

From: [REDACTED]
To: [-- City Clerk](#)
Subject: Public Comment
Date: Sunday, April 16, 2023 7:56:04 AM

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Good day,

I'd like to make a comment for mondays meeting on the fairgrounds discussion, addressing the mayor, city council and city staff.

I urge the city to minimize its commitment to the California state appointed fair board while fostering the development of and partnering with a grass roots organization, which could transition to manage the fair and fairgrounds.

Local farms are struggling, while many of us are struggling to access affordable healthy foods. The Petaluma people have expressed desire for a more robust local food system. Many understand the fairgrounds was intended to be a supportive local food hub of sorts, and have great ideas for what that could entail. Currently it's nothing of the sort.

Many Petaluma people also recognize that the fairgrounds was intended to be a park. Currently it's gated and closed to the public.

Grassroots management may honor the initial intended use of the property and be responsive to the townspeoples needs and requests in a way that the state appointed fair board has not.

The current fair board appears unflatteringly defensive and offensive. How could the city want to continue the relationship in any capacity after such disrespect? As a vegetable farmer I feel disconnected from them and what they, an "agriculture" association, are offering. Besides, they do not seem amenable to fulfilling the fairgrounds intended or possible spectrum of uses. Noticeably their proposed plan for the farmers market is in the middle of a parking lot, like Luccessi Park, lacking the requested permanent structure. At the April 5th open house they hosted, the question and answer period was obviously curated as

only softballs were lobbed at the fair board. Certainly my questions and concerns were ignored. After that meeting their “save the fairgrounds” campaign feels ironic. I fear perpetual mediocrity for the place under their management.

Understandably some dedicated and experienced Petaluma people will need to step up and work together to pull this off. Given the passion expressed for the place, I bet a locally overseen managing organization could form and given the opportunity, the fair and fairgrounds could be a far greater expression of all that Petaluma is. I am interested in further discussion about this possibility.

Thank you for your consideration.

Matt Hinds

