

**From:** [mschouweiler](#)  
**To:** [City Council Public Comments](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] 3.1  
**Date:** Saturday, January 30, 2021 9:21:50 PM

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Bennett Valley golf course is used by thousands of players each year. Please don't consider closing one of the most used recreational facilities in the county.

Marvin Schouweiler

**From:** [Bill Brooks](#)  
**To:** [City Council Public Comments](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Bennett Valley Golf Course  
**Date:** Sunday, January 31, 2021 8:18:43 AM

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Dear City Council,

I cannot think of a better way to losing your seat in government than try to take away such an icon of Santa Rosa.

This is not just a golf course, it is a gathering place, it is exercise and a giant social hub of the city.

Your books are cooked and do not show all the income, where is the \$2.00 improvement fees??

This is a fight you cannot win and you will lose the backing of the entire county.

Golfer at BV for over 40 years,  
William Brooks  
Santa Rosa, CA

**From:** [Bill Brooks](#)  
**To:** [City Council Public Comments](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Fwd: Bennett Valley Golf Course  
**Date:** Sunday, January 31, 2021 9:12:04 AM

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Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Bill Brooks <[wilrose@sonic.net](mailto:wilrose@sonic.net)>  
**Subject:** **Bennett Valley Golf Course**  
**Date:** January 31, 2021 at 8:18:39 AM PST  
**To:** [cc-comment@srcity.org](mailto:cc-comment@srcity.org)

Dear City Council,

I cannot think of a better way to losing your seat in government than try to take away such an icon of Santa Rosa.

This is not just a golf course, it is a gathering place, it is exercise and a giant social hub of the city.

Your books are cooked and do not show all the income, where is the \$2.00 improvement fees??

This is a fight you cannot win and you will lose the backing of the entire county.

Golfer at BV for over 40 years,  
William Brooks  
Santa Rosa, CA

**PS: Your facts about golf are totally wrong. Golf is seeing a resurgence like never before.**

**Manufacturers are running out of product due to high sales.**

**More people are playing now than ever before.**

**From:** [Paul & Carolee Verdier](#)  
**To:** [City Council Public Comments](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item #3.1  
**Date:** Sunday, January 31, 2021 11:32:08 AM

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TO: Mayor and City Council

Subject: Bennett Valley Golf Course Complex Study Session

I moved here on August 2, 2003. In October, I first teed off at the Bennett Valley Course. What a wonderful surprise! In my 73 years of golfing over public, private and foreign courses, BVGC is in the top 3 courses that I have played! This course is always in great shape...the Superintendent, Course Superintendent and Crew keep the entire course in fine shape! This course is a Top Star for Santa Rosa!

To take away any part (i.e., take away the 18 hole course) would be a disaster!

Please keep the golf course as it is today (the restaurant should go).

Paul R Verdier Jr

**From:** [Terry Freeman](#)  
**To:** [City Council Public Comments](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item #3.1 - Bennett Valley Golf Course  
**Date:** Sunday, January 31, 2021 12:03:25 PM

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Dear City Council Members,

My wife and I visit the Bennett Valley Golf Course 4-5 days per week to play golf or use the driving range. We are retired, and we try to take full advantage of the course (and the restaurant when it was open), often with friends. Along with our parks, we believe this course is a very large part of Santa Rosa's identity. We hope you will do whatever it takes to keep the property as an 18-hole course with a driving range.

Thank you,  
Terry Freeman

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

**From:** [Campbell Michael](#)  
**To:** [City Council Public Comments](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] 3.1 BVGC Closure  
**Date:** Sunday, January 31, 2021 12:27:36 PM

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Dear City Council,

Please, do whatever you can to save historic BVGC from closure. Besides the history, there is the beauty of the place and its the heartbeat of Santa Rosa community golfing.

Best Regards

Michael S Campbell

**From:** [Chuck Twichell](#)  
**To:** [City Council Public Comments](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item #3.1  
**Date:** Sunday, January 31, 2021 1:40:56 PM

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Name: Chuck Twichell

It was more than infuriating to read the planned presentation about Bennett Valley Golf Course you will receive from Jill Scott and Jen Santos and their consultant. It's intended to make out the course as a broken down, money losing operation which couldn't be farther from the truth. They have gone to great lengths to tie the event center to the course - it isn't.

I have played the course since 1970, the year after it opened. I have seen it developed by the operators over the years from a run-of-the-mill muni course to what it is today - one of the premier muni courses in the Bay Area.

