. He respects Gallo's facility because they have a turn lane. This project enters right into the direct traffic flow of a two-lane road where the average speed 50-80 mph. He was almost rear-ended by someone texting and driving 60 mph on this stretch. He mentioned there are more stores of trouble entering area driveways from multiple neighbors. He is in support of winery and in support of the tasting room. He thinks that his concern is about the production facility and believes this is not the right place.

Nicole asked if the Guidelines say this type of facility should be near a highway, rather than in the middle of the valley floor.

John Saini--Saini Vineyards and Winery, 507 Dry Creek Road, Healdsburg--He is in favor of the project. He asked what would happen if Bob backs out of the project. He said that so far we have welcomed everyone. He is the poster child for being near large facilities. In the realm of size for wineries, this is fairly small. Mentioned every farm used to have a dryer. He understands about traffic. His property is near a Kendall-Jackson facility and they wanted to do a 16 ft. lane in front of his house. He believes they mitigated every concern. He believes county regulations caused their own winery to be delayed for 5 years. He believes we should support them. He asked that we think about Gallo with a million-and-half-case facility bringing in fruit from out of the country. Knows of another current winery that has been 8-years in the making. They have been run through the gauntlet.

Kim Wallace--Dry Creek Vineyards--3410 Dry Creek Road--She said that she had written an opposition letter, and stated that this is an awkward position to be in, as we are all neighbors and friends, and she is also a family winery owner. She knows the impacts of a larger scale winery. She mentioned that the revised proposal is for 80,000 case. She asked if the 80% all Bob Mauritsen's grapes. She also asked how much of the 64,000 cases will be bottled on site.

He stated that he has wine contracts with other wineries. The juice would get shipped out before bottling. A majority of their capacity will be shipped out to other wineries. Part of the juice will be bottled for other labels. No other labels will be sold out of the tasting room. A small amount would be for their own family brand.

Kim asked what is best for Dry Creek Valley. She believes the spirit of Guidelines were written for the future and stated that we can't ignore impacts. Kim's family has about 85 acres to produce 30,000 cases. They have no impact on neighbors. She feels the scope of Bob's business model is not appropriate for the site. She asked everyone to remember there are 7 wineries--plus Zo has 600 case winery--and this does not include Saini. She believes the nature of business model is not right for the spot, and reminded the

Council that this will set a precedent. She acknowledged the downscaling from 100,000 to 80,000 cases but still doesn't like it. She mentioned he does not live on the site or in the valley. She believes the nature of their business model is not right for this spot, and reminded the Council that this will set a precedent. She acknowledged the downscaling from 100,000 cases to 80,000 cases, but still does not like it. She also acknowledged that she does not live on their winery site, nor in the Valley.

(Note for clarification: the seven wineries are Dry Creek Vineyards, Passalacqua, F. Teldeschi Winery, Rued Winery, Gallo, Amista Vineyards, and Mauritson Wines. Zo is also in this vicinity with only a 600 case permit farm stay. If you go slightly farther in each direction, there is also Rafanelli Winery, Unti Vineyards, Saini Vineyards, and Nalle Winery.)

Councilperson Arthur Murray asked if anyone knew when the last time a winery of this scale was approved. Kim Wallace shared that Dry Creek Vineyard was approved in 1993. Someone mentioned that Gallo had fairly recently sought approval for an increase in production that was approved.

Bruce Lawton—Pech Merle—4543 Dry Creek Road Healdsburg—Bruce asked about the footprint. Bob acknowledged that the footprint was designed to be small. They have tall tanks and not much barrel storage. The quantity of wine that stays there is less, per the architect, Ken Lafranchi.

Councilperson Richard Kagel asked about barrel storage. He was told there will be 2,600 sq. ft.

Councilperson Alex Harris asked about bottling, and if this could be addressed in the proposal. Bob stated that on-site bottling would most likely be no more than 10,000.

Nicole Litchfield said she was also concerned with the noise generated by grape delivery.

Mike Sterline—(no speaker card)—stated that he operates Nicole's winery—he expressed concern for the neighbors across the street from the project. There are 10 homes. He said that when their winery turns on the chillers, all the neighbors can hear it. He also expressed another concern: it is a small community and he asked that the impact on this group be considered.

John Saini mentioned his experience with sound mitigation from Kendall-Jackson's facility and that it all had to be included in their plans. (He clarified he was talking about his own nearness to KJ's Stonestreet Winery. He also stated that all of his properties have two huge wineries right next door. He also mentioned that chillers must meet a certain decibel requirement. He asked those in opposition what they would like to see? He believes that they should be careful what they wish for.

Kim Wallace addressed the warnings from John Saini. She said the property could be sold and there could be a beautiful large home. She does not see it being sold to Gallo for trucks or any of the other scenarios John foretold.

