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Mr. Jim Carlton, Wall Street Journal (via email: Jim.Carlton@wsj.com)

SUBJECT: Your Yountville Story of March 27, 2026

Dear Mr. Carlton,

I was very pleased to note your byline on your recent story on Yountville; on October 7, 2010, you wrote an excellent piece on our efforts in Yountville for FOYAL (Friends of Yountville Ag Lands), which was very much appreciated by our group.

However, on this story – and with all due respect – you really missed the mark.

Unfortunately, your story on the Yountville Commons (YVC) project focused on the WHAT of the matter – affordable/workforce housing – enhanced by the opinions, angst and agitprop of YIMBY. This is a nationwide ([80+ chapters](#)), noisy and very well-funded organization; few if any of its members live here but clamor for more affordable housing here, regardless of the facts.

(As an aside, I wonder if the communities where the WSJ's multi-million dollar, Friday-featured "Mansion" properties are located are experiencing such YIMBY issues. Indeed, other communities are much more affluent than Yountville, which has a [median household income – MHI – of \\$80,342](#). Contrast this with communities like Nantucket [[MHI: \\$148,017](#)], Atherton [[MHI: \\$250,001](#)], or Indian Creek Village in Miami [known as "Billionaire Bunker," where Mark Zuckerberg's \$170 million home purchase was featured in "Mansion" on March 6]. By comparison, the median household income of Yountville's 'wealthy' is small potatoes.)

While I do not dispute the facts in your story, they are very selective. They focus on successful businesspersons like Thomas Keller, an easy target because of the worldwide acclaim of The French Laundry – or on Gary Jabara's Estate Yountville, where Locals' Night, for example, charges \$10 for a glass of wine (not \$85, although that is available, as are frequent free tastings by local wineries). It is also noteworthy that Mr. Jabara took the time and energy on his own to survey 172 of his workers ([see item 4. A. "Public Comment" of the February 17 meeting](#)); this is in contrast to the town, which DID NOT ask many workers their preferences. This obvious lack of quantitative research – to ask the actual workers what they need and want in their housing! – has caused a huge outcry from residents. Furthermore, a particular omission in your story regards Phase I of the YVC project: its 40 units, mostly studios, are estimated to cost \$40 million – which is \$1 million per unit! (Think of how much affordable housing that should buy!)

In any case, the issue of the Yountville situation is not the WHAT of affordable/workforce housing, but rather its HOW, WHERE, WHEN, HOW MUCH and WHY. Despite the numerous media stories with click-bait headlines castigating Thomas Keller (not yours!), he is not against

affordable housing, just the way it has been proposed so far, as you correctly end your story. With this dichotomy in mind – an emphasis on WHAT, with a lack of consideration for other key facts – I would kindly ask that you read my March 2 letter to the Yountville Town Council (also online in the *Yountville Sun*, and Nextdoor); this is attached. My comments address other facts beyond the WHAT of this matter – and it is these more nuanced issues of the HOW, WHERE, WHEN, HOW MUCH and WHY that the community's concerns lie. In fact, it is in these matters, mostly unaddressed by the media and YIMBY, where the actual YVC story resides.

Two other comments: I believe Town Manager Brad Ralston, whom I don't know, is disingenuous when he says of taxpayers who oppose the YVC project, "It's hard for me to understand their concerns." Since the price tag of \$91 million on the project was first made public on February 17, there have been non-stop expressions of alarm by Yountville taxpayers (both residents and businesses) – and overflow attendance at Town Council meetings on this matter. For Mr. Ralston to pretend otherwise is willful ignorance.

Likewise, I was rather shocked to read Robin McKee's comments about "a fear of riffraff." Like many others here, I have been very involved since the February 17 Town Council meeting, when the project's plans and costs first came out. However, I have never once heard this as a concern. Rather, we residents are fully cognizant that Yountville is a popular Wine Country destination that relies heavily on hospitality; tourism; and the appeal, proximity, and beauty of the bucolic vineyards. Furthermore, we know that its workers – in hotels, restaurants, retail, and agriculture, plus the Veterans Home – are an integral part of the backbone of the town; their services and efforts are valued, not looked down upon. Regarding Ms. McKee's comments in your story, I truly hope she was misquoted.

In closing, my aforementioned letter with other facts is attached to this email. Given your initial interest in this story and an emphasis on the WHAT (YIMBY/NIMBY) aspects of the matter, I would ask you to consider a follow-on piece that addresses the HOW, WHERE, WHEN, HOW MUCH and WHY of the Yountville Commons project. This would give your and WSJ's readers a much truer picture of the actual situation, which is far more nuanced than the story portrayed.

Thank you in advance for reading my letter and your further consideration.

Best regards,



Jill M. Turner