

Guest: David Guhin, City Manager, Sandra Lowe

### **Measure T - Vote Yes recommended**

*Measure T is a proposed 0.5% increase in the local sales tax (officially called a “transactions and use tax”) for the City of Sonoma, placed on the November 2024 ballot. The measure is designed to generate approximately \$3 million annually to support essential city services. If Measure T is passed, this tax would be applied to sales by retailers within the City of Sonoma and on the storage, use, or consumption in the City of tangible personal property by any retailer (for example, online purchases by City residents). State law provides exemptions that include prescription medication, groceries for home consumption, and other items. The amount of Revenue resources that we can use specifically to improve the conditions within the city of Sonoma. So like many cities who are doing similar things.*

Over the years the State has cut way way back on the amount of revenue that they give to cities. We used to have redevelopment funds that could be used for housing and and many other funds. And of course, right now, as you know, the State is in a bit of a deficit.

We came upon this, we did a survey, a scientific survey, not just one of those, you know what do you think? Click and click! But actual interviews, and found out that what the priorities were for the people in in Sonoma, and its not surprising. The safety is number one. People are very concerned.

We've all lived through fire. We haven't had a disastrous fire season this year. We don't want any cutbacks to police and fire. It's so important. And we're very fortunate that we have excellent representatives in both of those, you know who actually signed our ballot argument.

And our police chief and our fire chief actually signed an argument in favor Of this measure, so this would guarantee that we would not have to cut into those revenues in order to do something else, because we have sort of fixed amounts that we have to give for those safety purposes.

And yet people want us to do more. We want to do affordable housing. And we'll be talking about the cemeteries later.

We want to establish a recreation and parks department. We're like the only city of our size that doesn't have one and yet at any given Sunday or weekend, or whenever there's something going on at the Plaza, it's draining our staff because they're going in there to do one thing, and then, oh, by the way, can you handle a concert? How about Flea Market? How about a race? How about a vintage festival, I mean so, and.

Even though this tax would be just in the city of Sonoma, you have to remember we're a city of about 10,000 people that really serves about 30,000 people. Because the the whole area boys, Hot Springs, Shellville, El Verano, they all come into the city for all of those resources.

And so our budget is based on 10,000 people, and really serves 30,000 people, and on any given weekend it could be a hundred 10,000 people. If there's a race at Sears Point or if there's a big foot race or a big festival, the 4th of July, all of these things. It's really draining on on our staff, and we want to do more. And we have to figure out, how do we have a consistent revenue stream that will give us something that we can plan on.

So a lot of people say, Well, how can you? You know just make those developers pay or make this person pay. Well, you know you can't bake sale your way out of this problem. You have to have consistent sustainable revenue that you can plan because you have to hire people.

And you can't say, well, we got a big chunk of money this year, but we don't know next year so we'd love to hire you to do this, but we'll see what happens. You can't do that. You have to build a community and staffing and a sustainable city, where you know from year to year that you're building something for the future, and that you can sustain it.

And this is probably the most stable way that we can do this. So we're asking for your support. I've been walking and knocking on doors doing this.

I have extra materials uh that I'll leave here if people would like more. And you know, really hope that you can share with your congregations, with your friends, With your colleagues.

You know that this will be revenue that is going to stay in the city for local residents based on our budget? So people say, well, who's gonna decide? Well, we have a completely transparent process. At the city of Sonoma we invite everyone in for our budget. We we had our meeting down at the lodge, so that we could accommodate as many people as wanted to be there, and there were participants in our meeting, and it was zoomed, and everyone has come back and said, this has really built trust in the city. They really know that their issues are being heard.

Fixing the potholes, making sure that we have a fire district. By the way, the Fire District voted this week to support us. The Sonoma Valley Fire district is very excited about that, making sure that we have adequate Response. Times. This is so important. It's all about staffing. It's all about response times.

Making sure we have recreation programs for kids and for seniors, and that we're able to coordinate with all of the various groups and agencies and school districts, so that we can have a comprehensive program for everyone in the city, and that includes people in the Springs and every area of of the town.

And make sure that we have the resources, the staffing to put together an affordable housing program that can keep what we have. Make sure that we maintain what we have and expand it, so that we have places for teachers to live, for clerical workers to live, for farm workers to live.

