

George Gordon

Response to Sustainable Mill Valley questionnaire.

Affordable Housing.

I may be the only candidate who actually offers affordable housing in Mill Valley. I occupy a duplex with an apartment below. I have consistently offered it to local, low income residents. It is a one bedroom, living room, kitchen and bath; I charge \$800 per month including utilities. I also have a second property in Mill Valley, a 1914 cottage which I restored and upgraded and offer on a short term basis to parents, grandparents, visiting children and friends visiting friends. It is a complete house, sleeps five, occupies its own lot and is fully furnished for a low as \$170.00 per day. It is occupied almost 90% of the time.

Mill Valley is unaffordable to many who would like to live here. In fact, it is beginning to be unaffordable to some who already are here. I believe that most who use the term affordable housing would fail to define it satisfactorily. I believe that if we interchanged the idea of affordable housing, to "Maintaining a good population mix" (young, middle age and old, and high, medium and low income, single, single parents, couples and married couples with or without children), we might get closer to being able to implement policies that could accomplish that as a goal. I do not believe that one solution fits all. If we are lead to believe that the solution is to build apartments that have less than market rate rent, we missing the point; that can only solve a small part of the stated goal. I think that we need a comprehensive set of solutions that will allow us to keep the elderly in their homes, assist young singles, singles families and young couples in establishing community stability. Government's roll is to do for the general public that which the individual cannot do by himself. In this case, it is going to take a combined effort by both government and the individual to come up with creative solutions to maintain our community population mix with subsidies, enhancements, grants, and partnerships whose aim is to accomplish that goal.

Local Business

I make it a point to shop in Mill Valley first, at the book depot, at the hardware store, local cleaners and for food. I might add that any item I can get in Mill Valley, I can get cheaper somewhere else, usually at a lower price. But, I would have to travel in order to make the purchases. By making a conscious choice to buy locally I help these businesses stay in business; they are also there when I need them. I have done this for years.

There are a variety of reasons for business closures in Mill Valley; some valid, some not. If your intention is to help local businesses stay in Mill Valley, you must stop creating the circumstances which cause them to fail. Mill Valley took quite sometime to create the problems that local businesses now face. When I first came to Mill Valley, no businesses

were open on Sunday. They were all local businesses, and served the residents of Mill Valley. Systematically over the years, local businesses were priced out of the retail spaces they occupied and more upscale retailers replaced them. The downtown emphasis is now on attracting buyers from outside Mill Valley and all are open on Sunday for the weekend influx of tourists and visitors. The same result will occur if the current MAPP proposal is allowed to proceed.

What was done over time cannot be solved overnight. However, we can establish an interactive connection between residents and local businesses by creating a Mill Valley Resource Bank. It will allow resident to log into a local directory of businesses and service providers to find local services and goods. We can also begin the process of City Government not making matters worst by fully vetting proposed changes so that the local business climate does not deteriorate any further.

This is very short discussion of a question whose answer could fill a book.

Traffic

I try and walk or ride my bike as much as possible. Rather than add to the problem, I become part of the solution.

There are simple and complex solutions to our traffic problem. To get in or out of Mill Valley, you enter or exit on a one-lane road (yes, that's correct). Three traffic problems: Blithedale at Camino Alto to the Freeway, Whole Foods intersection on Miller and cut through traffic in the neighborhoods. Solutions: Make Blithedale Ave two lanes from Camino Alto to the freeway. The city owns the land, has done the engineering and all that needs to be done is to build it. At Whole Foods, change the entry from Miller Avenue to Greenwood Ave and the exit from Greenwood Ave to Miller. Stops all the backup on Miller Ave and will make crossing Miller in the crosswalk much safer because no left turns will be made on Miller to enter Whole Foods. Cut through traffic: make La Goma one way from Locke Lane to Sycamore Ave. No left turn signs between 7AM and 9 AM – 4 PM to 6 PM on Amacita and Nelson at Sycamore. At Reed, Nelson, Amacita and Hilarita at Blithedale.

Start a free circular bus that loops around Mill Valley from downtown to Camino Alto. Ask everyone who would ride the bus to submit their idea of the route the bus should take and adjust the routes to their preferences. Make it easier to not take your car downtown. Get a bike, take a walk.

Water Supply.

I pay close attention to the amount of water that I use. It is a simple process of doing a full load of wash instead of a number of small ones, using drip systems for irrigation and trying to have draught resistant plants in the garden. I have planted three additional trees in my back yard to add to the cooling during the summer months.

If water is to be the deciding factor when adding a structure, we might consider making it a zero sum approach. If your new structure will add to the water use, you should be responsible for establishing water conservation programs that provide a large portion of what you will consume.

Ecological Footprint.

One of the most obvious points to be made concerning an ecological footprint is to stop construction that makes matters worst. Why add 300 new dwelling units to Miller Avenue if you believe that the totality of the town exceeds reasonable levels at this time?

Cities for Climate Protection

The city has a conflict of interest in this area. The main revenues of Mill Valley are property tax, sales tax and fees. In all areas they make statements that they favor any and all methods for not adding to the problem, but consistently advocate more building, higher fees and increased sales tax revenues. You can't have it both ways.

Community Choice Aggregation

I am beginning the process of solar panel installation along with flash heaters instead of the standard tank water heater.

As is almost always the case, NIMBY is the main obstacle to overcome. Everybody is for it until it is being built next to their house. I think that one of the most important events of the past two years was the elevation of the price of gasoline to more than \$3.00 per gallon. More people have decided to make positive and permanent changes in their energy consumption than at any time in our history. It also begins to make other sources of power seem reasonable and useful when compared to present systems.