

TO: [publiccomment@yville.com](mailto:publiccomment@yville.com)

FROM: Jill Turner (jillturnerpr@gmail.com)

DATE: June 16, 2026

**SUBJECT: YOUNTVILLE COMMONS OBSERVATIONS FOR THE TOWN COUNCIL ET AL**

Hello – My name is Jill Turner. My husband Steve and I have owned a home in YV since 1998.

I'm new to the Yountville Commons project and only got involved on February 17. Now after four months of attending Town Council meetings, I would like to make several observations.

**1) First, I am puzzled to hear Town Council members say that there was never any intention to proceed quickly to approve the Yountville Commons project.** But that is not true. After hearing this often in Town Council meetings, I went back to listen to the February 17 video to see if maybe I got it wrong. I did not. Here is what the former Town Manager said – and when. These are quotes:

**1:56 into the video:** "...We present a business plan to the Council, which is where they vote on moving forward with funding, and I think we are kind of coming into that right now. This is the listening session. We anticipate March, April, May, which we'll see in the next steps. You need to make a decision; otherwise we go back to the drawing board..."

**2:19 into the video:** "...We determine March 17 is the next meeting...I think it says April, May in terms of like a decision point...."

**2:20 into the video:** "... Then on March 17, if we are given direction, we'll bring back a specific business plan, which becomes the decision point, whether that be in April, May or beyond..."

**2:21 into the video:** "...We expect clear direction on March 17..." (End Quotes)

I encourage you to go back and listen yourself. Now, you may say the former Town Manager misspoke, didn't represent the Town Council accurately, you've changed your mind since then, or whatever – BUT those comments are WHY people continue to say that the Town Council's next step was to proceed imminently with the project.

**2) Second, a Town Council member recently said what the project needed was more "educational sessions."** I disagree and I am sure many others do, too. It is not that we do not understand the project – rather, we disagree strongly with the approach. While I personally agree with the WHAT (workforce/affordable housing) and the WHO (YV workers), I do not agree with the HOW, WHERE, WHEN, and HOW MUCH that was proposed.

Now you may say that's old news because all those proposals are now moot as of the last Town Council meeting. That's true and that's great. But if future recommendations are similar to those of the past, I think the community reaction will be the same.

**3) Third, I think community input is being given short-shrift.** Before the last election, I went to hear those of you who were candidates. Some comments really resonated with me – particularly, commitments to “listen more to the community.” That is why I voted for some of you – and probably MOST of you. But that is not what I heard recently, where a community member made an excellent suggestion to have a citizens’ committee panel for the selection of the new Town Manager. This suggestion was roundly dismissed – with the comment that the Town Council IS that committee and it is YOU who were elected.

That is true, but I think a reminder of your public service role is appropriate. As stated in the “Yountville Town Council Member Handbook,” “The Town was incorporated to ensure a high level of service and accountability to residents and businesses...” (page 8), and “...the Council is responsible to its constituents...” (page 21).

**In my opinion, we want the Town Council to make decisions WITH us – not make decisions FOR us.**

Furthermore – going forward – we are very fortunate that YV has many smart people with diverse skill sets. Many of us are willing to contribute our time and professional expertise in areas that the Town Council does not have, to my knowledge – like recruiting, business planning, market research, property management, real estate development, et al. Now there's no reason that Town Council members should have all those skills. But other people in town DO – so why not take advantage of that expertise before spending many more of our taxpayer dollars on the project? It is short-sighted not to. And this would deliver the community engagement that many residents crave, enable the Town Council to make wiser decisions, and produce better results for the town – which is what we ALL want.

**4) Finally, I think the disparaging comments from some Council members and the public are damaging and unhelpful.** We often hear concerns about a lack of trust within the community. Yet trust is NOT built when people who disagree are characterized as holding “secret meetings,” belonging to a “cult,” being “mean girls,” or being told to “leave previous bad behavior behind.”

I don't think you can say how much we all love the town and want the same good things, then in the next sentence make statements that are inflammatory and divisive. I would encourage everyone – the Town Council and residents alike – to avoid polarizing language, to consider differing viewpoints, and most importantly – **to listen more and talk less.**

With that, I will stop talking myself and thank you, hopefully, for listening.

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