Because the death of affordable housing has created traffic gridlock with people coming in. Taken people out of our community. When you have people that work in your community and live in your community, they become your piano teachers, your Sunday school teachers, your soccer coaches because they're here. So they stay and at the end of the day they help that kid with their homework rather than saying, I got to get home I've got an hour and a half drive to get to my kids.

It makes all the difference in the world to create a community where everyone lives together as best we can. And in order to do that. We have to make sure that we have the people that can apply for those grants that can reach out to the Nonprofit housing developers, that can look for properties that can actually put some of the money into some of these programs to keep people that are vone paycheck away from being without a place to live.

All of those things are essential. And so those are all the things that we can do with measure. T. And it will be done, based on the community input based on the vote of the city council in a completely transparent fashion.

### **Proposition 5 - Vote Yes recommended**

*California voters strongly support building housing that is affordable for low- and middle-income families and developing the public infrastructure needed to support new housing, like roads and transit, water, and fire stations. But state law currently restricts the ability of local voters to approve local housing and public infrastructure bonds for their communities.*

*Prop 5 empowers local voters to approve bonds for affordable housing, critical public infrastructure, and emergency response in our communities with a 55% vote – if those bonds have strict accountability and oversight.*

And I'll just do one more little pitch, and that is for yes, on Prop 5. There's an article in the Index Tribune in which I'm quoted today. This is a statewide proposition, and it will allow bonds to be passed at 55% to build housing, infrastructure, fire stations, parks in local communities. So it is a local control measure. Really, it's saying that the local communities can use this if they want. It doesn't imply that it's gonna happen. But it would help us a lot because currently to pass a bond you need 67%. Unless you're a school. Schools are 55%.

This would make everything 55%. So right now you can build a school for 55% but you can't build the housing for the teachers at 55%.

And it's still a super majority, it but it would put everything at the same level. You have a level of oversight, you have to list your projects, and so forth. But it would. It would help us a lot, because if ever we were gonna venture down that road it's very difficult to pass something.

I worked on a lot of school bonds, as Pam can tell you, in the city, in Sonoma, and it's it's very difficult. And it also applies to hospitals. We've got hospitals all throughout the State of California that are slated to close because they can't meet their seismic retrofit. And the governor vetoed the extension on the seismic retrofit. So they have to go to the voters in order to get the bonds to build and retrofit the hospitals, and that's life and death.

So it's it's important. People say, Yeah, but you know, I don't know our taxes, and you know there's always the naysayers. But conservative States, like Texas and Florida they pass bonds at 50%. They don't have a problem with it. People go look at all the nice things they have there. And it's like, Yeah, they can pass their bonds at 50% and no money from the State. So this proposition at least gives us a level playing field, and communities don't have to do it, but if they want to, then they'll have an opportunity.

So these might go together, anyway. So I'll leave it at there. I could take a few questions, and then I'm gonna zoom to my zoom.

What was the percentage for the proposition team? That's just a simple majority. There's a no until the voters decide, and the reason for that is right now that's the way all our sales tax is.

I mean, we couldn't Possibly budget if we thought every single year we have to go out and do this again, or every 5 years. We want to do long term planning. We want to be guaranteed that we know from time to time if the voters decide that they think it's ridiculous, they can ask us to take it off. You know we can do it.

People rely on it, and they've got a plan for it. This this year to year, not knowing what you're going to have, is, it's just very difficult. The rest of the taxes, sales tax goes on and on. Why should numbers? You know the State doesn't make you do that right? So why should we have to do that? It just doesn't seem right.

And all of the the cities around us, they're doing the same thing. So ours would not be more than it. We're the same as Petaluma. It'll be the same as Petaluma, it'll be the same as Cotati. It's not like, you know, we're an outlier. Everybody's having to do this.

2 questions, what is our current city tax rate, or what's the total tax? It's Currently 9.5. Because the fire tax went into effect on October first that brought it to 9.5.

If measure T passes and measure I passes, measure I is the child care tax, which is quarter cent sales tax. If those 2 pass will go to 10.25, and that's the State cap. So no city can go above 10.25, as Sandra mentioned.

