



Dear Friends:

The Napa Valley Horsemen's Association needs your help. On March 20, 2012, the Napa County Board of Supervisors will be deciding whether or not the Napa Valley Horsemen's Association (NVHA) may continue to use its property as it has all these years. This issue has reached the Supervisors, based on the protests of a single new neighbor. Originally the neighbor was concerned about the clubhouse rentals but now they are protesting the all of the uses covered in the club's application for a Certificate of Legal Non-Compliance.

NVHA, formed in 1939, and occupying its present location at 1200 Foster Road since 1948, has been a good neighbor and a positive presence in the community. The property is zoned Urban Reserve/Single Family Residential, so NVHA has been working with the County Planning Department to get a Certificate of Legal Non-conformity (CLN) in order to be in good legal standing going into the future.

After a hearing held on May 18, 2011, NVHA was granted this CLN, followed by a waiting period of 10 business days, during which time anyone could protest it. One did - a new neighbor in the Oak Ridge subdivision. Although not required by law to do so, the County reopened the case and it was heard again on November 17. 37 out of the 39 homeowners in the Oak Ridge Subdivision registered their support of the Horsemen, several neighbors testified in favor of NVHA, and the one dissenting voice, the resident of 10 Cavalry Court, came to protest. NVHA met with this neighbor before the November 17 meeting to address their concerns but we were unsuccessful. A compromise was offered at the November 17th meeting; again the neighbor declined. The neighbor has now appealed the entire CLN to the County Board of Supervisors. The appeal will be heard on March 20, at 9:45 AM. If this appeal were to be successful, the NVHA would no longer be able to serve our membership and the Napa community as we have for over 70 years.

This case brings up several issues, many of which should be of concern to everyone:

1. Obviously, NVHA has the most to lose in the short run. The income we get from the rental of our clubhouse is critical to our ability to retain ownership of the property, and to maintain and improve it. Without that revenue we may be forced to sell the property.
2. Such sale of the property would most likely result in its development, with the loss of open space and the rural character we all enjoy.
3. The greater Napa community would lose access to an affordable venue used by ordinary working people for celebrations and parties.
4. Another issue is whether real estate disclosures and the CC& R's of a housing development are worth any more than the paper they are printed on. The title to every property in the Oak Ridge subdivision includes a statement that in purchasing this property, "owners shall be deemed to have acknowledged and acquiesced in the use of such adjacent land in the manner in which it has been and is now used." Additionally, all homebuyers in Napa County must agree to accept normal and customary agricultural use, which may include noise, odors and insects.
5. A successful appeal could jeopardize similar non-profit organizations such as the Rutherford Grange and the Tucker Farm Center.

Here's how you can help:

1. **Attend the Board of Supervisors Meeting on March 20 at 9:45 at 1195 Third Street, room 305 (Board of Supervisors Chambers)**
2. **Write and submit a letter in support of NVHA to the Napa Valley Register**
3. **Write and send a letter of support to each of the Napa County Board of Supervisors (addresses are on the addendum)**

Attached is a Fact Sheet about NVHA and this issue, as well as a list of addresses for sending letters of support.

Sincerely,

Napa Valley Horsemen's Association

1200 Foster Road, P.O. Box 726, Napa, California 94559 (707) 254-1009

FACT SHEET

I. ABOUT NVHA

- NVHA was founded in 1939 and is one of the oldest equestrian organizations in the state
- NVHA has lived in harmony with the neighboring community at its current location since 1948
- NVHA is a 501 ©(7) non-profit social organization, whose mission is to preserve and promote an equestrian presence in Napa County.
- The NVHA Scholarship Fund gives scholarships each year to deserving graduates of Napa's public and parochial schools, who wish to pursue higher education in the fields of agriculture, veterinary medicine, or equine studies.
- NVHA provides a home for 4-H and Scout meetings, civic clubs, and other civic groups
- Historically, NVHA has been used as a polling place for many years
- NVHA holds events to help the public to learn about and enjoy horses. Such events include the bi-annual Napa Mustang Days, which is held in partnership with the Bureau of Land Management, and to which over 400 people each year come out to enjoy, and which places 20 – 30 homeless horses and donkeys into good homes each year.
- NVHA property provides an open space resource for the neighbors of the Foster Road neighborhood, and for visitors entering the Napa Valley

II. ABOUT THIS CASE:

- NVHA relies on the rental of its clubhouse for private events, in order to support itself, to raise funds for its scholarship program, and to continue its horse-related activities.
- NVHA's clientele for clubhouse rentals are ordinary working people who could not afford spaces at country clubs, wineries, etc. Such venues are hard to find.
- If NVHA loses its right to support itself through rentals, so may the Grange, Pope Valley Farm Center, Tucker Farm Center, and other similar facilities
- NVHA has the support of the Napa community as well as its immediate neighbors including Snow School, the Napa County Farm Bureau, and the Resource Conservation District. 37 out of the 39 homeowners at Oak Ridge subdivision signed a letter of support for NVHA's CLN
- NVHA has been recognized by the County Board of Supervisors and the Honorable Mike Thompson U.S. Congressman for its service to the Napa community
- NVHA rentals include the full-time presence of a security guard
- NVHA is subject to the county's noise ordinance, has agreed to discontinue amplified music after 10:00 p.m. and has recently hired a security agency to ensure compliance with this requirement.
- No complaints against NVHA were filed with the Napa County Sheriffs Office for the 2010 year, the only year for which records are available.

III. LIST OF SUPERVISORS:

- [Brad Wagenknecht](mailto:brad.wagenknecht@countyofnapa.org), District 1 -brad.wagenknecht@countyofnapa.org
- [Mark Luce](mailto:mark.luce@countyofnapa.org) , District 2 – mark.luce@countyofnapa.org
- [Diane Dillon](mailto:Diane.Dillon@countyofnapa.org) , District 3 -Diane.Dillon@countyofnapa.org
- [Bill Dodd](mailto:bill.dodd@countyofnapa.org), District 4 – bill.dodd@countyofnapa.org
- [Keith Caldwell](mailto:keith.caldwell@countyofnapa.org), District 5 –keith.caldwell@countyofnapa.org