A little history is in order. The course was doing fine until 2005 when the City Council, led by Sharon Wright, decided there needed to be an "Event Center" in the South part of town. Without any input from the course operator or the golfers who use the course, they came up with a plan for a event center/restaurant building and a new pro shop since the large event center would take up the land where the old pro shop was located. The design was as you see it today but, built to "green" standards. It eventually cost \$10 million. They used the entire \$4 million Enterprise Fund the course had saved up for future infrastructure maintenance and replacement. The operator and the golfers were assured that the cost would be recouped by raising green fees for a couple of years. Of course, increasing fees by the amount they wanted would reduce rounds played, and it did. Now, the truth is the event center/restaurant is no more a golf clubhouse then the Finley Center is. And yet, the course has been expected to pay the debt for the whole complex.

It's clear the real estate dept. and public works have no interest in the recreational value of the golf course, which is ironic, since golf has seen a massive surge in popularity since COVID-19 protocols have been in place because it is the best suited activity to wearing a mask and socially distancing while enjoying the company of others.

The golf course is extremely valuable as a recreational asset. Particularly when, for the fifth largest city in the Bay Area, it is the ONLY municipal golf course we have.

**From:** [Stan Woodward](#)  
**To:** [City Council Public Comments](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item Number 3.1  
**Date:** Sunday, January 31, 2021 2:39:14 PM

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Date: January 31, 2021

To: Santa Rosa City Council

From: Stan Woodward

Subject: Council agenda item 3.1, February 2, 2021.

I am a resident of Santa Rosa and a member of the Bennett Valley Senior Men's Golf Club, and wish to express my concern about plans to modify the Bennett Valley Golf Course (BVGC) and recreational areas.

I play BVGC every week. As you know, the number of 18 hole golf courses in the area have decreased over the past five years, leaving us with fewer places to play at an affordable price. BV has the highest number of golfers of any course in Sonoma County and is, as mentioned in the background report, a profit-making enterprise. Golfers pay not only a green fee but also a "capital improvement fee" that is supposed to be going towards revamping the irrigation system.

The value of the BV complex to all of us was amplified during these pandemic times, as the area provided us with a safe opportunity to exercise and stay healthy. We have developed friendships in a welcoming environment we would not have met otherwise.

We believe the \$150,000 for analysis is unnecessary and would like to see such funds used to pay for the replacement of the irrigation system and other needed maintenance.

Thank you for considering the value of the BVGC to our community.

We urge you to agree to Option #1: to find a way to keep the golf course intact and get a desirable lease for the restaurant.

Stan Woodward



**From:** [Glenn Seime](#)  
**To:** [City Council Public Comments](#)  
**Cc:** [fredricrose@comcast.net](mailto:fredricrose@comcast.net); [Jim and Nancy Gurke](#); [Bob Nadell](#); [Wehrmeister, Kurt](#); [roy thuestad](#); [jlweaver47@gmail.com](mailto:jlweaver47@gmail.com); [Glenn Seime](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] City Council February 2 Meeting Agenda Item Number 3.1  
**Date:** Sunday, January 31, 2021 3:32:56 PM

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Please consider ways to increase the profitability of the existing golf course and restaurant, as opposed to the myriad of options being presented to you in this meeting.

The existing driving range is profitable. I use it frequently and have never heard any complaints about it being too short. My guess is it would only be too short for ~ 1% of the golfers, and, if needed, a net could be installed at the end of the range to contain longer balls. And the usage and profitability of the range could be increased by adding lights for nighttime use. There is no need to relocate and expand the existing driving range.

Regarding the restaurant, I don't know how the lease would be structured, but it shouldn't be difficult to get a better restaurant manager than Legends to increase the restaurant profit. But one manager for both the golf and restaurant is not a good idea. They are two very different businesses.

Reducing the number of holes on the golf course from 18 to 6 or 9, and possibly making them par 3's would dramatically decrease the revenue from the course, offsetting any cost savings.

Another thing to consider....CBRE is the real estate company that worked with city staff to prepare the presentation for City Council. I'm sure that CBRE is a respected real estate

company, but it's business is real estate. I can't help but think that they would have a tendency to think in terms of real estate solutions, as opposed to the status quo, and the presentation seems to bear that out.

Respectfully,

Glenn Seime

**From:** [Tom Sparrowe](#)  
**To:** [City Council Public Comments](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item #3.1, Council Meeting of February 2, 2021  
**Date:** Sunday, January 31, 2021 4:12:46 PM

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Dear City Council Members,

I am writing you in hopes that you will deter any actions related to adjusting the current use of the Bennett Valley Golf Course.

I am an avid member of the Bennett Valley Senior Men's Golf Club and Seniors in Retirement (SIRs) #17 golf group and wish to express my concern about plans to modify the Bennett Valley Golf Course (BVGC) and recreational areas.