Mike Verlander shared that they first winery they tried to build had the neighbors up in arms, and they persisted in believing that he would go forward with the winery. He ended up putting his winery in an industrial area in Windsor, which ended up being a good thing. He said that transportation and costs were much better in this other location. The County will be the big bar that this project will have to meet. The task of the DCVCAC is to decide if it meets the Guidelines. This is just the beginning of the process.

John Saini stated that the review of the Saini project for the County did not have any opposition.

Comments from Councilmembers

Richard Kagel stated that this is a hybrid project. The major part is a bulk wine production facility with a 10,000 case family winery piggy-backed onto it. He referred to the Guidance document and said it does not make sense to have a bulk wine facility here and that it seemed reasonable to split their need. He asked if they could do barrel aged high quality wine in a smaller facility and process grapes in a facility that the neighbors would consider appropriate. He thought there would be both costs and benefits. He does not like to see fights. He thinks that the fights might increase. He asked Bob to consider splitting the project and to consider the economics of that. He asked if that had been evaluated at all. Ecologically he thought it seems more sound. He also mentioned that 20 acres is the bare minimum for a winery, so the scale seems like it should be on the smaller end of the scale, also. He likes the promise of crushing 80,000 cases of Dry Creek grapes, but believes it could be located elsewhere.

Nancy Bevill pointed to the lesson that information should be gathered and information on the project should be made available. Maybe if the industrial part was not the major part of the project it would be more acceptable. We are all concerned with being able to see grapes in the valley, but she asked how we make these decisions as a community. It should not be a single person going ahead without consulting their neighbors. When a big event takes place, it effects the whole valley. She would like to see a family make a living on their farm, but also thinks they should consider the industrial part being separate from the winery.

Arthur Murray stated that Bob's family is respected. This council exists because it will go before the County and they want to know what the Dry Creek Valley community thinks about the project. They will do what they are going to do. He believes that at the last meeting there was good dialog. The consensus was 20,000 or 30,000 cases would be a good number. He asked if that was feasible for this project. He used the example of a power plant. Bob is coming in at the tipping point. He knew that the new proposal of 80,000 cases would be difficult because it was not closer to 30,000. He asked If 30,000 would be feasible or if it could be put somewhere else.

Dani Price spoke to how special it is to live in Dry Creek Valley. She does not feel that the size and scope of this project fits our Guidelines.

Bob he could not reduce the project to 30,000 cases because of the amount of his own production. Currently he has it processed in Ukiah.

Statement of Motion:

On a motion by Councilmember Arthur Murray and a second from Councilmember Richard Kagel the Dry Creek Valley Citizens Advisory Council moved to recommend **denial** of UPE24-0048 at 3319 Dry Creek Road, Healdsburg, based on the revised 80,000 case capacity.

The motion carried on a roll call vote (4-1).

Councilmember Nancy Bevill-aye
Councilmember Alex Harris-nay
Councilmember Richard Kagel-aye
Councilmember Arthur Murray-aye
Councilmember Dani Price-aye

Discussion Items

ACTION ITEM – *Action if indicated*

Possible discussion items: Discuss items of significant interest on the calendar; discussion of General Plan Update.

Agenda Items: Potential projects for future meetings and suggestions for the next DCVCAC meeting.
Opt out of Zoom-discuss opting out or allowing without public comments via Zoom.

Adjournment

On a motion by Councilmember Arthur Murray, seconded by Councilmember Alex Harris, the meeting was adjourned at 7:43 pm. The motion carried on a voice vote (4-0).

Approved Date: _____

Council Chair:

***3393 Dry Creek Road
Healdsburg, CA 95448***

November 11, 2024

BY EMAIL AND U.S. MAIL

Tennis Wick, Director
Permit Sonoma
2550 Ventura Avenue
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Dry Creek Valley Citizens Advisory Council

Arthur Murray
Nancy Bevill
Richard Kagel
Elaine Foppiano
Alex Harris
Sharon Pillsbury

c/o Board of Supervisors 4th District
575 Administration Drive, Room 102A,
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Re: Proposed Use Permit UPE24-00048 for 3319 Dry Creek Road

Dear Director Wick and Advisory Council Members:

We are writing to express our opposition to the proposed use permit UPE24-00048 for the Amann/Mauritson property at 3319 Dry Creek Road in Healdsburg (APN 090-150-041). As proposed, this new winery and tasting room is far outside the appropriate scale and level of activity for the area. We do not oppose a winery and tasting room of appropriate scale, design, and event activity, and in fact we believe the proposed design is on the right path toward aesthetic improvement of this parcel from its current state, which is important in this scenic corridor.

