

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE

Climate Action Working Group: April 21, 2017

Muir Woods Conference Room, 175 N. Redwood Blvd., San Rafael

Present: Doug Wilson, Pam Reaves, Ed Mainland, Judy Teichman, Heather Furnidge, Pat Nelson, Kate Powers, Tamra Peters, Belle Cole, Bill Carney, Bob Miller, Kiki La Porta. Guests, Judy Ford, Sustainable Enterprise Conference and Sleepy Hollow Church (sponsor of Youth Climate Summit); Helene Marsh and Sarah Loughran, students from the Environmental Forum Master Class 43, working on a project to convince Marin County and eight Marin municipalities to use MCE Deep Green for all municipal energy use. Guest speaker, Chris Choo, Principal Watershed Planner, Marin County Dept. of Public Works, spearheading release of the BayWAVE sea level rise vulnerability assessment.

Doug called the meeting to order at 9:06.

Introductions

Agenda and Minutes

The agenda was adopted by consensus, with a change in the order of reports and announcements, beginning with those pending Chris Choo's arrival.

The March minutes were approved. M/S Pam/Doug/Approved.

Brief Announcements and Reports

Pam (Announcement): Katie Rice is on the board of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD). BAAQMD just issued a regional plan to address climate change. See Wednesday's Chronicle [<http://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/Bay-Area-air-quality-agency-tackles-climate-change-11084992.php>]. We should ask Katie Rice to come to one of our meetings to discuss this.

Sustainable Organizations (Bill)

There are climate and science marches upcoming. There is a science march in San Francisco tomorrow. Next Saturday, there will be a climate mobilizations at Lake Merritt and San Anselmo. These are posted on Sustainable San Rafael's website and announced in its newsletter. Sustainability goals will be addressed at Monday's San Rafael City Council meeting. The big item is Marin Sanitary Service's (MSS) rate changes and the related difficulty in selling recyclables. The MSS Franchise Agreement with the City provides for sharing of recycling revenues/losses. This is worth watching.

Sustainable San Rafael has a priority goal to promote completion of solar installations in Novato under the solar SEED [Sustainable Energy and Economic Development Fund]. There is a problem with

the C Street Garage Project. The Novato City Council will also consider going Deep Green at its May 2 meeting. We can watch the meeting online.

So far, the approach to going Deep Green has been incremental, with a goal of revenue neutrality. It's a priority item in the budget. However, the impacts of sea level are coming. Officials need to step up.

Sarah (announcements): The Environmental Forum is presenting a lecture on climate action on April 26, featuring Cory Bytoff. The Deep Green campaign is proceeding. Larkspur and Corte Madera unanimously voted to go Deep Green. Going Deep Green will be discussed at the County budget meeting next week, Monday – Wednesday. Public comment will be received Monday morning. There will also be an update on the Climate Action Plan around noon.

Resilient Neighborhoods (Tamra): Resilient Neighborhoods is seeking to encourage people to use public venues for their neighborhood teams: the Mill Valley library, the San Rafael community center. The City of Novato has incorporated Resilient Neighborhoods in its General Plan.

Ed (Sustainable Novato/announcement): Sustainable Novato is putting pressure on the City to go Deep Green and hire a sustainability coordinator. They are also starting to follow the Hwy 37 issue.

Helene/Doug (announcement): Meetings re the BayWAVE study are upcoming on April 25 at the Mill Valley Community Center and on April 29 in Novato.

9:28 Discussion: Report on Rollout of BayWAVE Phase 1 Vulnerability Study (Chris Choo)

Doug made a preliminary introduction of Chris Choo, describing the recent presentation of the sea level rise vulnerability study at Pickleweed Community Center in San Rafael. Chris presented a copy of the BayWAVE study to MCL, for use by MCL and as a resource for concerned community members. The study is also available online as a pdf and in libraries. It is currently in the public comment period. [See <http://www.marincounty.org/main/baywave/vulnerability-assessment>]. Chris noted the upcoming public meetings in Mill Valley, April 25, 7:00 – 9:00, and in Novato on April 29, 10:00 – 12:00.

The report makes comprehensive use of existing GIS data. The County is looking for momentum moving forward. The information in the study is a basis for decision-making, more effective policy and planning for land use. Planning and adaptation will occur incrementally over time. Directions forward include implementing a shoreline project on County lands, finding new partners for the project. Four pending Coastal Conservancy projects include one for Tiscornia Marsh east of Pickleweed Park in the vulnerable Canal district, on land owned by the Audubon Society; oyster-related living shoreline work by the Romberg Tiburon Center, and Point Blue planning efforts for landscape infrastructure.

The County is seeking support from the cities and towns and local agencies for planning and getting the word out. DPW has issued guidance re incorporating sea level rise in construction.

There is an issue as to whether sea level rise could be a factor in planning for replacement of infrastructure in the short-, medium-, and long-term planning for replacement of infrastructure. The hard part is reevaluating the business-as-usual model and coordinating across agencies.