A lot of other cities are doing this. If everything, passes in November, we're all at our cap. We're all going to be at the cap. Between the fire tax and the child care tax they're taking away some of the cap. And so this is our last chance to get the housing.

And you know I want the continuation of library tax as well. These are all good programs. None of those put money directly into the coffers of the city of Sonoma.

0We're we're really expected to do an awful lot with very little. And we're doing a great job. So proud of David, his team, the people that he's hired, I mean, we've really turned it things around um. We've got a great people over there. We're we're gonna do amazing things. But we have to have the resources.

Is there a more detailed plan as far as where the money is going to go. Aside from it's a general fund tax.

So the the detailed plan is our budget. So if it passes and it'll be a completely transparent process. We'll have a budget meeting where everyone can participate. We'll set our goals. It'll all be right in front of you. You'll see exactly where every single penny is gonna go just like we have now.

Yeah, if it passes in November, we'll have goal setting in probably early February, where we'll talk about what does the city want to do? Then from that the budget will be created based on that and that new revenue, and then we'll present it to the community. It'll happen between February through June. Adoption in July is happening, You've got the Bocce Court people that want this. You've got the field of dreams people who want it, I mean, everybody is like please. You know we've got the cemeteries which are part of our parks. Really in the park system. David will talk about that. So everybody is just waiting for this to happen. And they've already got their their budgets ready to, you know, create something. So this is this is something from the ground up. This is what people are asking us for, and we're just trying to figure out a way to do it, and we think we think this will work.

Are both of these in valley-wide Voter packets. This is statewide or just City?  
So the the letter ones are cities, and then the number ones are state.

The Measure I, which is child care. That's county one.

And W is countywide for the libraries, which is not a new tax. It's a continuation of what they currently have.

Thank you so much. Thank you for all you do. Yeah, no, thank you. I really appreciate it.

That was Sandra Low, our former city mayor and city council member.

## **Rabbi Steve**

So we're gonna quickly talk about Thanksgiving. It just kinda came around the corner real fast. We were busy looking. So um, to make matters simple I think we should do it here in the shared Sanctuary of Shir Shalom and FCC. It's centrally located. It's the Jewish/interfaith campus.

And I'm staying in town this year for Thanksgiving, so I, personally will be here.

Rabbi Steve - Sonoma: Everybody cool with that?

It's Thanksgiving Eve. It's the evening before, Wednesday. I think we found the sweet spot of 6:30 to 7:30 kind of thing after dinner.

So I've been spending a little bit of time over at Hanna Center With their new Mental health, hub. And specifically representing the Interfaith group on the topic of bereavement which is going to launch at Hanna center. With the Sonoma Valley interfaith, kind of as an Advisory Council. We kind of built the program and handed it off to them and said, You take it from here, which they graciously accepted.

Dave and I were talking earlier. Because, as Thanksgiving is approaching you know, when do we miss our loved ones the most is at holidays.

Our Theme, I don't want it to be a downer topic. Right? Of course, Thanksgiving is all about gratitude. That is the main thing.

But as far as who we're inviting, we usually invite a Couple of nonprofits, a few city officials, and all of that. So this year I was thinking about inviting Hanna representatives to come up and talk about what's soon to be launched. They're gonna have workshops and seminars. And weekly meetings every season. And you know, for the husband who lost his spouse, for the wife who lost her spouse, for the parents who lost a child. I mean, it's gonna grow. I guess, it will reveal itself as it develops with the questions that are.

You know, we always kind of redefine ourselves when we answer questions. I wouldn't put that as the whole theme. I think that would be one call.

Put it in Thanksgiving that we have this program to help people who are in need. So I think I can still use that Thanksgiving word. I mean, it's in the nature of healing. It could be presented with hope. Okay, good.

That sort of the event rather than. Yeah, yeah, okay, obviously, we have different, you know, technological views within the group. But you know, both beyond this life as well as part of that healing. It's certainly something that many of us put our put our faith in our hope, in. But even though we are paying here in this in this life, also there's for many of us there's hope beyond the grave. There's hope past this life.

In terms of the pain that we deal with, and one of the ways that many of us frame, that is, that the pain that we suffer this will somehow be redeemed. And made it right. So that's another.