I have made playing BVGC a routine part of my weekly activities. As you may know, the number of 18 hole golf courses in the area have decreased over the past five years, leaving us with fewer places to play at an affordable price. BV has the highest number of golfers of any course in Sonoma County and is, as mentioned in the background report, a profit-making enterprise. Golfers pay not only a green fee but also a "capital improvement fee" that is supposed to be going towards revamping the irrigation system. As a result of the club and the guidance of Bob Borowicz and Jim Knego, we have developed life-long friendships in a welcoming environment with men we would not have met otherwise.

In addition to playing golf, my friends, family and I use the picnic area, tennis courts and dog park. We take our (grand)kids to the playground and watch them play soccer and baseball on the recreation fields. These are features that brought us to live and stay in Santa Rosa and wish to keep them for years to come. The value of the BV complex to all of us was amplified during these pandemic times, as the area provided us with a safe haven to exercise and stay healthy.

Prior to Covid-19 pandemic closing the BV restaurant, Legends, was a popular stopping point before and after a round of golf. The local SIRs men's and women's clubs also held weekly meetings in the lounge and event centers and Legends had a weekly Friday Happy Hour with local music that entertained the local community. Revising a well-run restaurant serving drinks, snacks and tasty food would be a welcomed addition.


I believe the \$150,000 for analysis is unnecessary and would like to see such funds spent on the replacement of the irrigation system and other needed maintenance.

Thank you for considering the value of the BVGC to our community.

I urge you to agree to Option #1: to find a way to keep the golf course intact and get a desirable lease for the restaurant.

Sincerely,

Tom Sparrowe

  
Santa Rosa, CA 95404

**From:** [Fred Rose](#)  
**To:** [City Council Public Comments](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Meeting Agenda Item Number 3.1  
**Date:** Sunday, January 31, 2021 6:37:32 PM

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My name is Fred Rose. A citizen of Santa Rosa for over fifty years.

First things first. Do you honestly expect a real estate company to recommend anything other than selling property?

Second, the golf business and the restaurant business are not the same.

It is a shame that a successful golf course is shackled by dreadfully run restaurant. Too bad you made a bad choice the first time. Get over it. If you had visited any of the courses served by Legends you would have seen they were nothing more than a hamburger stand, and a poor one at that.

I am a member of two clubs that play at Bennett Valley. I have been for more years than any of you have been in office. The profitability of the golf course is the only reason you were able to consider the debt load you acquired. How about restructuring your bond problem. Even the Smart Train has been able to do that.

Your suggestions to "restructure" the golf course is beyond unimaginable. Do you not realize that Galvin Park has a dog park, a fly fishing set up, walking paths, soccer fields and tennis courts? How about we use that land for low income housing? Not really a good idea is it. Baseball diamonds? How much have you utilized the ones you have? How profitable are the city parks? Maybe they should become low income housing. Suggest that and you will not only be out of office but probably run out of town.

At the Bennett Valley Golf Course golfers have been paying greens fees with an additional fee for several years now to a fund for capital improvements. We are still waiting for those improvements. Where is that money? You want to spend \$150,000.00 to fund an analysis of your ideas? How about spending that on capital improvements. Too sensible?

Sincerely,  
Fred Rose

[REDACTED]  
Santa Rosa, CA 95405

**From:** [Jim Dale](#)  
**To:** [City Council Public Comments](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] DO NOT CLOSE BENNETT VALLEY GOLF COURSE  
**Date:** Monday, February 1, 2021 8:00:29 AM

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For the past 10 years following my retirement, BVGC has been a mainstay of my life. I've played golf there 2-3 times a week during those years and it's been a great source of senior socialization. During the pandemic, the golf course has been a safe haven for those of us who need to be outside. Any thoughts of closing BVGC seem ludicrous to me and many others who play the course.

Jim Dale

Sent from my iPad

**From:** [John Weaver](#)  
**To:** [City Council Public Comments](#)  
**Cc:** [Bob Borowicz \(external\)](#); [Andrade, Glenn](#); [Bill Brooks](#); [Bondi Gary](#); [Claude Schwarz](#); [Clay Nesbitt](#); [Dale, Jim](#); [Edelstein, Steve](#); [Ford, Kenneth](#); [Gurke, Jim](#); [Hafner, John](#); [House Craig](#); [Kaiser, Gene](#); [Loughran, Dean](#); [Lubas, Tom](#); [Mielke, Don](#); [Nadell, Bob](#); [O'Neill, Michael](#); [Oswald, Jim](#); [Petrie Allan](#); [Richmond, Kent](#); [Rose Fred](#); [Rosetti, Jack](#); [Saulsbury Steven](#); [Scapeccia, Ted](#); [Schouweiler, Marvin](#); [Seime, Glenn](#); [Smith Brad](#); [Sommerville John](#); [Sorum, Arvid](#); [Terry Freeman](#); [Thuestad, Roy](#); [Tom Sparrowe](#); [Virtue, Stephen](#); [Weaver, John](#); [Wehrmeister Kurt](#); [Wieszczyk, Mark](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item Number 3.1  
**Date:** Monday, February 1, 2021 10:19:49 AM

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The Bennett Valley Golf Course is a classic 18 hole golf course. All the holes are carved out of a mature forest of giant trees. The fairways are long, bordered by these tall trees making it a challenge to get to the green on your second shot. The greens were re-built around the year 2000 and your ball will roll fast and true. With the good maintenance the course is getting, it is always ready for a tournament. It should not be modified.