We have lived in Dry Creek Valley for over a decade. We own three parcels that are directly across Frei Bros. Winery Road from the project site (APN 090-160-044, 090-160-047, and 090-160-048) as well as two other parcels within 300 or 400 feet (APN 090-160-045 and APN 090-160-046). The associated addresses are 3393, 3379, and 3449 Dry Creek Road. Our property is about 15 acres and includes our home, two homes with long-term tenants, a barn, and approximately 10 acres of vineyard. We have never been provided with notice of this application but learned about it from other community members after the October 17 meeting of the Dry Creek Valley Citizens Advisory Council.

The Proposal Would Create a Detrimental Concentration of Commercial and Industrial Businesses in What is Already By Far the Most Densely Concentrated Area of Dry Creek Valley.

Our property abuts three businesses: (1) the Gallo of Sonoma Winery, which is the largest winery in Sonoma County and by far the largest business in Dry Creek Valley; (2) the Dry Creek General Store, which is the only commercially zoned parcel in Dry Creek Valley and generates more traffic than any other business in Dry Creek Valley; and (3) the F. Teldeschi winery. The project site also abuts the Gallo Winery and is only a few hundred feet from the General Store and the F. Teldeschi Winery. Within a quarter to half a mile are four other significant wineries: (1) the Mauritson Winery at 2859 Dry Creek Road; (2) the Amista Winery at 3320 Dry Creek Road; (3) the Dry Creek Vineyard Winery at 3770 Lambert Bridge Road; and (4) the Passalaqua Winery at 3805 Lambert Bridge Road. In addition, there is a small permitted winery (ZO Winery) at 3232 Dry Creek Road, across the street from the project site.

This is by far the most concentrated area of Dry Creek Valley. Adding another winery, particularly one producing a volume of up to 100,000 cases, would be detrimental to the character of this neighborhood and the Dry Creek Valley generally. This 100,000 case proposal does not “support agriculture and related agricultural promotion on a scale that best fits the character of Dry Creek Valley,” as is the goal of the DCVCAC Guidelines. It will further increase traffic and noise.

We understand that the applicant plans to operate a custom crush facility, meaning that it will not just have retail consumers but will have commercial customers who are seeking to have their grapes crushed at this facility. This promises to increase vehicle traffic far more than a facility that processes grapes in one consolidated operation because smaller loads will come and go. There is already a significant over-supply of grape processing operations in Sonoma County due to both overbuilding and the downturn in consumer demand. This proposed facility is essentially industrial in nature and would be better sited in an industrial park in Cloverdale, Healdsburg, Windsor, or Santa Rosa.

The proposed 100,000 case volume is particularly worrisome. The DCVCAC Guidelines note: “Eighty percent of the wineries in Dry Creek Valley fall in the range of 3,600 to 30,000 permitted cases.” The closest two wineries to this site are Amista, which is permitted at 20,000 cases, and ZO, which is permitted at 600 cases. In fact, the two newest, significant wineries built on Dry Creek Road in approximately the last 15 years are permitted at 25,000 cases (Mauritson, 2859 Dry Creek Road) and 35,000 cases (Comstock, 1290 Dry Creek Road). This proposal is way out of scale to any growth that the Citizens Advisory Council and Permit Sonoma have approved in recent memory.

Furthermore, the proposed number of events is outside the DCVCAC Guidelines. The proposal includes 24 agricultural promotion events per year, while the Guidelines limit these to 2 per quarter, i.e., a maximum of 8 per year. The proposal includes a calendar showing 8-10 events per quarter in the summer. This will increase traffic and noise beyond permissible levels.

The Proposal Does Not Consider Noise Impacts to Our Property Despite Its Close Proximity.

The application materials include a detailed noise study that is deficient in many respects. The most obvious of these is that it does not include any assessment of noise impacts to our property with its three residences, all of which are within about 450 feet of the proposed parking lot. As the study notes, the planning code requires setbacks of 450 feet for parking lots, 625 feet for outdoor gathering areas without amplification, and 1600 feet for outdoor areas with amplification. There is no excuse for not studying impacts on these three residences at 3379, 3393, and 3449 Dry Creek Road.

Furthermore, as the noise study notes, noise travels differently according to meteorological, topography, and vegetation conditions. It therefore cannot be assumed that an impact on one property is acceptable merely because it may be acceptable on a closer property. For example, during much of the year, prevailing wind patterns blow from southeast to northwest up the Valley, carrying sound from the project site to our residence. There is also nothing but vines between the project location and our residence.

We also note that the property studied as Residence #2 (3381 Dry Creek Road or APN 090-150-048) is owned by the project applicant and rented to an employee, and the property studied as Residence #3 (3377 Dry Creek Road or APN 090-150-049) is owned by Gallo and also rented to an employee. As a result, the lack of objections associated with these two properties should not imply that the noise impacts and other impacts are acceptable.

The noise study also does not evaluate the noise associated with the proposed trash enclosure, where presumably glass bottles will be discarded and trucks will unload dumpsters. Even with care these areas can be quite unsightly. This is situated closer to our property than other parts of the proposed project and is unscreened and unmitigated for noise.

