

**From:** [Terry Strombom](#)  
**Subject:** Ladera Minor Modification Application and June 7th Planning Commission Meeting  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 6, 2023 8:23:59 AM

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Hello,

We would like to begin by reiterating our gratitude for the opportunity to present our thoughts and recommendations on P21-00294; Ladera Minor Modification application to you. We very much appreciate the manner in which the county planning team and the Planning Commission have sought to understand our concerns.

That said, we wanted to express our regrets that while we were present at the Planning Commission meeting on May 3, 2023, we can't be there in person on June 7th. We do hope to share our thoughts by telephone during the meeting but in the unlikely event that communication systems fail, we wanted to confirm that our neighbors, Charlie and Kathy Oppenheimer, will represent our concerns just as our memo to the planning commissioners dated May 2, 2023 did.

We look forward to speaking with you soon and again thank you,

Terry and Bruce Strombom

**From:** [kathy oppenheimer](#)  
**To:** [Hedge, Emily](#); [Bordona, Brian](#); [Brunzell, Kara](#); [Whitmer, David](#); [Phillips, Heather](#); [andrewmazotti@gmail.com](#); [Dameron, Megan](#)  
**Subject:** Comments Regarding May 3rd Postponement of Ladera Session  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 6, 2023 1:13:38 PM

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Hello everyone. As our meeting in May was postponed at the last minute, I didn't have a chance to give my presentation to the Planning Commission Council. As one of 7 presenters that day, this is the presentation that I would have given. The fact that all other neighbors are travelling out of the country right now, my script for tomorrow is going to be very different.

So, I respectfully ask that you review my presentation on the water situation and give it consideration when making your decision. Also, in case you aren't familiar with the Wermuths and their Rancho de las Flores Winery, I attach it as background information. It's actually quite a fond trip down memory lane of the early Napa days! See you tomorrow! /kathy

## Declining Water Production Across Neighborhood

### 3939 Silverado Trail:

- 2014 – Well production at 31.5 GPM and static water level 62.2ft.
- 2022 – Well production at 20.6 GPM and static water level 126ft.

### 3950 Silverado Trail:

- 2014 – Reduced well productivity prompt owners to install 5,000G storage tank
- 2018 – Well production down to 4-5 GPM @ 150 ft depth
- 2018 – New well drilled @335 feet. ~50 GPM.
- 2021 – New well productivity down to under 20 GPM.

### 3940 Silverado Trail:

- 2021 – Well production falls to 1 GPM. Maintenance improves production to 2 GPM
- 2022 – Well production declines again to 1 GPM and recovery time lengthened. Water runs out before end of summer.

Hi. I'm Kathy Oppenheimer, wife of the first speaker and neighbor of the others.

I'd like to take the first moments of my time to thank you four Planning Commissioners for making time in your schedules to visit our properties adjacent to Ladera Winery. It is one thing to look at an expansion project on architectural drawings and another to see the real world impact a project like this would have on our neighborhood. While it is completely understandable that Ladera's owners want to upgrade their visitation experience, I respectfully ask that you consider the Ladera plans and the WDO ordinance and the proximity of the residents homes with regard to this expansion.

All of us here today are participants in the wine industry. Growers, wine makers, wine consumers. We are not anti-industry. We just ask that applicant work with this neighborhood group to upgrade their facility while maintaining the spirit of what Ralph

and Smitty Wermuth intended when they established their winery in the late 70s/early 80s.

**Now, allow me to offer a few comments about the water situation in the neighborhood.**

While 2023 has been a good year for water, it does not make up for the many prior years of extreme drought. Wells in the immediate vicinity of the applicant's property have seen year-over-year declines in production with some of the wells running dry between seasons. And while it is true that Ladera already has current rights to water usage for production and hospitality, the current actual situation is that there is no production today. However, with the greatly increased number of visitors the strain on the existing water supply will inevitably get worse.

Here are a few examples of our challenges.

At 3939 Silverado Trail, 2014 saw well production at over 31 gallons per minute and a static water level of 62 feet. By 2022, well production fell to about 20 gallons per minute.

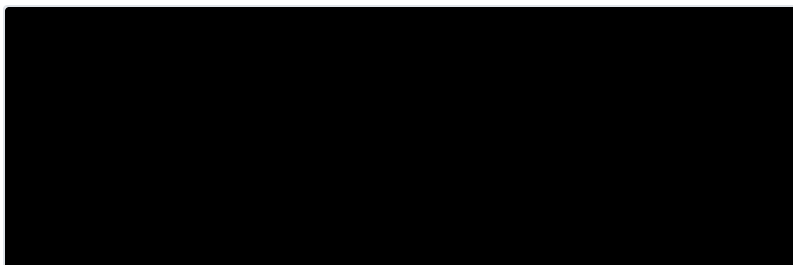
At 3950 Silverado Trail, we see a similar story. In 2014, reduced well production led the owners to install a five thousand gallon storage tank. But by 2018, those tanks started to run dry as production declined to 4-5 gallons per minute. And so later that year they drilled a new well at twice the depth of the old well. Initially, production was measured at approximately 50 gallons per minute but three years later, it was down to 40% of initial figures.