Positive. Yeah, so hope healing and hope. I think that's a nice slash, you know. Gratitude.

Healing and hope healing. But both can happen within the immediate future, too. Yeah, yeah, absolutely.

So Donna already said she won't be there for Thanksgiving and Matt Pearson as well.

Nicole And also myself. I'm out of town every year. But I can find a deacon or an elder at the church to represent Saint Andrew, and have a part in service. No problem.

I'm gonna talk to Donna about someone going, because I have to be in the course room so I can't go. And one of us should go. And there's no reason she can't go unless she has something else going on that isn't involved with our course room. She informed Tricia that she couldn't come this year.

And deacon Dave. Have you been the main speaker yet?

Not the main speaker. 2 years ago I offered some parts of the faithful, basically Thanksgiving, prayer, or something like that.

Because the main speaker generally it's about. It's not long. What was it 7 to 10 min. Something like that.

You've done it, and Donna's done it. I've done it. Eventually, we're gonna have to get back to me because it's been. I did it my 1st year. And now I'm in my 11th year.

Right. So there are many pastors who did it, and now they're gone. They were here for 2 or 3 years. We usually get Whoever's new.

The only one really new is Us. Church of the Nazarene. But she doesn't come to any of our meetings, and I'm not even sure what's happening with that church there. Is there even gonna be a church? Have you had any contact with.

I went over and visited her, and welcomed her to Sonoma, and told her about our meetings and all of that. But I was kind of hoping that she would show up. And I think she did reach out to Tricia once about confirming when the meetings are, and all of that.

Is there? Isn't there transition right now at the episcopal?

Yes. Trinity Episcopal. I always thought that Lisa Cole was sticking around a while. But It's only been a year, and she's moving on. So they're going through a transition right now. That's the one on Spain Street.

So we need a main speaker, would you Dave?

Alright

And then I'll see if healing and hope are a theme.

And Jason if you want to touch on your person, you know the churches. If you want to represent the church on hope beyond this life. You won't insult anybody right? It's all faiths.

Those that strongly believe in that will say Amen.

And those that are on the fence say hmm might be nice.

Yeah, let's start investing in this life so that I earn a good spot in the world to come.

All right, and then I'm gonna put Hannah Center for guests Speakers.

And well again let's not Be a downer with, you know Mental health and all of that kind of stuff. We just want to offer that, make to be a perfect place for them to you know share, as one of the nonprofits in town.

And any other number of nonprofits, I mean, who we usually get Sonoma overnight support and fish and La Luz right.

Okay, so you'll do a reading or something like that, or a song. (to Jason)  
You guys? No, no, not you, please, but your band. You know, Yaffa and I would really love to play with your band. I mean, that would be talk about interfaith right? And I heard some really good Christian music On, of all places the Hallmark channel. We were watching, you know, every now and then we like to watch a good old Christmas hallmark movie. They had some really good music in there, and I told you we gotta learn that stuff, fantastic.

Nicole, whether it's you know, Ken or Dick, or whoever you're gonna send over to us, they'll have a reading part or some kind of participation as well.

Okay. Yeah, do you wanna set what that is now? So I can tell them. Or do you.

Oh, I have no idea. I mean, if they wanna if they want to offer.

So yeah, I'd like to offer this. It's from our Hymnal or Prayer Book, or you know. A thanksgiving, blessing.

Well, that's what I'm saying. Would you like a prayer? Would you like a blessing?

So a closing blessing, like at the end.

Do we have an opening prayer? We should have an opening prayer and closing blessing.

Now we're starting to put the agenda together. Everything's been last last year. And so plug and play. Yeah, exactly.

Closing, blessing.

Sonoma collective and Shir Shalom putting some music together, maybe a couple of songs. We've got Deacon Dave as our main speaker. We've got St. Andrew as a closing blessing.

Okay, alright, and we'll see if we can get members from the Methodist Church and Trinity, and we'll start to build it from here.

Okay. Alright. Um That's it.

David, you're our city manager? Um, so I personally, I got to know David. Uh. A little while ago we took a walk up into the cemetery. And turned out that my timing was right, because soon after Caroline came into the picture. Who's now our cemetery Manager

## **David Guhin, City Manager**

So that and other topics I think David wants to share. You guys want to jump the chair just in case you have questions that way.