One clear way to address the noise impacts of the proposed parking is to move the main parking area (and trash enclosure) from the north side of the new building to the south side. This would significantly reduce the impacts on the five residences immediately adjacent to or across Frei Bros. Winery Road from the project site, and the one nearby residence on the south side of the project site is farther away.

Furthermore, regardless of where the parking lot is located, noise impacts would be reduced with vegetation screening such as evergreen hedges and lines of evergreen trees rather than merely shade trees. In fact, the two largest nearby wineries – Gallo and Dry Creek Vineyard – effectively use such vegetation to lessen their noise and visual impacts, and all in keeping with the landscape and view corridor of the Dry Creek Valley.

The Proposal Does Not Show the Full Design Impact and Does Not Include Common Mitigation Approaches Consistent With Those Used by Other Local Wineries.

Missing from the drawings in the application is any visual depiction of the current structures that will remain on the project site, to which the large winery and tasting room structure is being added. One of those is a modest house that is in keeping with the neighborhood, but the other is a large metal barn (approximately 4000 square feet) that will be incorporated into the overall new structure proposed. The elevations and most of the plan views look much smaller than what the resulting complex will be because they leave out this structure.

The drawings also do not show whether it will be painted or resurfaced to match the rest of the structure or whether it will remain its current light blue and white metal, which is not in keeping with the rest of the design and would not be permitted for a new residence in Dry Creek Valley. Ensuring that this structure is painted a dark color and that the overall massing of the complex is lowered are obviously important considerations for aesthetics and for preserving the view corridor of Dry Creek Valley.

Common to both noise and design impacts is the relative lack of vegetation screening of the proposed parking lot, buildings, and trash enclosure/fire tank. The plans show shade trees in the south side parking area along with “columnar” screening trees (perhaps Italian cypresses), which provide very little screening. Furthermore, lighting will be necessary, and even in accordance with local restrictions for dark skies, this will only draw more attention to the parking lot after sunset and emphasize the commercial nature of the site. Vehicle parking lots are an unavoidable characteristic of developed areas, but well-planned wineries in Dry Creek Valley and elsewhere screen parking with significant vegetation such as hedges and more full trees that preserves views, buffers noise, and provides wildlife habitat. This should be a required element of any permit for this site given its prominent location in the scenic corridor.

Furthermore, we note that the project site is zoned VOH for Valley Oak Habitat Combining District. Under Sonoma County Code section 26-067-100, because the project is subject to design review due to its location in a Scenic Resources Combining District and a scenic corridor, at least half the landscape trees will need to be valley oaks.

* * *

Finally, given its large case volume and square footage, with minimal efforts at mitigation, we note that this application appears to be taking a strategic approach. Well-known to savvy developers, this approach is to propose an obviously outsized project that will surely engender opposition so that the developer will eventually, apparently grudgingly, scale it back as a “reasonable” compromise that is actually far larger and with more events than what local standards would ordinarily support. We urge the Citizens Advisory Council and Permit Sonoma to be wary of this dynamic and to consider any revised proposal against the Guidelines and planning code afresh rather than by reference to changes from the original, obviously unacceptable attempt.

Director Wick and Dry Creek Valley Citizens Advisory Council

November 11, 2024

Page 5

We appreciate your consideration of this objection and our comments. We would be happy to discuss with any of you and with others involved in the permitting process.

Sincerely,

Trent Norris & Jack Calhoun



the proposed winery at 3193 Dry Creek Road

Dan Teldeschi <dteldeschi@gmail.com>

Tue, Jan 14, 2025 at 6:54 PM

To: "spillsbury76@gmail.com" <spillsbury76@gmail.com>

Cc: Jacob.Sedgley@sonoma-county.org

Hello Sharon and Jacob,

My name is Dan Teldeschi and I own F. Teldeschi Winery located at [3555 Dry Creek Road](#) right next to the Dry Creek General Store. I have looked at the proposed Amann winery project and I am writing you to give my support for the project to move forward. I figure there is going to be a lot of opposition against building this winery so I thought I would try and say something positive about it. There are already 90 - 100 wineries located in this appellation, is one more really going to change the culture that exists right now. I realize it is going to be one of the bigger wineries in Dry Creek and I have learned Robert is planning to process grapes that are grown in Dry Creek Valley and probably other locations in Sonoma County. That in itself should help to promote the grape growing business in Sonoma County and Dry Creek in this very difficult time that we are all facing. One more point to make is that the Mauritsen family has been growing grapes and farming in Dry Creek for at least 4 generations, probably more, that should count for something. I think that any new proposed wineries should only be approved for people and families who own property and have lived and farmed in Dry Creek Valley.

I ask that you approve the proposed Amann/Mauritsen Winery.