The Legends Restaurant turned out to be quite successful and was sought out by non-golfers for dining. It was doing well till the pandemic arrived. Now it's just another fine restaurant that had to close its doors. Lets kill the pandemic and then re-open the restaurant.

The last two years of wildfires have taught us to not build near or in a forest. So residential housing might not be a good idea. I would hate to see Bennett Valley disappear as a golf course. I'm John Weaver and I started playing here in the 20th Century.

Date: February 1, 2021

To: Santa Rosa City Council

From: Christopher Gargano

Subject: Council agenda item 3.1, February 2, 2021.

I am a member of the Bennett Valley Senior Men's Golf Club and wish to express my concern about plans to modify the Bennett Valley Golf Course (BVGC) and recreational areas.

I have made playing BVGC a routine part of my weekly activities. As you know, the number of 18 hole golf courses in the area have decreased over the past five years, leaving us with fewer places to play at an affordable price. BV has the highest number of golfers of any course in Sonoma County and is, as mentioned in the background report, a profit-making enterprise. Golfers pay not only a green fee but also a "capital improvement fee" that is supposed to be going towards revamping the irrigation system. As a result of the club and the guidance of Bob Borowicz and Jim Knego, we have developed life-long friendships in a welcoming environment with men we would not have met otherwise.

In addition to playing golf, my friends, family and I use the picnic area, tennis courts and dog park. We take our (grand)kids to the playground and watch them play soccer and baseball on the recreation fields. These are features that brought us to live and stay in Santa Rosa and wish to keep them for years to come. The value of the BV complex to all of us was amplified during these pandemic times, as the area provided us with a safe opportunity to exercise and stay healthy.

The BV restaurant was a popular stopping point before and after a round of golf. The local senior men's and women's clubs also held weekly meetings in the lounge and event centers. Having a well-run restaurant serving drinks, snacks and tasty food would be a welcomed addition.

We believe the \$150,000 for analysis is unnecessary and would like to see such funds used to pay for the replacement of the irrigation system and other needed maintenance.

Thank you for considering the value of the BVGC to our community.

We urge you to agree to Option #1: to find a way to keep the golf course intact and get a desirable lease for the restaurant.



**From:** [Dennis Mangan](#)  
**To:** [City Council Public Comments](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Comment - Agenda item 3.1 - Feb 2, 2021  
**Date:** Monday, February 1, 2021 10:47:45 AM  
**Importance:** High

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Date: February 1, 2021  
To: Santa Rosa City Council  
From: Dennis Mangan  
Subject: Council agenda item 3.1, February 2, 2021.

I am a member of the Bennett Valley Senior Men's Golf Club and wish to express my concern about plans to modify the Bennett Valley Golf Course (BVGC) and recreational areas.

I have made playing BVGC a routine part of my weekly activities. As you know, the number of 18 hole golf courses in the area have decreased over the past five years, leaving us with fewer places to play at an affordable price. BV has the highest number of golfers of any course in Sonoma County and is, as mentioned in the background report, a profit-making enterprise. Golfers pay not only a green fee but also a "capital improvement fee" that helps to cover the costs of maintenance, operational fees and debt recovery. As a result of the club and the guidance of Bob Borowicz and Jim Knego, we have developed life-long friendships in a welcoming environment with men we would not have met otherwise.

In addition to playing golf, my friends, family and I use the picnic area, tennis courts and dog park. We take our (grand)kids to the playground and watch them play soccer and baseball on the recreation fields. These are features that brought us to live and stay in Santa Rosa and wish to keep them for years to come. The value of the BV complex to all of us was amplified during these pandemic times, as the area provided us with a safe opportunity to exercise and stay healthy.

The BV restaurant was a popular stopping point before and after a round of golf. The local senior men's and women's clubs also held weekly meetings in the lounge and event centers. Having a well-run restaurant serving drinks, snacks and tasty food would be a welcomed addition.

We believe the \$150,000 for analysis is unnecessary and would like to see such funds used to pay for the replacement of the irrigation system and other needed maintenance.

Thank you for considering the value of the BVGC to our community.

We urge you to agree to Option #1: to find a way to keep the golf course intact and get a desirable lease for the restaurant.

