

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE
Land Use and Transportation Committee Meeting Notes: December 5, 2012

Present: David Schnapf, chair; Priscilla Bull, Nona Dennis, Don Dickenson, Randy Greenberg, Jana Haehl, Karen Nygren, Roger Roberts, Bob Spofford, Susan Stompe, Ann Thomas, Doug Wilson. Met at MCL conference room, 9 to 11.

Agenda. OK as submitted

November 7, 2012 Meeting Notes: Approved as submitted.

Local Coastal Plan. The BOS meeting next week will include discussion of energy and community development issues.

Solar Policy Discussion. In preparation for drafting a solar policy in collaboration with the Climate Action Committee, this committee spent about an hour brainstorming suggestions for and ideas about this topic. A sampling of comments follows:

- If solar is a profitable use of low-value land there is a potential for a lot of proposals for this use in Marin County.
- Solar installations on agricultural land would be a concern. CWP policy states that a non-agricultural use in agriculturally-zoned areas must be ancillary to the agricultural operation.
- We should not just look at the economic use of land, but also its ecological value. There is virtually no land that is not productive at something and/or supporting life of some kind. Earth is a living organism and there are consequences to covering up large portions.
- MCL should prioritize lands suitable for this use. The Department of Conservation has a rating system for lands of significance that may be helpful.
- Baylands, wetlands and historic marsh, or any area where there is a likelihood of eventual wetland conversion as sea level rises, should not be developed with solar or other built uses. Other considerations in determining whether or not a solar array is appropriate might include visual impacts, location (e.g. north slope), local climate, whether it is being done for commercial use or personal use, presence of sensitive habitat, whether proposed on existing hardscape or on undeveloped ground.
- Impacts are the same whether the solar installation is commercial or done for self-use.
- Proposals should possibly require an Initial Study.
- *Community Marin* has a number of relevant policies which are already adopted by MCL.
- Consideration of merits of solar installations (on undeveloped landscapes) should include information on benefits of alternatives, such as the ability of existing vegetation to capture and store atmospheric carbon dioxide.
- As a conservation organization, MCL should continually remind people that, regardless of preventative actions that Marin takes, the sea level will continue to rise, that communities must adapt to this change and that wetland areas that will disappear need to be replaced.
- A policy regarding location of solar installations should be set in the context of a larger policy on climate change and broad recommendations for strategic actions.

Roger and Bob were named by the Climate Action Committee to draft a policy for consideration by both committees and the board. David and Nona, who attend meetings of both committees, will represent Land Use in drafting this document.

Scenic Highway Designation/Lucas Valley Road. A letter Susan drafted went to the BOS requesting that the county explore the process that would be required to seek a Scenic Highway designation for Lucas Valley Road from Highway 101 to Nicasio Valley Road, and the pros and cons of the designation.

Hwy 101/Greenbrae Corridor Project. The MCL board approved our participation in discussions, and expenditure for legal fees of up to \$2,000, regarding the options for dealing with the decision that potential impacts of this project would not undergo EIR analysis but would be dealt with through an alternative mechanism. In this regard, David and Audubon president Barbara Salzman have spoken with an attorney at Shute, Mihaly. A group of committee members will meet December 6 with TAM staff for a presentation on the project and opportunity to ask questions about the project process.

San Rafael Airport Sports Complex. At their December 3 meeting the City Council deferred action on this project to December 17. A group including Susan with Barbara Salzman and Santa Venetia neighborhood activist Bob Dobrin will meet with San Rafael Councilperson Barbara Heller on Saturday to discuss the complex proposal.

Port Sonoma/Carneros Project. A meeting of the parties involved in the appeal was held last week at Susan's home. At that time the participants agreed to meet with representatives of the relevant state and regional agencies to encourage their review of the project soon, rather than waiting until it is on their calendar for action. The EIR release is not yet known.

Marin County Housing Element. The December 3 Planning Commission hearing was cancelled and this may be on their agenda again in January.

Golden Gate Seminary. The Seminary has hired a new planning consultant and is working on a revised plan.

Marin County Regulatory Improvement Advisory Committee. Nona, who is on the committee said they would next meet on December 6 to begin discussion of the development code and the planning process.

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