

To the Sudden Valley Community:

First, I am not going to deny that I am deeply disappointed and saddened by the outcome of the recent vote on the proposal – set forth by the Board – to revitalize Sudden Valley’s aging and poorly maintained amenities. I know, too, that this disappointment is strongly felt by many smart and talented people who devoted a lot of time and energy to putting together the best plan possible for everyone in the Valley. I still believe that it is the best way forward, and I regret that the rationale for adopting such a comprehensive approach may not have been communicated as effectively as it might have been.

I also regret that, due to our desire to remain strictly focused for the sake of this project on the revitalization of capital assets, areas of evident community concern, such as parks and trails, which are classified as "operational" issues, seemed to have been excluded from consideration. In fact, this was not and is not the case. Recommendations formulated over several months, for example, were recently elevated to consideration by the Board, and a new parks and trails committee has been approved. Further, other Board members and myself have financially supported the very effective Firewise campaign in the hillier Gates conducted by involved members of the community. The Board has applauded and supported that work, as well as other volunteer efforts, such as the new community garden near the Adult Center. Volunteers for Association and community-based projects are always appreciated.

Given the number of issues facing Sudden Valley, the Revitalization plan was developed in such a way as to enjoy the greatest chance of securing outside financing on the most favorable terms, to be as affordable to members as possible in any single year, and to ensure the whole Association remains financially viable over the long term. Nonetheless, the debate over the proposal was marked, as many people have noted, by a great deal of acrimony, which at times degenerated into abuse, intimidation, and character assassination. Soon after the balloting, attempts were made to gloss over this acrimony by calling it “free speech,” the argument apparently being that if rules of civility stand in the way of a desired result, their being pushed aside is excusable. In this case, it was argued that the name-calling and vulgarity was forgivable or even justified so as to call attention to the allegation that decisions were being made by a very small group of people seeking to impose their will on everyone. Surely we can do better than that. It is time for us to stop being our own worst enemies.

While I acknowledge that better ways need to be found to communicate with homeowners, the Association’s business is always conducted in the open. Community members are always welcome to attend Board and all committee meetings. Because not everyone can come to Board meetings, recordings of them are posted on the Association website. Budgets and budget proposals, financial statements, studies commissioned by the Association, and many other similarly informative documents are posted online. Anyone who wishes to review them may do so. If they have difficulty finding these documents, Board and staff members are entirely willing to provide assistance. All one has to do is ask.

Since the revitalization vote, I have been encouraged by the resilience of those who worked so hard to put the plan together. Though disappointed, they are not dispirited. They remain committed to our community. I am encouraged as well by the fact that so many members of the Association, whether they supported, or had strong reservations about, the recent proposal, have expressed the desire to move ahead.

Clearly, in fact, we must continue moving forward. Given the dire condition of the majority of our facilities, our parks and trails, our roads, we need to continue to address Revitalization. We need to

determine which elements of that need to be implemented immediately and in the most cost-effective manner. We need to go forward as well in the permitting process in order to ensure that options for redevelopment remain legally viable. There is a lot to be done.

We cannot wait to address many of the items requiring attention, and I want to assure everyone that we will use all of the resources at our disposal to keep Sudden Valley moving in the right direction. We have a loyal, extremely hard-working and effective staff, and a community that is as concerned and informed about the issues as at any time in its history. Let's all come together to make the best of this time of opportunity.

Larry Brown,  
2017 Board President.