

## EDITORIAL

# Advice to town: What failed before just might fly today

■ Another option for the town to consider is teaming up with the Taos Land Trust. That conservation-driven organization has made great strides in protecting open space in and around town.

**T**aos town councilors voted this week to deny an appeal filed on behalf of a trio of acequia associations who were seeking to prevent the construction of a 28-unit subdivision on prime agricultural land.

While many still worry that Valverde Commons could irreparably harm one of the town's two remaining green belts, town officials believe they've come up with a solution that

benefits everyone.

Only time will tell whether this land will be adversely impacted by development.

Our question is this: Why let time dictate the future health of one of our most precious resources?

Subdivision opponents rallied behind the fact that for 400 years, the land in question has been free from development. The reason: No one has wanted to disrupt the flow of water to those living downstream.

But changing times bring changing philosophies and land management practices.

True, the land is not owned by the town of Taos. As such, development cannot be prevented. The best we can hope for are thoughtful developers who leave tiny footprints in their wake.

That is, unless, the town takes a more proactive approach to protecting agricultural land.

Lovato Acequia Mayordomo Alfred Peralta hit the nail on the head this week when he suggested that the town purchase such property in order to preserve it as open, agricultural land.

Mayor Bobby Durán quickly shot that idea down with his, "We've tried that before. It didn't work" quip.

That was years ago. We suggest it's time to try again.

Environmental consciousness has risen and continues to rise with each passing day. It makes sense that if residents are willing to shell out millions of dollars to construct a new judicial complex, they'd also be willing to shoulder a fraction of that cost to preserve arguably the most important element of our tri-cultural history for current and future generations.

Another option for the town to consider is teaming up with the Taos Land Trust. That conservation-driven organization has made great strides in protecting open space in and around town.

Surely the mayor's dismissive comment should not be heeded.

We'll say it again: Changing times bring changing philosophies and land management practices. Nowhere is that more evident than in these days of disappearing open space and agricultural opportunities.

It's time to change the way we think about preservation. It's time to actually preserve whatever we can.