Sincerely yours

Dan Teldeschi

Owner/Winemaker F. Teldeschi Winery



Sharon Pillsbury <spillsbury76@gmail.com>

Comments on UPE24-0048 - Amann Use Permit Application

vicky@amistavineyards.com <vicky@amistavineyards.com>

Mon, Oct 14, 2024 at 12:18 PM

To: Alex Harris <a3harris@gmail.com>, Richard Kagel <richardkagel@gmail.com>, Nancy Bevill <nbevill@sonic.net>, Arthur Murray <art@flambeauxwine.com>, Dani Price <dani@fatdragonwine.com>

Cc: Jacob Sedgley <Jacob.Sedgley@sonoma-county.org>, Sharon Pillsbury <spillsbury76@gmail.com>

To Members of the DCV CAC,

I am writing in reference to the proposed use permit application UPE24-0048 for a 100,000-case winery. While I fully support property rights and the promotion of agriculture in the agricultural zones, I must express my opposition to this application in its current form.

My concerns are rooted in the Guidelines* that were jointly developed by the Winegrowers of Dry Creek Valley and the Dry Creek Valley Association, approved by the DCV CAC in 2017, and adopted by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors on October 16, 2018. Although this project meets several aspects of the Guidelines, its size significantly exceeds the recommended limits.

During my time on the CAC, I worked with fellow member Ruth Wilson to draft these Guidelines. Together, we helped mediate a challenging negotiation between the Winegrowers and the Dry Creek Valley Association. Our shared goal was to support agriculture in a way that maintains the unique character of Dry Creek Valley.

The Guidelines specifically encourage winery applications that reflect the current scale of Dry Creek Valley, supporting smaller projects in less densely developed areas. They highlight that 80% of existing wineries produce between 3,600 and 30,000 cases annually, and they discourage projects of a larger scale. This application, however, proposes a production volume more than three times the largest recommended size.

Additionally, the Guidelines favor projects in less densely populated areas, stating that "projects not clustered around existing developed uses or located closer to major highways will be viewed more favorably." This proposed project is in an area with several existing homes, the Dry Creek General Store, and seven wineries, including the 4.9-million-case Gallo Winery. It is also not near a major highway.

For these reasons, I urge you to vote against recommending approval of this application.

Respectfully,

Vicky Farrow
[3310 Dry Creek Road, Healdsburg, CA 95448](https://www.google.com/maps/place/3310+Dry+Creek+Road,+Healdsburg,+CA+95448)

***Dry Creek Valley Guidelines for New Use Permits with Visitor Serving Agricultural Uses.** The Guidelines are available on the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors website at:

<https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/administrative-support-and-fiscal-services/board-of-supervisors/boards-commissions-committees-and-task-forces/list-of-boards-commissions-committees-and-task-forces/dry-creek-valley-citizens-advisory-council/guidelines>

January 9, 2025

To whom it may concern,

RE: Proposed Use Permit UPE24-00048 for 3319 Dry Creek Road

We are writing to express our support to the proposed use permit UPE24-00048 for the Amann/Mauritson property at 3319 Dry Creek Road in Healdsburg (APN 090-150-041). As proposed this new winery and tasting room is intended to allow Mr. Mauritson the ability to continue sustainably farming. With the ability to crush his grapes, a perishable commodity, when needed he lessens his reliability on the traditional system of having to be at the mercy of others. With a perishable crop time is of the utmost importance and if there are no wineries willing to buy the crop when it is ready to harvest, Mr. Mauritson is giving himself, and others if needed, a place to crush their grapes and taking the perishable portion out of the equation thus allowing him more time to sell his product rather than letting it hang on the vine and becoming useless.

Constructing a crush facility in close proximity to where the majority of his fruit is grown demonstrates his thoughts of being sustainable. Less trucking time and miles keeps his carbon footprint to a minimum. No need to make numerous trips as far as 60 miles, 120 miles roundtrip, to a crush facility, where his control is limited. Reducing the amount of highway traffic, time, wear and tear on our roads as well as burning fuel should factor in how our local farmers show ingenuity in regards to how they want and plan to keep a multi-generational farming operation viable in the turbulent times that we all face.

It is our understanding that Mr. Mauritson has already made the concession of a 20% reduction dropping from 100,000 cases to 80,000, in his request for his use permit. With no reason other than trying to appease his neighbors. Understanding that the Dry Creek Valley Citizens Advisory Council (DCVCAC) has "guidelines" that they have collectively come up with. With a simple discussion, Mr. Mauritson explains why he has chosen the size that he did. If at any time the need arises for him to crush all of his crop due to a lack of sales, he would be able to do that. This is not his intention. He hopes to have contracts for a portion of his crop and crush the rest at his own facility. When space allows, he would then be able to accommodate other local growers that may not have contracts for their fruit, giving them the opportunity to extend the viability of their crop.

