

From: [Tony N.](#)
To: [City Council](#)
Cc: [cityclerk](#); [citymanager](#)
Subject: Item 7.b - Watsonville City Council meeting - Aug. 27, 2024
Date: Tuesday, August 27, 2024 12:15:44 AM

Hello Watsonville City Council,

Five years ago, our city engaged in a comprehensive community-wide visioning process for all its parks, including the Watsonville City Plaza. [The outcome was clear](#): the community strongly supported making slight, thoughtful changes to the Plaza, with a focus on renovating and reinforcing the historic gazebo so it could remain the focal point of this iconic gathering place. This conclusion was not reached lightly; it reflects a conversation we've had as a community multiple times, with the same consensus each time.

Given this, I am baffled as to why the potential elimination of the gazebo is once again before the Council. Why does this issue continue to resurface? The community's stance has been consistent, and I struggle to understand how inflationary pressures could justify a departure from what the people of Watsonville have repeatedly expressed they want.

Many of you, like myself, are lifelong residents of Watsonville. You understand that our city does not have an abundance of locations and landmarks that have withstood the test of time and continue to resonate across generations. The Plaza and its gazebo are the heart of Watsonville, defining our city for decades. Yet, for reasons I cannot comprehend, the leadership in our parks department seems determined to push forward with plans that would erase this cherished piece of our history and culture. We should be embracing and preserving the elements that define us, not demolishing them in pursuit of fleeting trends. We are Watsonville, not Aptos, not Santa Cruz, not Capitola. I believe we have the creative talent and innovative minds within our community to bring the gazebo into the 21st century in a way that honors our heritage.

Perhaps there is a belief that demolishing the gazebo and installing a new, cookie-cutter performance stage might stimulate economic activity in our downtown. However, this approach would be akin to performing plastic surgery on a corpse: it may look appealing on the surface, but the life, energy, and soul of the place would be gone.

Before you consider removing essential parts of our city's history, identity, and spirit in hopes of sparking an economic revival, I urge you to take a closer look at the neglected historic buildings just steps away from the Plaza. The Mansion House, among others, is in a state of disrepair, and the owners should be compelled to sell for the betterment of the community.

There are numerous case studies where public entities have successfully revitalized downtown areas by reinvesting in their communities, purchasing old buildings, and offering creative, young entrepreneurs the opportunity to make their mark. Some cities have even [provided tenants with two years of free rent](#)—essentially a short-term loan without exchanging funds—on the condition that they make necessary physical improvements. As Alvarado Street Brewery in Old Monterey demonstrated, sometimes all it takes is one successful business to transform a neighborhood.

Please, leave the Plaza as it is. Invest in our community by emphasizing and preserving its strengths and culture—don't destroy them.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Tony

From: [City Council](#)
To: [Eduardo Montesino](#); [Vanessa Quiroz](#); [Maria Orozco](#); [Kristal Salcido](#); [Casey Clark](#); [Jimmy Dutra](#); [Ari Parker](#); [cityclerk](#)
Subject: FW: OK, , MY TURN as to what to do with the gazebo and the cannons
Date: Tuesday, August 27, 2024 7:28:08 PM

From: steve trujillo <cruztbone@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 27, 2024 7:27:54 PM (UTC-08:00) Pacific Time (US & Canada)
To: Nick Calubaquib <nick.calubaquib@watsonville.gov>; Mayor <mayor@watsonville.gov>; City Council <citycouncil@watsonville.gov>; citymanager <citymanager@watsonville.gov>
Subject: OK, , MY TURN as to what to do with the gazebo and the cannons

1. we need to write a grant and get the \$500,000 to go with option 3. the roof of the gazebo appears to be rotten. the roof is not needed as it is probably dangerous. and not using the basement is basically signing off on potentially usable space. not a wise move. we have OUTSTANDING grant writers at Cabrillo college. call Matt Wetstein, our campus president. he may have some ideas as to who and how to hire one. guess what? the price of their salary and benefits will be made up from the money they can raise in grant writing. i know. i wrote a number of grants as a school teacher. and they were funded.

2. KEEP THE CANNONS. if it keeps us on the historical registry, then we need them for grant writing, and ALSO they are a tourist attraction. they really are a part of what warfare used in centuries past, but having them in the plaza is NOT an indication that we are warlike. we are not. unless you support trump.

3. by the way, thanks for calling on me first and allowing me to get my Harris-Walz T shirt on camera.

4. Nick, you and Mr. Berry did a great job with the presentation. the timeline of events from the plaza's past was excellent. please put it on the city website.

5. yes, a stage would be nice, but if we have level lawn or dirt that will accept risers without risk of tipping over, then we can do without it for now. the gazebo and the cannons are frankly, more important.

great meeting. so glad i attended. thanks to all of you.

Cabrillo trustee Steve Trujillo