Yeah, thank you for letting me join you. All this is wonderful that you're all meeting in. I've been with the city for about a year and a half now. I was with the city of San Jose for about 18 years. And then I worked for the federated Indians of Agra, and ran their government 2 and a half years, and then came here. So I've been around the county for over 20 years.

As city manager It's a very random job, and it comes from potholes to dealing with housing issues, to politics, council members to I was just walking around with the chamber and the police chief different businesses before coming here to just ask how things were going and talk about details. So it's just a pretty. It's a very random job.

One of the most random things that hit me when I came to Sonoma, was the city owns and operates 3 cemeteries. That's very uncommon. Cemeteries in California typically are actually on the country, are usually run by districts. Or they're run by churches. So those are kind of the 2 ways symmetries run. Cities don't usually do that, and so they quickly found that our cemeteries were neglected.

No additional capacity was created. We were basically turning people away at the door, saying, No, we're closed. You know you have to maintain these sites so we were in the hole. We were in the red by over a million dollars. I'm trying to maintain these cemeteries. I took that on as a goal, to turn them around and actually make them an asset to the community, trying to figure out how to bring them back to what they should be in terms of respect for those sites.

And in doing so I hired a cemetery manager. So the cemetery manager, Carolyn Fulton, who I took from Cypress Hill Cemetery, she ran that, and so she came over to help run our cemeteries. And we just created a brand new brochure. Just to start the conversation. Let people know we're here. These exist.

And so in general, we own 3 cemeteries, the active cemeteries, one over it's called Valley Cemetery, which is over on Macarthur and we own Mountain Cemetery, which is just up the road here. And then above mountain I like to think of it as 2 cemeteries. There's Mountain Cemetery, which is an active cemetery, and then above there is a historic cemetery. So about right when you start to go up the hill, it turns historic, and that's where Vallejo is buried, and there's um. A lot of history up there, so we don't do active burials up there unless somebody has a family mausoleum that. They're they're filling in. But all the new are down on the bottom of mountain.

And then we have a veteran cemetery which you may have seen, but which is also it's a city cemetery as well. So we are in the process of increasing capacity of veterans and increasing capacity in mountain to try to make sure that we have availability for people that want to be in our cemeteries.

In talking to the Rabbi. One of the things we asked is, well, this is a community asset. This is something for the community, the people of Sonoma, the valley, and beyond. So we want to make sure that whatever we do is supporting the needs of our community.

You know, I learning all about cemeteries as fast as I possibly can. It's a whole crazy new world. But um! You know, there's different things that people need and want, and we want to make sure that we're prepared for that.



So part of coming here was, 1st to let you know we do have these these assets. We are investing in them. We do want to make sure that there's room for those that want to be in Sonoma want to stay in Sonoma, that there's a space for families, if that's in ground burial that's above cremations, if it's um crypt or if it's the niche. Yeah, the niches that you put the cremations in. Um we talked about doing a wall where you can do a scribed name, so you can at least have a presence there. So family members can come to a location. All that's possible. We just want to know what the what the interest is and what the need is, so that we can support that and create that, and be there for people when they need it.

So part of this was to have that to put that out there and and start that conversation. We are also gonna try to get people active in cemeteries and know that they're there. So we're doing cleanup days as well at our cemeteries. So we had one in Valley 2 weeks ago, and this coming weekend on Saturday from 9 to noon, we're going to be doing a cleanup day at Mountain Cemetery. So this is a volunteer day to come. Help! And then we're gonna be doing one in veterans cemetery the weekend before veterans day to make sure it's ready to go for the veterans Day ceremony.

And we'll do that more of a regular basis. And that information is in our city newsletter. So if you do go to our websites, highly recommend people sign up for our city newsletter all that stuff's in there, and it tells you what's going on in the city events and those kinds of things.

So part of that's just to expose people to the cemeteries. Let them know they're there, get people back into the cemeteries but we want to turn them into a place where people go and walk and use and make the way a nice place, and we'll also probably be doing tours up in the historic section.

