

## City Clerk Staff

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**From:** Katie Van Dorn <katie@theheartrockcafe.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 25, 2023 8:59 AM  
**To:** Grp. City Council and City Web Site  
**Subject:** Response to Rattlesnake Easement Proposal  
**Attachments:** Letter to City Council.docx

Hello - I have attached my response to this proposal, to be shared with City Council Members prior to the Public Hearing on March 13.

I appreciate the opportunity to share my public input. Thank you.

Katie Van Dorn

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Friday, 2/24/2023

To: Members of the Missoula City Council

From: Katie Van Dorn, Realtor, Katie Van Dorn Real Estate

Re: The requested motion for Rattlesnake Easement Proposal at Ten Spoon Vineyard and Winery

**“City to accept a donated conservation easement of the Ten Spoon Vineyard and Winery property of approximately 21.5 acres and a public pedestrian walkway easement as an addition to the city’s current open space network and approve expending up to \$40,000 of 2018 Open Space Bond proceeds to pay for associated due diligence, legal, transaction and other project-related costs.”**

Dear Members of the City Council,

I am writing, as a veteran Real Estate Broker to urge you to accept the graciously donated easement of the Ten Spoon Vineyard and Winery property, of approximately 21.5 acres, and public pedestrian walkway easement as an addition to the city’s current Open Space network, to include spending up to \$40,000 of 2018 Open Space Bond proceeds.

With 22 years of experience in working with home and commercial property sales in Missoula and the surrounding area, as well as being a Rattlesnake resident since 1989, I have been integrally involved with the Open Space vs development issues for many years. I worked on the Open Space committee when the first Open Space bond was approved in 2006. Although I believe that there is a need for some development, the communities with carefully executed development and foresight regarding impact on nature, infrastructure and roadways, scenery and more have shown that proper planning can offer great benefit for all members of the community, and not just the few who participate in the development. Missoula city and county has experienced rapid development in the Rattlesnake and greater Missoula area, and it is crucial that quality of life for the people, agriculture, natural habitat, watershed and scenery all be taken into account. In 2004, the city approved of the Applegrove subdivision, building 49 homes on what was a beautiful 22 acre apple orchard. It would be a travesty to see another development like that occur in the Rattlesnake Valley.

If the Ten Spoon Vineyard and Winery were developed, the life blood of the Rattlesnake Valley would be lost. All that residents and visitors value – natural habitat, wildlife corridor, local agriculture, open space, scenery, recreation and community space - would be eliminated forever. The point made that this Ten Spoon land is flat, close to residential neighborhoods, and connected to city utilities is not a strong argument. There have been many similar areas in the Rattlesnake and around Missoula that have been developed, and if all these unique and exquisite areas become subdivisions to satisfy a small number of peoples greed, the essence of the area that draws people to live there will be lost, along with wildlife, agriculture, scenery, and ease of ingress and egress into and out of the area.

I have witnessed the blood, sweat, and tears that Connie Poten and Andy Sponseller have put into developing Ten Spoon Vineyard and Winery. As Donna Gaukler pointed out, they have made a beautiful community space for all Missoulians and people traveling through to share. Donna also importantly noted that individual property owners should have the right to do with their land as they wish. Development of the 21.5 acres would not only go against the wishes of Andy Sponseller and Connie Poten, but it would ruin all of their heroic efforts.

I agree with Donna Gaukler that the city's ongoing responsibilities and expenditure from the 2018 Open Space bond would be minimal. Amber Sherrill, Ward 4, is right on when she notes that the easement would be an amazing generous gift for the community. I urge you all to please support this donated conservation easement of the Ten Spoon Vineyard and Winery. Thank you for the opportunity to provide my input.

Katie Van Dorn, Katie Van Dorn Real Estate