**Dennis Mangan**



Santa Rosa, CA 95401

**From:** [ROY THUESTAD](#)  
**To:** [City Council Public Comments](#)  
**Cc:** [John Weaver](#); [Bob Nadell](#); [Jim Gurke](#); [Bill Brooks](#); [Bob Borowicz](#); [Jim Knego](#); [Fred Rose](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item Number 3.1  
**Date:** Monday, February 1, 2021 12:10:03 PM

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Mayor Schwedhelm and City Council Members,  
The Bennett Valley Golf Course is a gem within our city park system. It has a devoted following and is part of what makes Santa Rosa the desirable community that it is today. Converting this property to its potential "highest and best use" may have economic benefits for a tightening city budget, but it would certainly create an environmental deficit for our community.

I urge you to consider options that would allow the Bennett Valley Golf Course to remain as the treasure it is today, as opposed converting it to a commercial/high density blight of tomorrow.

Thank you in advance for your consideration,  
Roy Thuestad

**From:** [Brad Smith](#)  
**To:** [City Council Public Comments](#)  
**Cc:** [Bob Borowicz \(external\)](#); [John Weaver](#); [Fred Rose](#); [Steve Edelstein](#); [Roy Thuestad](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item 3.1 - Bennett Valley Golf Course  
**Date:** Monday, February 1, 2021 12:17:36 PM

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My name is Brad Smith. I am a Santa Rosa resident and frequent golfer at Bennett Valley Golf Course (BV).

Besides the short term benefits of BV to the City and city residents, which are fairly clear given the substantial use of the facility and its profitability even in these times of economic contraction, it is important to look at the broader picture of where BV fits in with Santa Rosa.

Many city residents, especially seniors, rely on BV as their primary social center and form of exercise. The other available golf courses in Sonoma County are generally booked solid. Shutting (or repurposing) BV will force people to other facilities, and prices will rise. A 9 hole course will not meet the demand. Many seniors and other modest income residents will be priced out of golf.

There are other areas, such as the never used Highway 12 corridor, that are better suited for the alternative uses being suggested for BV.

Once BV is gone, it will never come back. An equivalent facility would be too expensive to start from scratch with today's real estate values.

Not having a public golf course (and clubhouse/restaurant) will make Santa Rosa one of the few major cities in the greater Bay Area without public golf. That is likely to have some impact on real estate values and a definite effect on the perception of Santa Rosa as a significant community.

It is hard to know what Santa Rosa would be like without BV. Maybe that is because BV is so tied into the community that it's loss would be unimaginable.

I hope you will give these issues serious consideration.


Sincerely,

Brad Smith

**From:** [Mark Wieszczyk](#)  
**To:** [City Council Public Comments](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item Number 3.1  
**Date:** Monday, February 1, 2021 12:43:33 PM

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I am I favor of continuing with a golf course at the Bennett Valley site and selling the restaurant.

Thanks,  
Mark Wieszczyk  
  
Sonoma 96476

**From:** [Karbowski, Tom](#)  
**To:** [City Council Public Comments](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Council Agenda Item 3.1, February 2, 2021  
**Date:** Monday, February 1, 2021 1:30:40 PM

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I am a member of the Bennett Valley Senior Men's Golf Club and wish to express my concern about plans to modify the Bennett Valley Golf Course (BVGC) and recreational areas. Prior to that I was a member of the BVGC Men's Club for 15 years.

For the last 30 years I have played BVGC with my three buddies at least three times a week except when the rains make it unplayable. I only play at BVGC because: it is very well maintained by a very conscientious crew led by Donnie Ballard, it is beautiful, affordable (I have an annual pass and pay for a cart), and the staff managed by Bob Borowicz and Jim Knego have created an extremely friendly atmosphere.

The possibility of closing the course because revenues are not covering the \$4.5 million bond debt and operating costs is important. This debt came about when the Santa Rosa City Council approved building a new restaurant and pro shop that cost \$13 million dollars. In the eyes of the regular BVGC players this was a poor decision. The facilities could have been constructed for a third of that amount.

I am a sales engineer the the Trane Company selling HVAC systems for large commercial buildings. The system that was installed for the new restaurant was an expensive first cost geothermal ground water HVAC system that is more appropriate for a large commercial building. The restaurant is too small for this type of system and more suited for the Package Air Conditioning you see on retail stores at much lower installed costs, as well as, lower operating costs.

So we urge you to agree to Option #1... "Status Quo"...as listed in the Council's agenda for the February 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting. The \$150,000 cost for a feasibility study is money that combined with the **"capital improvement fee (???)"** that is charged for each round would be more wisely used toward revamping the drainage/irrigation system which would substantially increase the number of rounds played in the winter. Losing the course or shortening it for the Santa Rosa residents would be a tragedy that would compound the poor decisions that were made by the City Council at the time to spend \$13 million for the new facilities.