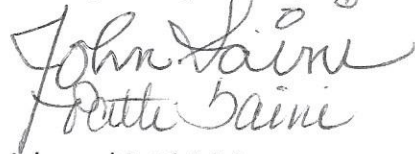
It is also our understanding that the County of Sonoma is in favor of these types of projects and that this project falls in line with what they would like to see.

The plan that Mr. Mauritson has in place includes the next generation, his children. Although they are not ready yet, they do have an interest in possibly creating their own wine brand with fruit sourced from their father's properties that will one day become theirs. Definitely something that we like to see. A multi-generational farming family continuing its legacy through the next generations sustainably.

Being neighbors with Mr. Mauritson and his family for many years our support for this project cannot be overstated. Using a small foot print (just over ½ acre) of their land that he and his family farm to process their fruit in order to continue farming is exactly what we would like to see happen. Without projects like this we may start to see the medium size farmers that have been instrumental in making Dry Creek Valley along with the rest of Sonoma County what it is today begin to go by the way side. If the small and medium size family farms cannot succeed, they will be forced to sell and soon this beautiful agricultural area will be covered in subdivisions. We know we don't want to see that and believe that others wouldn't want that either.

For all of the reasons stated above we support the granting of the use permit to Mr. Mauritson.

Thank you for your time,

Handwritten signatures of John and Patti Saini in cursive script. The signature for John Saini is on top, and Patti Saini is below it.

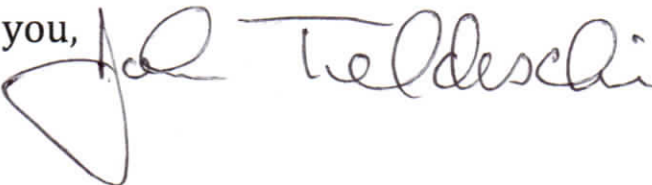
John and Patti Saini

January 8, 2025

Dear Members of DCVCAC & County of Sonoma,

My name is John Teldeschi. I own 3153 Dry Creek Road, which is the property that borders 3319 Dry Creek Road on the south side. I have viewed the proposed use permit UPE 24-0048 and have concluded that this project would have no significant impact on my property. Robert Mauritson has taken your concerns into consideration and reduced the case capacity of his winery from 100,000 cases to 80,000. This winery project is consistent with the County of Sonoma's general plan, by creating opportunities to process and promote wine grapes grown in Sonoma County. Robert Mauritson and his family have farmed in Sonoma County for generations, and the development of a family-owned and operated winery is going to protect the future of agriculture in Sonoma County.

I respectfully ask that you support the Amann Winery project (UPE 24-0048).

Thank you, 



Sharon Pillsbury <spillsbury76@gmail.com>

Proposed Amann Winery Permit

Nicole Litchfield <nicole@bioscribe.com>

Thu, Oct 17, 2024 at 8:40 AM

To: "a3harris@gmail.com" <a3harris@gmail.com>, "nbevill@sonic.net" <nbevill@sonic.net>, "art@flambeauxwine.com" <art@flambeauxwine.com>, "richardkagel@gmail.com" <richardkagel@gmail.com>, "jacob.sedgley@sonoma-county.org" <jacob.sedgley@sonoma-county.org>, "dani@fatdragonwine.com" <dani@fatdragonwine.com>, "spillsbury76@gmail.com" <spillsbury76@gmail.com>

Dear Council Members,

I own the home and small 600 case winery facility located at [3232 Dry Creek Road](#) that formerly operated as Zo Wines. I hosted the neighbors meeting with Mr. Mauritson, his consultant and architect to review the plans for the proposed new winery. I am unable to attend the meeting tonight as I am in New York this week, but I wanted to add my voice to those with concerns about the size of proposed facility. Vicky Farrow, Kim Stare Wallace, and Richie Masino have all shared their letters to you with me and I feel those letters accurately and adequately lay out the concerns of the neighbors across the street from the site.

My primary concerns are 1) the intent for the use of the large production facility - which attempts to bring a more industrial scale to a world-renowned wine road and does not reflect the intent of the Guidelines to limit such facilities to more appropriate areas of the valley, for example close to the highway; and 2) the impact on traffic safety on what is already a heavily impacted two-lane road on a stretch from 101 to Lambert Bridge Road where there are no stop signs, traffic lights, or passing lanes. The substantial impact of trucks and visitor traffic that would be going in and out of a single driveway across the road will add to a situation that is already a concern for residents on this particular stretch of Dry Creek Road. For example, I and my neighbors on both sides have witnessed accidents that have spilled into our yards or driveways when speeding vehicles try to pass someone turning into our driveways or attempt to merge from Frei Road leading to the large Gallo production facility.

