

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE

Land Use, Transportation, Water, Agricultural Land Use: September 2, 2015, 9 to 12

Present: Susan Stompe chair; Priscilla Bull, Nona Dennis, Don Dickenson, Randy Greenberg, Jana Haehl, Pat Nelson, Kate Powers, Judy Teichman, Ann Thomas, Doug Wilson. Guests: Lori Schifrin.

August 5, 2015 Meeting Notes. OK as submitted.

Announcements. 1) Escrow closed August 28 on the Madera Bay Park property in Corte Madera and a celebration of the acquisition will be held on the site September 27. 2) The North Bay Watershed Assn board meeting on September 11 includes two agenda items of interest: Hamilton Field levee accreditation, and implementing a sustainable groundwater act in Sonoma County. 3) A Healthy Creeks workshop is planned for September 12 at Miller Creek.

Revised Letter/Civic Center Drive Area. This draft letter was circulated with the agenda for this meeting and was reviewed. It was M/S (Nona/Randy) and approved to mail to the BoS.

Pacheco Valley Mowing Letter. Susan had drafted a letter to the editor in support of open space policies regarding the meadow at Pacheco Valle, and it was reviewed by persons present. It was M/S (Ann/Priscilla) and approved to send the proposed letter including revisions suggested at this meeting, which complies with existing MCL open space policies, to the IJ opinion page, and copied to the Board of Supervisors.

Water Issues. 1) MMWD has not made further progress on the Wildfire Protection and Habitat Improvement Plan and EIR (vegetation management) since their July decision to drop consideration of herbicides from the management plan. 2) Both of the county's major water districts are in full compliance with state orders to reduce water usage, exceeding 20% cutbacks. 3) College of Marin is working on a major facilities master planning process and appears open to considering wetland restoration of parking lot 13, and incorporating fish-friendly features along the channel through the campus. Friends of Corte Madera Creek is pursuing these possibilities.

Pt Reyes National Seashore Ranch Management Plans. Judy reported that Melanie Gunn, the director of outreach for the seashore, is meeting with ranchers to help develop alternatives for the environmental assessment that the National Park Service will have to do. Also, MCL's August 28 quarterly agricultural land use meeting in Pt Reyes included excellent presentations.

Judy suggested that planning for 20-year leases is an opportunity to include activities with an environmental benefit. In particular she suggested MCL ask the Park Service to develop a way to support carbon sequestration projects on the ranches, even something on a pilot basis. Others noted that the soil sequestration is only one component in a broad and complex climate balancing system; how best to integrate this into planning probably needs more discussion. Judy will investigate further as the ranch planning process will extend well into 2016.

Local Coastal Plan. Judy and Nona attended the BoS meeting August 25 when the Board approved staff-prepared recommendations on agricultural policies for the coastal zone. Media reports on the meeting did not make entirely clear what was approved, particularly with regard to housing guidelines, so Land Use members need to see the report going to the Coastal Commission. Judy will draft a letter to send to the CC, for review at the October Land Use meeting followed by action at the October MCL board meeting.

Whistlestop Redevelopment. The application for the senior housing and services facility at this site was submitted to the City and is being reviewed by city and county agencies. An EIR will be required so L.U. members itemized a general list of issues (not intended to be complete) that a scoping letter should raise. These include: 1) traffic and parking, including parking for service providers and guests coming to attend or visit the senior residents, and traffic they will generate. 2) Height and bulk, and the zero setback on Third Avenue for a five-story building. 3) Air quality, e.g. from idling cars, exhaust from public transit, proximity of units to 101 traffic, toxins generated by train use. 4) Impact from reduced ease of public accessibility to senior services. 5) Safety, including pedestrian safety, relative to tracks and transit. Include studies on signalization, noting need for ADA signalization in the area. 6) Noise impacts.

Community Marin Action Committee. Kate asked if there could be updates on this group's activities as part of the regular board meeting reports on MCL committees. Rick F is chair and in his absence today Susan briefly reported.

Novato General Plan. The City has prepared its 10th white paper, on the downtown specific plan, but the draft general plan is still expected to take another six months.

Novato Sports Complex. The applicants are expected to ask for a general plan amendment to allow commercial use on the property. In the meantime they are meeting with community members to encourage support for the project.

Grady Ranch. Nothing new. The site is currently zoned for 32 units, but this could be expanded to as many as 240 units depending on the number of units that would be affordable.

Bio Marin/Expansion/San Rafael Corporate Center. MCL sent a letter to the Planning Commission requesting additional review beyond the negative declaration that the San Rafael Planning staff had recommended. The Commission's approval included comments suggesting the Council further examine several issues, including: 1) pedestrian crossing safety, 2) bicycle parking, 3) how the soil would be managed where the toxics cap is penetrated. It was M/S (Jana/Judy) and approved to send a letter to the Council, revised from what went to the Planning Commission, asking that unresolved issues be addressed, including 1) monthly reports to the public on soil contaminants, 2) visual impacts, 3) how to include restoration of the city's creek, adjacent to the property, 4) sea level rise (not addressed in original EIR).

Agricultural Land Use Committee, meeting, 11:15 to Noon. Present for this segment: Priscilla Bull, Nona Dennis, Kate Powers, Susan Stompe, Judy Teichman, Ann Thomas.

MCL Ag Policy Committee. Sally G is working on this and will do an introductory section.

PRNS Ranch Management Plan. Judy suggested a letter to NPS itemizing some subject areas for analysis, possibly drafted by a group representing MCL's several issue committees. She would like the planning to cover the environmental benefits of carbon farming, for which cap and trade funding might possibly be available at some time. Nona pointed out that there is a large range of activities that will need to be analyzed in preparation for the plan. As the management planning is extending into next year, further discussion of this topic was deferred.

Notes: AT

Draft