Sincerely,

Tom Karbowski



Santa Rosa...95403

**From:** [John Hafner](#)  
**To:** [City Council Public Comments](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Golf Course Agenda #3.1  
**Date:** Monday, February 1, 2021 1:51:00 PM

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We want the golf course to remain as is. Have played there and supported the city for more than 25 years as has my wife and our children. We are devastated to think that during this pandemic we would be forced to stay inside, where the course allows us freedom. With this course change, freedoms will be lessened. Where will it end...?  
Keep Bennett Balley Golf Alive...!!!!

Thank You,  
John Hafner

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [tescape Quattro](#)  
**To:** [City Council Public Comments](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item Number 3.1  
**Date:** Monday, February 1, 2021 1:51:55 PM

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I have been playing 1 - 2 rounds of golf per week at Bennett Valley for more years that I care to remember. In my opinion BV is one of the top golf courses in Sonoma County in terms of playability, affordability and how well it is maintained. The staff is always friendly and helpful. It is located right here in Santa Rosa, so we do not have to travel a great distance to enjoy a round of golf.

During this pandemic the BV course has been a godsend. It is one of the few activities us seniors have been able to pursue albeit the modifications that were made. Keeping in touch with old friends while playing a round of golf has been a great distraction to the trials we face due to the virus.

I realize that over the years participation in golf has been on a decline. This is also the case with many other activities that were vibrant in the past. However, a lot of people still play golf at BV and we can ill afford to lose another golf venue. We recently lost the two Oakmont courses, much to my chagrin.

A group I am a member of was conducting our monthly luncheon meetings at Legends prior to the pandemic. With what has transpired with Legends we are scrambling to find a suitable place to hold our meetings. Recently it was suggested we move to Charlie's. Could you imagine, our group of 70 plus seniors have to drive up to Windsor to hold our meeting?

After perusing the suggested alternatives for use on the acreage presently occupied by the golf course, et al I find one set particularly disturbing. Downsizing the golf course to 6, 9 or 12 holes while expanding the driving range seems ridiculous to me. Who do you think is going to use that lighted driving range after the golf course is killed? Have you visited the golf facility at the Fairgrounds?

What you currently have there is a jewel. A great golf course, some very nice tennis courts, a place to let you dog run, a soccer venue and a very nice casting pond. Please, do not kill it.

Respectfully,

Ted Scapeccia



**From:** [Kurt Wehrmeister](#)  
**To:** [City Council Public Comments](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item 3.1; Future of Bennett Valley Golf Course Complex  
**Date:** Monday, February 1, 2021 3:10:15 PM

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Ladies and gentlemen of the Santa Rosa City Council and city staff:

After fifty years in suburban Chicago, I moved to the southeast side of Santa Rosa nearly eight years ago. As I am an avid (if not necessarily gifted) amateur golfer, I was soon introduced to Bennett Valley Golf Course. Ever since I was able to retire early in 2017, I have played it more than fifty times a year; at least on a weekly basis.

My career was largely spent as the chief communications officer and public affairs director for a national nonprofit organization. My work took me all over the U.S. and Canada; for nearly thirty years I had the opportunity to play dozens of fine public and private courses (including a couple of PGA Tour venues) on both coasts, and pretty much everywhere in between.

From my first visit to Bennett Valley, it immediately impressed me with its stunning natural beauty; its challenging level of play designed *within* the landscape it occupies, not just *on* it; and the attractiveness and quality of its facilities.

Its optimum upkeep -- it's essentially in top condition, after the rain relents, from roughly the beginning of April through into at least December -- is achieved despite a twelve-month operating schedule. There's very little "downtime" for the course to just rest, let alone for major projects or civil engineering work. (Perhaps an off-month to complete necessary work might be a solution to one of its cited problems.)

However, when its restaurant/banquet facility was up and running, I felt it qualified as one of the very finest municipal golf facilities anywhere in America. Old friends and former colleagues who've visited me from Chicago uniformly agree. More than one has marveled to me that "I can't *believe* this is a municipal course! This place is nicer than several private clubs I've played." And I have to agree.

Its year-round operation enables it to keep greens fees extremely reasonable; back in the Midwest, a public-access course with *nearly* the amenities and atmosphere of BVGC could and would command fees of at least half again what we currently pay.

So now, learning within the last week that city staff and the City Council are going to be entertaining "options" for this fifty-year-old civic treasure -- which could include its closure, or a repurposing to the point of its ruination -- is nothing less than APPALLING to me and numerous other residents, and taxpayers, and voters.