We've got a lot of stories within the Historic Society to figure out who's up there? What are the stories? How do we create tours that people can go up and experience this, but that could also be a revenue generation generator to bring back into the cemeteries to help maintain them and make them what they should be.

The city of Santa Rosa has a historic cemetery in there. They're run by a group of volunteers, and it's very very active, and we did a tour with them, and they showed us how they manage their historic cemeteries. It's incredible. They have people out there restoring graves, doing tours. Tours they sell out within hours, you know, where they have people dressed up in period costumes, and each grave, and they act out a story of that. The people that are there, and they kind of move from station to station, and it's a pretty pretty cool event. So we want to try to do. We want to engage people to do that kind of thing. So let's let's bring this back to.

Lot of opportunities at the cemeteries so we're excited about that. I'm excited to have Carolyn on board, because before it was just me trying to figure this out like, now I have somebody that knows cemeteries. I can support her and make sure that she has the resources she needs to get it done.

But basically, all this is is just kind of let you know that we do have these 3 mountain, valley and veterans.

So there's information here about how to reach us. So that's kind of the one thing we're talking about. Um. And I actually just got a phone this morning with the county. I'm looking at land around Mountain Cemetery to see if we can take some of that on, because it's vacant. But the county owns adjacent to veteran Cemetery and mountain cemetery that potentially expand to do more creative things, that we talked about so lots in the works. But nothing is final. So that's why I want to reach out and let you know.

But I take Saint Francis Solano kids. I take them on a virtues walk, and we go up you know the Overlook Trail. We talk about Sonoma Valley history and natural history, but I always stand in the cemetery: Kind of the virtues of your life at the end of your life. What are you going to be able to say that you did in your life, and that's what we I call the virtues. But I tell you I mean we talk about snakes and deer and water, and trees and flowers. The kids are fascinated by that cemetery, and I always say stare at them and tell me the oldest birth date you can find, and the old death date you can find, and there will be somebody will find that Military guide is buried the oldest one there, but the teachers always say that's 1 of their favorite things on this whole walk, and so I think there's some connections with the community there. Certainly historical, which would be very, very, very nice. I'm kind of excited about looking at cleaning it up. I tell you there's needs some help. There needs help. And the historic section, specifically, we need volunteers in the community to come together on that, because it's just.

You know it's a park, right? And the stories up there are incredible. So I think we got the name. You see, names. There's a street in town with that. Then they bought it, or you know some other historical connection? Yeah, is there any additional land aside from just.

Those existing around mountain that are potential sites to expand, or even a new cemetery. I think I think maybe not a new cemetery, but more expansion of mountain. Is that what you're talking about?

No, beyond that. Is there anything else any other property in town or.

For a brand new cemetery. We haven't looked at that. No, um, not that I know of to be brutally honest. If we have more land available to us, we're probably looking at for housing. Because we just we're so short on space within the city limits itself. Um housing for the living. Yeah there are 2 types of housing right here. So yes, long-term housing and very long term housing.

But there is potential of. And that's what I was talking to the county about. There is land that we could expand potentially and create more space, do more things that's of interest. Let's do that.

And but we're seeing, and we've talked to the punatory or the um mortuary. And the numbers have completely shifted from in-ground to cremations pretty dramatically in terms of what they're seeing. And so we're trying to figure out what that means in terms of investment, because we have to put the money up front and invest in this infrastructure. So you know, going up, it's kind of it is kind of like housing going up versus, you know. Sprawl right? It's a high density. It's kind of worse.

We actually do. Yeah, we've got quite a bit of room in all the cemeteries. Surprisingly, we did a study a couple years back, and the capacity is pretty dramatic. I mean, we inventory cemetery alone. We'll only have maybe a 3rd or a quarter of the space used there's still, for in ground there's a whole bunch more valley. There's a whole back section that hasn't even been touched yet that we can add in ground. And then there's once those are full. Then there's the ability to go fill in the middle section of the aisles. Because right now we keep the aisle so that contractors can get in to do the the digging piece, but we could make all those and have those are ready to go. So the the capacity at all the spaces um can be dramatically increased. Um in ground and above ground.