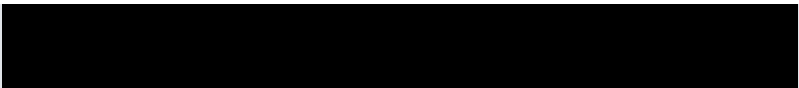
3940 Silverado Trail has had a particularly tough time. In 2021 well production fell to one gallon per minute. Maintenance helped but only raised production to 2 gallons per minute. And last year, production was again down to one gallon per minute and it actually ran dry by the end of the summer.

This brings us to a question: Because there's so little vineyard acreage at the Ladera property, the majority of the twenty thousand gallons of wine production will necessarily come from grapes brought in from the outside. In that case, why not also bring in the water?

Thank you for allowing me my 3 minutes.

[Wermuth Winery - The Napa Wine Project](#)





Wermuth Winery - The Napa Wine Project

**From:** [Charlie Oppenheimer](#)  
**To:** [Hedge, Emily](#); [Bordona, Brian](#); [Brunzell, Kara](#); [Whitmer, David](#); [Phillips, Heather](#); [andrewmazotti@gmail.com](#); [Dameron, Megan](#)  
**Subject:** Fw: Ladera Minor Modification Application: June 7th Planning Commission Meeting  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 6, 2023 3:05:05 PM

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From Neighbor James Treanor.

----- Forwarded Message -----

**From:** James Treanor <jjstreanor@gmail.com>  
**To:** Charlie Oppenheimer <charlieo@yahoo.com>; James <jjstreanor@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 6, 2023 at 01:51:45 PM PDT  
**Subject:** Ladera Minor Modification Application: June 7th Planning Commission Meeting

I am on a plane. Could you please forward to the commissioners..

Dear Commissioners, Applicant and County Officials,

It has been a pleasure to meet with the commissioners over the last few months, alongside neighborhood representatives Charlie & Kathy Oppenheimer and Laurie Shelton. We appreciate you finding time to visit the proposed development to get a first hand understanding of the physical impact of the proposed development by Ladera winery. Many of us were ready to share our concerns at the May 3rd meeting but due to health concerns of the applicant the rescheduled review has been arranged such that many of us cannot attend. I ask that you do not consider this to be a reflection of a change in the level of concern that we all share regarding the scope of this proposed expansion of the Ladera facility and operation.

I am disappointed with Ladera's approach to this application. Having attempted to engage with Pat and his team, which led to one face to face meeting, we framed many of the same concerns that our neighbors will represent to the committee at the June 7th meeting. The written response to our concerns, received a few days after the delayed May 3 meeting was dismissive at best. It was not a reasonable approach for Ladera to take. None of the neighbors are against Ladera having a facility in our small and compact community, but operational proximity is an issue.

The concerns that become apparent when one examines the proposed "minor" modification is that it is far from "minor". Ladera's proposed expansion will be impactful to the quality of life for the entire neighborhood from a visual (lighting), visitation (road safety), water usage and noise (exterior entertainment and winery operations) standpoint.

The steps that Ladera has taken to modify their proposal have been unnecessarily difficult to arrive at. Limitation of light and noise pollution would seem little to ask. Control of times of operation, number of visitors and water usage to minimize impact would likewise seem reasonable.

I do not believe that given Ladera's approach to date that they deserve to be allowed to expand their facility or operations beyond their "grandfathered" allowances. They should be required to engage with the neighbors before any expansion be approved.

Our neighbors will present a series of concrete proposals that we would expect Ladera to take seriously.

James Treanor and Alison Moore  
James Treanor  
jjstreanor@gmail.com

**From:** [Hank Miller](#)  
**To:** [Hedge, Emily](#); [Bordona, Brian](#); [Brunzell, Kara](#); [Whitmer, David](#); [Phillips, Heather](#); [andrewmazotti@gmail.com](mailto:andrewmazotti@gmail.com); [Dameron, Megan](#)  
**Cc:** [charlieo@yahoo.com](mailto:charlieo@yahoo.com)  
**Subject:** Ladera Project on Planning Commission Docket Wed 6/7/23  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 6, 2023 3:40:24 PM

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**[External Email - Use Caution]**

To Planning Commissioners,

I would like to voice my opposition to the current proposed Ladera Winery plan. The project will be located on approximately 2 acres and will have by far the largest building footprint and planned usage of any property in the neighborhood. We as neighbors are all fulltime residents and this project will change the entire character of the neighborhood while severely increasing noise and traffic. Here are some of the issues and changes that we as neighbors would be forced to deal with.