Questions and Comments

Pam: Is sea level rise being incorporated in the planning for the new transit center in San Rafael?

A. I don't know how it's being incorporated. The location is vulnerable. Most sea level rise impacts extend to infrastructure that affects everyone. The City of San Rafael is involved, as are Kate Colin and the Public Works and Planning departments. This is incorporated in hazard mitigation planning. Steve Kinsey is a consultant. We want ideas on how to address planning issues.

Doug: It has been more than a year for the study and launching-pad phase. Are there other phases? What are the next steps? How do we get beyond the choir?

Belle: What did you think of the reactions at Pickleweed?

Doug (addressing orderly discussion): 1) Start with the reaction to the Pickleweed presentation, 2) How do we get beyond that, 3) Impacts on particular projects.

Chris: There were 87 people in attendance at Pickleweed, an improvement over attendance at general flood control meetings. There were many "in the choir." The format of the meeting was a quick overview, followed by playing the Game of Floods. This provided a basis and example of how to address the San Rafael Transit Center and connections to other infrastructure. The presentation was well received. There was positive comment. Moving forward, presentations will be more tailored to people wanting specific information.

Belle: Was there a handout? A. There was a handout of the slides, which are also available online. Pam: The handouts were fuzzy and distracting—suggest fixing them or eliminating them. A. The AV equipment is better at Mill Valley and Novato.

Ed: Were there climate change deniers? Who were they? A. I noticed one critic who was interested and productive when playing the Game of Floods, which leads into the incremental planning going forward.

Tamra: The long-term goal is to make the study part of the General Plans. How do we get advocates trained? How do we create a general will? Could the Game of Floods be targeted, integrate the personal? A. It's in many General Plans now, but not in a meaningful way. We need to use science for meaningful planning. Tamra: Will it be project-by-project? A. I hope not. We're providing a template.

Kiki: There are lots of different, overlapping expenditures. Can we harmonize efforts across jurisdictions and departments? Is part of the intent of the DPW program to create a framework for municipalities to make decisions? Create a broader set of rules? A. The project has helped to break down siloes. We're meeting with other departments, city managers, about land use changes. There is an existing desire to coordinate. Until we provide templates, it is difficult. We're pushing on the state, but the new state guidance just assesses the science again.

Pam: In the Game of Thrones, it helps if people get the lay of the land first, see how complicated it is and that the point of the game is to generate new ideas. Emphasizing the point of the game encourages meaningful participation. A. Time is a factor. It's hard to do this without some degree of existing knowledge about adaptation measures. We're trying to make it into a board game. We're hoping to do that as a series, begin with a fictitious island and play repeatedly with different factors in mind. We would eventually progress to a real landscape with players making suggestions. We're talking to the Parks Department regarding their decision-making.

Ed: Prior to the Novato presentation, it would be helpful to make a special effort to get all of the planning commissioners to attend. Make explicit that it's a planning exercise, a dress rehearsal for where it fits in Novato's future. Use NextDoor. A. We're announcing on NextDoor a few days before the meeting. We're working with Bob Brown to get councils and officials to attend the meetings.

Helene: When you go to individual jurisdictions, you need a catalyst. Plan to call a meeting for the Supervisors and all councils to listen together. Use a long-term exercise to bring them together, develop a unified approach to thinking and planning. A. We have a policy committee comprised of the electeds of every city, also an executive committee. We meet with the electeds plus staff and everyone else in the technical groups, and they are invited to bring others. We meet with many, with overlapping roles. Meetings are noticed as public meetings under the Brown Act.

Bob: A sense of urgency is missing. The Bay Area Council Economic Institute report emphasized sea level rise/100-year storms, which served as an incentive for Measure A. There is a lot of damage 15 years out. We should build on our recent experience; there were more than 40 atmospheric-river events. Provide projections re what would have happened if these events had stalled. The issue is how people perceive risk. Regarding climate change, they are not risk-averse enough. A. There has been much discussion about what to tell people. We need to balance the factors of urgency and the need to give people time to think. Our presentations include storm photos and we go through impacts on property values and assessed tax values. There is detailed information and a multi-jurisdictional hazard mitigation plan.

Bill: How can the different officials come together and evolve toward a Joint Powers Authority addressing both adaptation and mitigation? Comments at the Pickleweed presentation included "Too bad it was not more specific to San Rafael" and a statement that the Game got people thinking about "What next?" Re the Game of Floods, the idea of a series is a good one; it might evolve into the 13 jurisdictions. Also good is the idea of storms being part of the Game. Storms do what the government would otherwise do through eminent domain and FEMA. It's painful to rebuild something will be destroyed again.

Tamra: I like what Bob said about risk aversion. Inadequate insurance is a factor. Only 10% percent of people have earthquake insurance. Videos of the Oakland fire are instructive, and we can see damage from landslides now.

Judy Ford: The term "sea level rise" is complicated for people to understand if there is no sea around them. Use different phrases to make it more relevant.

Sarah: Are you scheduled to speak before the monthly mayors/councils meeting. A. We did that two months ago.