We just need to know that there's an interest um, or because I don't want to invest all the funds. If there's not an interest with them from the community to say, I want to be in Sonoma, or this is the type type of variables of interest, or to us, and we can curate that.

That would be worth surveying, because then there's also a cost factor. I mean, burial is way more expensive. Yeah, we just updated our our fees. And I think we're probably most competitive. And in the area. I know we're way below some of the like church fees, but I think they have very limited capacity. But because we are a city Cemetery, we're able to keep the fees pretty much at cost, because we say, here's what it costs to do the service and get you in there. We have resident rates and Value rates and then out of county rates. Right? So we want to try to cater and support those that live here first.

You got me on the waiting list? Yeah, yeah.

Yeah, my son is a funeral director in Saint Paul, Minnesota. And he said, there's a movement, not only the cremations, but to more environmental friendly burials. So I'm sure you consider that option as well.

We're looking at that. Yeah. And I think that kind of goes towards in California has taken some steps encourage that. I think that the only place that I know that's doing that right now is in Marin. But there, that's 1 of the things about potentially expanding.

One of our cemeteries to look at green burials, and what? That? What that might be. Um and do we have the space? What are the environmental regulations around.

It's definitely something I've heard over and over again.

Just one other other thing is that in counseling Parishioners and whatnot. My wife and I taught a class on and Eternal rest, the art of dying well, and a lot of that is planning ahead the gift that you give to your family by. And now, what do you do with all your stuff? You want a funeral? What do you want? And part of it is buying your plot in advance and on terms of financing and marketing, you know, to encourage people.

It's going to be cheaper today than it's going to be in 10 years when you die. But also it doesn't put the burden on your kids say, what do I do with mom or dad? Now, that's big. Yeah, I think from that standpoint, also for us to know. Oh, there's that! There is that interest, and we can start preparing for it.

Yeah, I think that's great. And unfortunately, I think in the past cities just hasn't paid attention to them. So people have come to us and said, Oh, we wanna oh, there's no room. And that was the answer. And so people start going to Petaluma, or they go to San Francisco, or they go to Sonoma: You know that's unfortunate. If somebody wants to be here, especially the veterans, that were getting turned away like, Okay, that's that's uncalled for. So we we are quickly trying to figure out how to build that capacity, because you know, which people shouldn't have to. So that's not something currently available for people to pre purchase. We're working on figuring out how to get on the list so we know How much to purchase.

We're gonna pre purchasing some Columbariums, which are for the niches for cremations for veterans ain mountain now, so it'll probably be couple 100 new spots by middle next year, so you could get on a list now for that. But the other thing we want is interest. So if you could say like would be helpful to us to say, there's interest in. That way we know it's worth we should get going on that now, so we can have that ready for when people need it.

But right now we don't know, because nobody's telling us what the demand is, we have to guess.

Have you reached out to Cogir?. And some of these larger developments that are 55 plus communities ?

No, the vintage house is another good one.

There's a lot of retirees in this community. So I'm sure you have lots of people that could express interest if they knew it was available.

Yeah, it is an aging population. And so I think I think that's the thing is, I don't think people know that this is an option. So part of coming to you all is just to help get the word out. But then educate me a little bit about what the need might be, and also the best way for us to communicate. If we get a waiting list, or what that looks like one we can tailor it.

Let me just interject and say the reason this came to be, David's presence here. is because I was told there was no room when I inquired. And I literally went out to Petaluma and their Jewish cemetery.

I think I told you, and you said, Oh, oh hold on because we got some plans in the works. Don't go to Petaluma. And that's when we went up to the cemetery. So as Rabbi of my community I want people to know that have not yet made their final burial plans. You know I feel it's part of my responsibility to ask them. And for that reason of you know, you're going to relieve your children of the burden of Did they tell us what they wanted? You know, I know that our daughter feels very relieved that we're making those decisions right? So that's part of a kind of our pastoral care group here in our community. Inquiring, have you made your final arrangements? May you live a long life right? But you know let's recognize our own mortality.

In the meantime, it's actually with a representative from our board of directors who is meeting with Caroline. We're going to be supplying her with real numbers of interested people that are saying, Yes, when can I sign a check? We're ready to go.

So the idea was to get all the other churches to understand what the specific particular needs are for the various States. I think that would be helpful for us to to know. Okay.