1. If a usage permit for 20,000 guests annually is allowed, we will see:
  - a. Major increase in traffic – a left hand turn lane will not deal with this issue. In the past 3 years, there have been 5 documented accidents from the blind curve, north of the Ladera project on Silverado Trail. This has caused wall, tree, and vineyard damage to 3 different properties. Since it is a blind corner, a left hand turn lane will potentially make things worse, since people speed around the corner and will be surprised by cars sitting in the middle of the street. The egress and ingress from all driveways are not sufficient to handle additional traffic. In fact, there was a fatal accident here approximately 10 years ago because of that reason.
  - b. The noise level from having any outdoor activity will have a huge impact on the entire neighborhood.
  - c. Many of the wells in the area are already beyond capacity servicing the current demand.

As solutions to these issues, I would like to respectfully submit and request:

1. Do not increase the visitor capacity from its current level. This will go a long way to solving the noise, traffic, and water issues.
2. All activity of the winery must be kept in the cave without exception.
3. There must be sound remediation added to this project that keeps the current levels of noise and neighborhood characteristics the same or less.

Sincerely,  
Hank Miller  
3906 Silverado Trail  
Calistoga CA 94549  
925 997 2088

**From:** [kathy oppenheimer](#)  
**To:** [Hedge, Emily](#); [Bordona, Brian](#); [Brunzell, Kara](#); [Whitmer, David](#); [Phillips, Heather](#); [andrewmazotti@gmail.com](#); [Dameron, Megan](#)  
**Cc:** [Charlie Oppenheimer](#); [Laurie Shelton](#)  
**Subject:** 3959 Silverado Trail Resident Presentation - 6/7/23 Planning Commission Meeting  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 6, 2023 4:11:06 PM

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Hello again. Laurie Shelton was in attendance for the cancelled Planning Commission meeting on May 3rd. Unfortunately, she is unable to join us today, as she is traveling internationally on a long planned trip through June 14th, and is disappointed not to be able to deliver the following speech in person or via Zoom, as internet access is limited. Laurie texted me and asked me to forward to you what she had planned to say at the May 3rd meeting and would deliver in on person tomorrow if it was possible. Her words follow below. Thank you for your time.

####

Hello,

First, I agree with my neighbors on all issues.

My name is Laurie Shelton and I have lived at 3959 Silverado Trail for over 24 years. My late husband Tom Shelton was active in all aspects of the Napa Valley Wine Industry. I understand the importance of Wine to the Napa Valley. I also make wine from my vineyard and am an artist with an art gallery and wine tasting room downtown Calistoga.

Wermuth Winery/ Rancho de las Flores was known for being the smallest winery in the NV with one acre of grapes on a 7 acre property. Smitty and Ralph were quiet, intelligent people who loved the land and wanted to farm, make and sell their own wine. Over the years, you would hardly notice a visitor to their property. Ralph was usually in his vineyard pruning his own vines and would greet a visitor and pour them a taste of wine. The employees were Ralph and Smitty. They lived where they made their wine.

I love my home and my neighbors moved here with the same passion, to honor and care for the Napa Valley. My little vineyard has become Certified Napa Green. This means we don't use pesticides, we farm with the least amount of water possible and we work to create a healthy habitat for all. Napa Wildlife Rescue just confirmed again that we have owls sitting on their nest. I saw an eagle the other day! If the Napa Valley wants to be Green we need to manage our land carefully. Wermuth made the amount of wine from the grapes they grew. They didn't purchase grapes and make wine. This means they didn't use more (water, power, road, sound, lighting) than was needed for their small vineyard.

In the last 20 plus years, a few things have changed:

- Our original wells are weak or dry and if we have new wells they are deep and have boron.
- The traffic has grown ever more dangerous, especially in the mornings and afternoons, it is hard to get out of the driveway.
- The major expansion of Ladera will only put many more vehicles in the area.  
In the years that I have been here, more than a dozen vehicles have come off the road barreling into our properties. They have repeatedly taken out my, and my neighbor Mr. Johnson's, olive and magnolia trees.
- In a five year span of time, the Strombom's property (which is directly across the street from Ladera) has had cars drive off the road and crash through their surrounding rock wall 3 times. Serious injuries have occurred.

All of this occurring before the proposed turn lane - a lane which will cause cars to line up and possibly be targets for the drivers already failing to negotiate the sweeping curves in the road. Please don't expand on this project. The Wermuth's never came close to ever using the limits of their license and now Ladera wants to expand upon it. Our environment cannot handle this requested growth. Please do not approve more visitors to this tiny property.

Thank you for your consideration.

Laurie Shelton & George Schliser  
Full-time Residents of 3959 Silverado Trail, Calistoga  
CAMii Vineyards + Art - 1333B Lincoln Avenue, Calistoga