I'll not pick apart details of the Study Session document; I'll only note two observations:

1) In a five-page, single-spaced document, it seems telling, to me, that perhaps THE crucial point is breezily and vaguely dismissed with "Overall, the golf operations are somewhat profitable . . ." I have been advised by friends better informed than I, that BVGC is THE MOST PROFITABLE PUBLIC GOLF FACILITY IN SONOMA COUNTY, clearing more than \$400,000 per year after paying all operational expenses. That's a pretty good annual return on 175 acres of open space. And . . .

2) Whoever drafted this document displays flabbergasting ignorance of the game of golf -- in its blithe suggestions that BVGC could possibly be re-conceived as "a 6-hole" or "a 12-hole" course. There are no such golf facilities anywhere on the planet, to my knowledge. And building one would create the biggest white elephant imaginable. Golf is played nine holes or 18 holes at a time, period.

I would urge that, in lieu of a "proposed Phase 1" of making a consultant wealthy with a \$150,000 fee over ninety days, that you instead:

-- devote that same \$150,000 toward making happen the capital improvements (for which each of us golfers have been paying an extra \$2 per round over the last several years; where has THAT been spent?);

-- post-Covid, find a restaurateur/banquet operator who knows what they're doing, to operate the former "Legends" facility . . . whose chronic understaffing created a situation where golfers would go elsewhere post-round, instead of being the "captive audience" they should be -- and frankly would welcome being -- at what is a beautiful dining/cocktails facility overlooking the course;

-- commit to doing what is necessary to STRENGTHEN the municipal gem that is Bennett Valley Golf Course. And NOT RUIN IT.

Sincerely,

Kurt N. Wehrmeister  


**From:** [edwardjensen674](#)  
**To:** [City Council Public Comments](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Bennett Valley Golf Course  
**Date:** Monday, February 1, 2021 3:24:34 PM

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My name is Edward Jensen I am a member of the Bennett Valley Senior Men's Golf Club. I wish to express my concern about your plans to modify the most popular golf course in Sonoma County. I have been playing here since 1970 and have loved every round, I have brought many friends and family to play here also.

The pro and manager Bob Borowitz and his staff do a great job of maintaining the course as good or better than any course in Sonoma County.

Please cancel any plans to change this Jewel in Santa Rosa.

Sincerely, Edward Jensen

Sent from my iPad

**From:** [James Gurke](#)  
**To:** [City Council Public Comments](#)  
**Cc:** [Bob Nadell](#); [Bill Brooks](#); [John Weaver](#); [Roy Thuestad](#); [Kurt Wehrmeister](#); [Fred Rose](#); [Glenn Seime](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] February 2, 2021 Assembly Study Session; Agenda Item 3.1  
**Date:** Monday, February 1, 2021 3:33:47 PM

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Public Comment

By: James Gurke, Santa Rosa resident and Annual Member of the Bennett Valley Golf Course

February 2, 2021, Assembly Study Session  
Agenda Item 3.1

To the Honorable Santa Rosa City Council:

The staff analysis, as presented by CBRE is deeply troubling for a variety of reasons. Most notably, they are real estate consultants — interested in making money from real estate transactions vs a primary interest in what has intrinsic value in our community; such things as parks, recreational actives or social gatherings. The things that make for a strong and viable community. Santa Rosa was recently named one of the most desirable communities in the country. Does anyone for a moment think that the recreational gems of the BV Golf Course and Galvin Park were somehow overlooked in that analysis?

The CBRE preliminary analysis is rife with assumptions that suggest the community no longer wants an 18 golf public golf course to exist. For instance, there is no mention that for the last several years those who play golf pay an additional ‘capital improvement fee’ on top of the greens fees. Yet the Assembly is offered no mention of that savings account to fund course improvements. Also overlooked is the point that BV has the highest number of golfers than any other course in Sonoma County and is, indeed, a profit making enterprise. The number of rounds played in 2020 exceeded 60,000, a 50% increase over the previous year. Nor is it made clear that the BV Golf Course pays approximately \$300,000 per year towards the bond debt, employing up to 35 individuals in prime season and approximately 15 full time employees throughout the year.

Suggesting that the land could be parceled to create a 6 hole course is ludicrous, because no one would pay to play so short a course. I know of none that even exist. Setting aside land for baseball diamonds when most of the current fields see little or not use, also curious. And how about the consultant’s absurd suggestion that the restaurant/clubhouse be torn down for some other ambiguous use. The buildings are not even 20 years old.

Remember the old Joni Mitchell verse: “take paradise and put in parking lot.” If we’re so hellbent on putting housing on every vacant corner why not do an inventory on all the parks in Santa Rosa and redevelop them instead of just focusing on a profit making golf course?

Instead of spending an additional \$150,000 for a further analysis, invest the money into some of the needed improvements — you’d be two thirds of the way to completion of the work allegedly needed on the restaurant/conference center.