We are hearing from within, you know what the specifics are. So that would be great. I just want to say, I I love your ideas about volunteer cleanup and about the historic tours, and those are all fabulous. So I can't wait to see what that materializes into. I had 2 ideas, one on the cleanup. We, as the Ministerial Association, might consider a church cleanup day in that cemetery.

Yeah, which I didn't know about. It's not that I could have attended this particular one.

And we could do dedicated days, more than just general community, but we haven't asked them. So dedicated like rotary events, or any so same thing. We can organize and have it curated, maybe. Have somebody come back. I don't know. We're open to anything we could supply, but support the dumpsters, the the crews, to make sure that we're there. I think whatever way we can engage the community we'll support.

That would be great, and I think.

like that idea a lot. Another idea on that is for cleanup. That requires some training where you don't want just the general community to come in and not know what they're doing. Um, that's where groups train us, and then set up groups.

Yeah. And I think, um, that's 1 thing about this. That's why I've separated historic from the the active cemeteries, the active cemeteries it's more of let's clean this up, you know. Rake the leaves up, take the trash out.

But for the historic cemetery. I'm holding back on that and not letting people up there yet because to your exact point, I want to have the Santa Rosa folks, they have people come in and train. You know? What do you touch, and what don't you touch? And What is restoration? And it's it's very specific. And a lot of that stuff is Old wood gravestones right? And you can really damage stuff if you do it the wrong way. And so we want to kind of use this winter time to figure out what that plan looks like, and maybe come up with a series of historic cemetery workshops and bringing some experts in and do those that are interested do some trainings. And then whoever wants to come out of that and be part of a group that's going to be.

Maybe ideally, my dream is to have a friends of the historic Sonoma Cemetery, and they kind of take it, and we empower them, and they run with it. We provide trainings and resources and just let that top half be Tours and events and restoration, and turn it into something to help fund the money that's raised there which can go back into it to help restore. And we're not paying on the general fund.

The parks, because that's a completely volunteer ramp at the Park. Um, it's a weird. It's like staying with them, but they're not responsible for maintaining it. They have an incredible volunteer base. And I would think that not to cannibalize their volunteers, but I would imagine there's a similar desire and like affinity for historic things. So you might find some people very interested from there, so I don't know if you have a contact there.

Yeah, I've actually worked with them now. They took over the roses in the plaza for me, which is awesome. So same kind of thing where we want to kind of take those.

That concept of basically empowering the community to say that you're you. This is a passion. You're an expert. Go for it. We'll help you support you. Same thing up there. I think.

And then, like I said, a volunteer group in the Santa Rosa Rural cemetery. They're incredible. And that's why we thought about having them come and talk about. What does it mean to volunteer at a cemetery like that? And how does that work. They even have an operations team and Production team. So like for events they had one team, and then, for, like just Maintenance they have another team. They've done that. They've gotten that subscription large, and they're very active. Yeah, you should come, speak at one of the meetings, because then you would be speaking.

And I should go there too, and just thank them, too, because they've done a lot for for us already. It would be great to engage them more.

Well, it's 1 o'clock. Sorry, and I want to make sure there are no other things. This was very, very informative.

Bye, Nicole, thanks.

So yeah, so anything's come up, or any other city questions you have feel free to call me. And we are doing the general plan. And we have a budget measure T, the general plan. We're talking things like this site here about potential rezoning to allow housing. So if there's anything you want to do with your properties? This is the time to have a conversation with us, because if you get in the general plan update, which only happens once every 10 years or so we can change the land, use and do the sequel for overall which gets you 90% of the way there, and you'll have to do it on your own. You're thinking about your properties and what you want to do. If it's the zoning or land, or whatever rules don't allow you to talk to us.

Sounds good.

Can you come up with a closing blessing? Sure we thank you for this day. We we do cherish it. We're thankful for life that you've given to us.

Thank you for sustaining us. And may we with the very breath that you supply us. May we maybe give you honor, and maybe love one another well with it.

Maybe enjoy the things you've given to us, and maybe take care of this beautiful place you've given to us as an all.

We love you guys. Thank you Jason Mayer of Sonoma, Collective