I wish Mr. Mauritson the best with his plans for his family winery, I just hope that he will opt to build it someplace more appropriate for its primary intended use to crush grapes from other properties than the estate on which it resides.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best,
Nicole Litchfield

My name is David Majerus and I am a member of the Dry Creek Valley Association (DCVA) Board of Directors. I am speaking tonight on behalf of the DCVA Board.

The Board would like to support the wine industry and grape farmers in particular in Dry Creek Valley. At times in the past our Board has been viewed as always saying no and we would like to get beyond that reputation. Towards that goal, the DCVA and the Winegrowers of Dry Creek Valley (WDC) spent untold hours putting together guidelines to assist in the evaluation of winery use permit applications. We believe that these guidelines are the appropriate way to evaluate any application and the Amann application in particular.

1. The Amann application is in conflict with section 6.2 of the Guidelines. The guidelines suggest that projects that fall in the range of 3,600-30,000 cases would be preferred. If a project is larger, it should have some mitigating factors such as a larger parcel or proximity to 'major highways'. Neither of these mitigating factors are met in this application
2. The Amann applications does not specify how much Dry Creek fruit or Sonoma County fruit will be processed at the site. We would like to see some assurances that at least 75% of the fruit being processed come from Sonoma County.
3. The guidelines also express concern about having over concentrated areas of wineries. The proposed site appears to have a significant number of wineries located within 1,000 feet of the proposed winery. These include: Dry Creek Vineyards, Gallo, Teldeschi, Mauritson, Amista, and the property that previously was Zo Wines.
4. In addition, we have concerns about water usage. When Gallo expanded its winery, the expansion put a strain on the local groundwater. We are concerned that these water resources might be insufficient to support another 100,000 case winery especially in drought years. We would be interested in learning more about water resources and what strains this new winery would place on these resources.

While the DCVA would like to support new wineries within Dry Creek Valley, for the reasons listed above, we can not give our support to the Amann Winery application. We would be happy if there were significant modifications to the application which would bring it more in line with our joint Guidelines.



Sharon Pillsbury <spillsbury76@gmail.com>

Proposed Amann Winery Permit

4 messages

richie masino <richie@farfallaranch.com>

Wed, Oct 16, 2024 at 10:17 PM

To: "a3harris@gmail.com" <a3harris@gmail.com>, "nbevill@sonic.net" <nbevill@sonic.net>, "art@flambeauxwine.com" <art@flambeauxwine.com>, "dani@fatdragonwine.com" <dani@fatdragonwine.com>, "richardkagel@gmail.com" <richardkagel@gmail.com>

Cc: "spillsbury76@gmail.com" <spillsbury76@gmail.com>, "jacob.sedgley@sonoma-county.org" <jacob.sedgley@sonoma-county.org>

3280 Dry Creek Valley Road
Healdsburg, CA 95448

October 16, 2024

Dry Creek Valley Citizens Advisory Council

Dear Council Members,

We moved to Dry Creek Valley three years ago, drawn by its unique beauty, agricultural heritage, and strong sense of community and we support our fellow grape growers as well as local winemakers and wineries. We believe the scale of this proposed 100,000-case crush facility and 50 person per day average tasting room attendance with 26 events/year raises several issues:

1. **Traffic & Noise impact:** Dry Creek Road already sees significant traffic, including locals, tourists, cyclists, motorcyclists, and boaters heading to Lake Sonoma. Adding more tanker trucks and delivery vehicles from a large facility will increase noise and congestion significantly on this narrow, two-lane road. The plans mention widening the single entrance and exit driveway but without a dedicated turn lane, through traffic will be forced to abruptly slowdown from the 50mph speed limit, creating bottlenecks near the General Store, which is already a busy area.
2. **Safety:** There have been serious accidents on this road, and increased truck traffic heightens safety risks. Ours and our neighbors' mailboxes are located directly in front of the proposed entrance, and we cross Dry Creek Road to collect our mail there every day. The added traffic from trucks and guests entering and exiting poses a danger to both residents and road users.
3. **Preserving Dry Creek's Character:** The introduction of this large-scale bulk wine/custom crush facility on a 20-acre land parcel means that most of the grapes processed at this facility would come from outside Dry Creek Valley. Large wineries like Gallo are already adjacent to the property, which brings into question whether another large facility in close proximity is appropriate for our community, which has historically been defined by small, family-owned wineries producing wines made from locally grown grapes. A smaller-scale winery and tasting room would better align with the character of the area.

In conclusion, I ask the Council to consider scaling back the project to better fit with our community's needs and existing infrastructure while preserving the qualities that make Dry Creek Valley special.

Thank you for your attention to these concerns.