In closing, I urge the Council to examine not the full range of options that CBRE offers. Instead, focus on how the BV Golf Course and restaurant/community center could become even more profitable and self sustaining while continuing to pay off the bond debt. A grave mistake was made by a previous council when the bonds were originally sold because neither the golf community nor management wanted or needed the buildings that came to be. Please don’t make a similar grave mistake by now considering a reuse of the land for housing or ill-defined economic gain.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my points and those of many others having an interest in the viability of our community: parks, recreational outlets such as golf, tennis, open spaces of all sorts that encourage good health and well being among our citizens.

**From:** [Craig House](#)  
**To:** [City Council Public Comments](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment for Agenda Item 3.1 Feb. 2 2021 Meeting re: Bennett Valley Golf Course  
**Date:** Monday, February 1, 2021 3:41:03 PM

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I wish to comment on the proposals regarding the “highest and best use” of the Bennett Valley Golf complex.

\Santa Rosa has only two public 18 hole golf courses. The number of rounds played on BV is huge, higher than many other courses around the bay area. It is also the most affordable, attracting many working and middle class golfers, as well as many seniors most of whom are on a fixed income.

Considering the course is covering its debt service, which is quite unusual for an entity owned by a governmental body, it makes NO sense to consider turning it into housing or other uses. There is much more land to the south and west of the city to accommodate these types of projects. Bennett Valley Golf Course is a community jewel that should be treasured, not discarded based upon some “consultant” study.

The former Legends restaurant facility was very popular for both golfer and non-golfer uses, and it’s reasonably priced meeting and banquet facilities were a boon to the community and the organizations that used them. Let’s find a new operator and leave a successfully operating public facility doing what it does best – serving the recreational needs of the community.

My name is Craig House and have lived in this area for 20 years.

**From:** [deanojr@comcast.net](mailto:deanojr@comcast.net)  
**To:** [City Council Public Comments](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Bennett Valley G. C.  
**Date:** Monday, February 1, 2021 3:41:50 PM

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I'm an 85 yr. old senior gofer who has trouble walking any long distances. Bennett Valley is a course that is user friendly, conveniently located, low-key facility, and easily available to a senior population. It is the only golf course in the North Bay that I can navigate comfortably due to its basically flat terrain. My golf activity is the only practical sport endeavor that is available to me. Many in my age group have similar physical problems but are able to get out and play a game of golf only because of the unique type of course Bennett Valley offers.

Therefore I would urge the council not to consider any suggestion to close this one-of-a-kind facility now or in the future. It's value to the average golfer and especially to senior golfers is incalculable.

Dean Loughran  
SIR's Branch 76  
Santa Rosa

Sent from my iPhone

February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021

Mayor and Santa Rosa City Councilpersons

Re: Reuse study of the City Bennett Valley Park made up of the golf course, surrounding athletic fields, clubhouse/restaurant buildings and supportive parking lots

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the consultant/staff report and ask that my comments be read into the record for your February 2<sup>nd</sup> City Council Meeting - Item 3.1.

The City receives property tax revenue to support the maintenance costs for all City parks including the Bennett Valley Park. I understand that, on a tax revenue per acre basis, the Bennett Valley Park receives less per acre in comparison to the other parks in the City. The City Council should correct this funding shortfall for the BV Park and not just rely on “rounds of golf played” revenue to support the golf course share of the \$4.5 million bond debt.

I agree with the consultant/staff comments (page 3) relative to the decline of area golf courses. In another ten years there will be only public municipal courses left as the other non-public courses will be priced out of existence. This situation will give the Bennett Valley golf course a large financial advantage to remain profitable and therefore able to financially support needed course improvements.

I disagree to the proposal to Re-purpose/Redesign Golf Facility (page 3). Short courses like 6-hole, 9-hole, and 12-hole will not draw the golf round revenue necessary to support course expenses. I also disagree with the suggestion of demo-ing of the existing clubhouse/restaurant to convert to another commercial use (page3). Given the right operator, the clubhouse/restaurant along with the availability of the existing parking lot can be a very successful operation for the Operator and the City. There are too many examples of successful clubhouse/restaurant operations in northern California to think otherwise.

The fly fishing casting pool (page 4) is vastly underused and should be removed with the area converted into athletic fields (little league baseball and/or girls softball).

The City Council should move forward in negotiations with interested restaurant operators now and delay suggested future studies (page 4&5). The City Council needs to understand the potential restaurant revenue stream before budget commitments are concluded. I believe once this information is known to the City Council, the Council will see the value of “staying with the status quo” option.

The current golf course operator does a great job in both the operation of the golf course and the attraction of new customers and should be retained into the future.

Al Petrie

