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1. First and Last Name

Nona Chiariello

2. Email address (will not be publicly displayed)

[REDACTED]

3. Organization (Enter name of organization, business, or non profit if you are submitting comments on their behalf.)

Open Space Committee

4. Street address (will not be publicly displayed)

[REDACTED]

5. City

Portola Valley

6. State

CA

7. Zip Code

94028

8. Date of Meeting you are submitting comment for.

10/22/2025

9. Agenda Item number or name

5a Conference with Real Property Negotiators

10. Comment

Please see uploaded comment.

11. Optional: You can upload a copy of your comments.

[Chiariello letter to Council 22Oct2025.pdf](#)

To: Judith Hasko, Mayor
Craig Taylor, Vice Mayor
Rebecca Flynn, Council Member
Mary Hufty, Council Member
Helen Wolter, Council Member

October 22, 2025

Your negotiations tonight on the Fogarty parcel (APN 080-010-020) are rooted in discussions that began in the Open Space Committee in 2022 when Dorothy Ford Park was added to the Housing Element. As a member of the Open Space Committee, the Ad Hoc Site Evaluation Committee, and its subcommittee that evaluated Fogarty, I am writing to briefly share my perspective on the groundwork by those committees and to express my thanks for how you and the Staff have built on it. Tonight's negotiations hold great promise.

In a meeting on July 7, 2022 the Open Space Committee drafted a statement¹ to the Town Council unanimously and strongly opposing building housing on our open spaces. During that meeting and another on August 25, we also began brainstorming about how it might be avoided. Committee members and fourteen residents expressed their concerns and ideas about how to save Ford Park. Some suggestions were practical—e.g., write letters to the Town Council—and others, less so. A community member warned that two majestic Valley Oaks would inevitably be cut, and offered a cathartic approach, “tie people to the trees.” There was also a crazy but intriguing idea to use the Open Space Fund to buy Ford Park again in order to protect it and provide revenue that could be used by the Town to buy an alternative site.

Praise for the sunrise provision; fears that rejection of the Housing Element by HCD might lead to a “builders remedy”; questions about impacts to the adjoining baseball field; and many other perspectives were voiced by residents. There was hope that the landscape might change. Members noted that in the ensuing few years some uncertainties would get settled, such as fire risk maps, and there could be changes in laws, efforts by citizens to purchase land specifically for affordable housing, or significant increases in ADUs. During 2024 the committee also looked in detail at whether Dorothy Ford Park could realistically accommodate the layout of 50 units assigned to it. We concluded it could not, but we didn't know if that was enough to change the Housing Element.

One of the Open Space Committee's crazy ideas metamorphosed into a much better version when the Ad Hoc Site Evaluation Committee added the Fogarty parcel to the long list of sites to investigate as alternatives to Ford Park. It all happened extremely fast because of the Ad Hoc Committee's constrained timeline. Mary Hufty made the initial contact with Tommy Fogarty on November 24 of last year. On January 2, Mary, Terrence Grindall and I met with three of the Fogarty siblings and discussed how the Fogarty parcel might help meet the Town's need for affordable housing. On January 23, Mary, Ronny Krashinsky and I toured the Fogarty parcel with Pat Fogarty and viewed much of the five acres that satisfy all six of the housing element's site filters.

¹ “The Portola Valley Open Space Acquisition Advisory Committee (PVOSAAC) unanimously and strongly opposes building any housing on our open spaces (including at Dorothy Ford Park and Open Space). Open Space is a fundamental value and characteristic of Portola Valley. We have received tax revenues, financial donations, and gifts of properties for open space in good faith. If we violate that trust, we could irrevocably compromise our ability to receive or acquire open space in the future.

We recognize the need and mandate for affordable housing. We appreciate the efforts of the Ad Hoc Housing Element Committee, Staff, Planning, and Consultants. However, we respectfully encourage the Town Council to provide additional time to explore alternative options to achieve our affordable housing needs.”

The property has stunning value as open space, adjacency to MROSD land, and the potential to help fill a gap in the Bay Ridge Trail. The site filter analysis had indicated that a portion could be suitable for housing, though it was fundamentally different from every other parcel the Ad Hoc Committee was considering. Ultimately the Ad Hoc Committee had mixed opinions about the Fogarty parcel's potential for housing, but no site was perfect, and Fogarty made it into the final recommendations. The remoteness from schools and shopping, and the lack of sewer would likely limit options to a small number of housing units, possibly designed with a different type of living arrangement.

On January 16, a week before Mary, Ronny and I toured the property, the Open Space Committee had its first discussion of the Fogarty parcel. I posed the question, "Can one imagine acquiring it for open space purposes while at the same time dedicating part of it to affordable housing?" The response was joyful, describing Fogarty both as a gap filler in the Bay Ridge Trail and as an alternative site to Dorothy Ford Park. To be clear, it's only a partial solution for those needs, but it would be a start. The reactions included:

When you said ... we might be able to contribute to connecting the ridge trail in this area, my antenna went up, and said, oh my God, I think that's brilliant.... I'm up there a lot and I know exactly what that concept would represent here....This could be a better version of what some of us desperate thinkers were thinking about Dorothy Ford.

It would be phenomenal because we can actually help with funding alongside some of the development partners ...and other grant money. The Bay Area Ridge Trail comes to an abrupt halt there at the end of Lost Trail...and a shared dream is to create a connection.

Gary Nielsen's initial reaction summed it up and was echoed in the meeting three times:

There's no such thing as a crazy idea... This is not crazy.

In my view, the Open Space Committee members believe that acquiring APN 080-010-020 is a use of the Open Space Fund tailored to the present-day open space needs of the Town. It combines the acquisition and **protection of new open space for public benefit** adjacent to Windy Hill Open Space Preserve, with the added possibility of extending a significant regional trail, together with acquisition of land to allow the **protection of existing open space for continued public benefit** via an exchange of development opportunities. Had it not been for the work of the Ad Hoc Site Evaluation Committee, the Fogarty property would not have been on the Open Space Committee's radar as a possible new acquisition.

The sentiments of the Open Space Committee on January 16 were reaffirmed when the Committee met again on March 6 and unanimously approved a motion² recommending that the Council take the next steps in the possible acquisition of parcel 080-010-020.

You have our deep thanks and high hopes for tonight's negotiations.

Respectfully,
Nona Chiariello
163 Brookside Drive, Portola Valley

² The motion proposed that we "recommend to the Town Council to take the next steps in the possible acquisition of parcel 080010020 in the ownership of Fogarty Winery for the purposes of open space and the potential of exchange of development opportunities onto this property to preserve the Dorothy Ford Park parcel seven acres as permanent open space in an effort to obviate the development opportunity that is currently within the housing element."