Sincerely,
Richard Masino
Farfalla Ranch

Richie and Tonya Masino
Owners/Growers
Farfalla Ranch Dry Creek Valley

(c) 1-858-342-1574

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

Nicole Litchfield <nicole@bioscribe.com>

Thu, Oct 17, 2024 at 8:40 AM

To: "a3harris@gmail.com" <a3harris@gmail.com>, "nbevill@sonic.net" <nbevill@sonic.net>, "art@flambeauxwine.com" <art@flambeauxwine.com>, "richardkagel@gmail.com" <richardkagel@gmail.com>, "jacob.sedgley@sonoma-county.org" <jacob.sedgley@sonoma-county.org>, "dani@fatdragonwine.com" <dani@fatdragonwine.com>, "spillsbury76@gmail.com" <spillsbury76@gmail.com>

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I wish Mr. Mauritsen the best with his plans for his family winery, I just hope that he will opt to build it someplace more appropriate for its primary intended use to crush grapes from other properties than the estate on which it resides.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best,
Nicole Litchfield

Sharon Pillsbury <spillsbury76@gmail.com>

Thu, Oct 17, 2024 at 10:14 AM

To: Richard Kagel <richardkagel@gmail.com>, Alex Harris <a3harris@gmail.com>, Nancy Bevill <nbevill@sonic.net>, Dani Price <dani@fatdragonwine.com>, Arthur Murray <art@flambeauxwine.com>

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Nicole Litchfield <nicole@bioscribe.com>

Date: October 17, 2024 at 8:40:54 AM PDT

To: a3harris@gmail.com, nbevill@sonic.net, art@flambeauxwine.com, richardkagel@gmail.com, jacob.sedgley@sonoma-county.org, dani@fatdragonwine.com, spillsbury76@gmail.com

Subject: Re: Proposed Amann Winery Permit

[Quoted text hidden]

Sharon Pillsbury <spillsbury76@gmail.com>

Thu, Oct 17, 2024 at 10:15 AM

To: Richard Kagel <richardkagel@gmail.com>, Arthur Murray <art@flambeauxwine.com>, Dani Price <dani@fatdragonwine.com>, Nancy Bevill <nbevill@sonic.net>, Alex Harris <a3harris@gmail.com>

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: richie masino <richie@farfallaranch.com>

Date: October 16, 2024 at 10:34:04 PM PDT

To: a3harris@gmail.com, nbevill@sonic.net, art@flambeauxwine.com, dani@fatdragonwine.com, richardkagel@gmail.com

Cc: spillsbury76@gmail.com, jacob.sedgley@sonoma-county.org

Subject: Proposed Amann Winery Permit

[Quoted text hidden]



Sharon Pillsbury <spillsbury76@gmail.com>

Concerns re: proposed Amann Winery use permit

Kim Stare Wallace <kim@drycreekvineyard.com>

Wed, Oct 16, 2024 at 9:46 AM

To: "a3harris@gmail.com" <a3harris@gmail.com>, Richard Kagel <richardkagel@gmail.com>, "nbevill@sonic.net" <nbevill@sonic.net>, "art@flambeauxwine.com" <art@flambeauxwine.com>, "dani@fatdragonwine.com" <dani@fatdragonwine.com>

Cc: Jacob Sedgley <Jacob.Sedgley@sonoma-county.org>, "spillsbury76@gmail.com" <spillsbury76@gmail.com>

I'm writing to express my concerns about the proposed new use permit for the Amann Winery located at 3319 Dry Creek Rd.

While I fully support the desire to build a family wine business, the size and scale of this operation is not appropriate given the location and concentration of existing wineries. No less than seven wineries are already located in very close proximity: Gallo, Mauritson, Amista, Dry Creek Vineyard, Teldeschi, Passalacqua, and Rued. Additionally, the Dry Creek General Store is a major hub for visitors and locals generating additional traffic, noise, etc. As a resident who lives close by, I can assure you there are times it is nearly impossible to cross the road to get my mail.

Furthermore, the scope and size of this application is in *direct conflict* with the Dry Creek Valley CAC guidelines, which were developed several years ago to provide oversight for all new use permits and to help preserve and protect the rural character of the valley.

Having met with the applicant, I have learned that this facility will be largely intended to serve as a custom crush facility to process grapes that the owner currently has produced elsewhere to lower their costs. This too, seems incongruent with the parcel size, location, and the overall nature of Dry Creek Valley.

There is a tipping point to the amount of traffic, noise, and congestion that this valley can handle, and I fear this proposed winery would put us over the edge. Additionally, with the incredibly difficult market conditions that wineries already face, the last thing we need is another 100,000 case winery fighting for the same consumer/visitor to Dry Creek Valley.

Sincerely Yours,

Kim

Kim Stare Wallace

President

707.433.1000 ext. 130

Kim@drycreekvineyard.com

3770 Lambert Bridge Rd.
Healdsburg, CA 95448



A FAMILY LEGACY
OVER 50 YEARS *in the* MAKING