Belle: We're preparing posters for a climate march. What do we say on the posters? A. We will work on this and follow up with Belle, send her some slides. We used Hwy. 37 on one of our slides.

Kate: It's important to start developing short-term solutions incorporating green infrastructure in replacement projects. For example, the Transit Center in San Rafael.

Kiki: From a dollar perspective, this is our responsibility. It's irresponsible to plan without considering sea level rise. Look at the report as a blessing, an opportunity to see the need for regional planning and to really consider where the transit center should be located. People need to see themselves as part of a region.

Doug: In playing the Game of Floods, we all noticed how fast resources are used to preserve transit, sewage, etc. The stages of planning are incremental and temporary. Expand out from MCCMC [the Marin County Council of Mayors & Councilmembers]. Kate Colin is an optimistic speaker. We need to envision how we can work together politically and as a community.

Chris: Should we play the Game using the Transit Center as one of the places? This is complicated even with the desire to plan for sea level rise. A. (Pam): Yes, and have the council members present. Kate: And Mayor Phillips. Chris: I'm happy to facilitate. Tamra: Videotape it. Kiki: How much time? A. (Chris): More than an hour. Two or more.

Kiki: Is there a learning curve required? A. Yes and no. It doesn't take a lot. Kiki: We could develop a common core of knowledge via a video. A. That exists now. Also fact sheets.

Doug: Do we need to revisit this? Who can help get the word out: Kaiser, schools, business, interfaith groups? A. Come up with a forum; one of them can support it.

Kate: This is different from anti-smoking campaigns. We can do something. Think in terms of an outcome/what to do. Put concern into action, have groups tabling.

Bill: Re the Transit Center, expand out. It's not just about sea level rise.

Ed: The answer to "What do we do?" is "decarbonize the energy economy, transportation, etc." This is a moral and practical responsibility. It's an impossible task to move everyone inland and still retain our communities.

Pam: Don't just stick to what we know. Technology is available and not fully utilized.

Kiki: It's not too early to present the concept of working together on a County Authority or policy. No projects go forward without accounting for sea level rise. What is happening regionally? A. It is happening regionally. We are coordinating with San Mateo. A recent grant proposal was submitted for a regional science team.

Belle: Read the Chronicle story about Brown and climate.

Pam: Sweden and Mexico signed on to the MOU.

Reports/announcements (cont.)

Sustainable Organizations (Bill) (cont.)

Sign up for the sustainable organizations' newsletters. There is a march tomorrow at 11:00 at the Embarcadero.

Kiki: There is a regional meeting of the sustainable organizations next month. We will report back, and reports will be coming out.

Doug: On Monday at 10:00, the Board of Supervisors will discuss the climate budget.

Highway 37 (Kate)

There will be a TAM meeting with Valerie Taylor to report on the status of Hwy 37. Multiple stakeholders will be present. It's not clear where the planning process will end; there is pressure for congestion-reduction. The next policy meeting will be on May 4th at Mare Island. Any solution will run through the San Pablo National Wildlife Refuge; Marin needs to be involved. We should emphasize that this is a public right of way and a regional project, not to be turned over to a private enterprise. That option is no longer on the table. Circulate Ed's "squib."

Doug: This was a stealth project. We should get beyond the powers-that-be and make sure it's done right. It's a climate issue and a Marin issue.

Sustainable Novato, Sierra Club (Ed)

There will be an MCE ribbon-cutting at the Novato Quarry Solar Project. The 1-Megawatt array in an abandoned quarry will supply Local Sol customers with local, renewable energy. There are no environmental objections to the site.

There are bills to watch in the Legislature for potential anti-CCA impacts. SB 618 would transfer decision making authority on power contracts from locally elected officials on the CCA board to the California Public Utilities Commission. The bill, supported by PG&E union members and TURN, has been defanged because CCA's now have a professional lobbyist, but keep the pressure up and watch out for attempts to bring the bill back at the 11th hour.

AB 79, sponsored by Marc Levine and supported by TURN, has the ostensible purpose of making it more difficult to import coal power, but in practice it makes it harder for CCAs to comply with requirements. The bill is in the process of being watered down.

The CPUC now has a new liability bond requirement for CCAs. "Death by a thousand cuts."

A CCA is coming into being for Los Angeles. This is a big deal and a potential model for other CCAs. By next year, there may be 15 CCAs in California.

Resilient Neighborhoods (Tamra)

The program has taken off. There are six new teams in the first quarter, 30% over the figure for all of last year. MCEP found \$275,000 for a two-year grant to Resilient Neighborhoods. They are counting on Resilient Neighborhoods to reduce residential carbon emissions.

Deep Green Project (Helene)

There is a County meeting on the climate budget on Monday. It's important to go and speak up. Sarah and Helene have talking points that people can use. Contact them to coordinate.

Pam: Send out a blast to determine who is coming and set up a pre-meeting. Be there before the public comment time starts at 10:00.

Doug: It's most important to just show up.

Doug (cont.): The next CAWG meeting will be on May 19th, starting a half-hour later than usual because of the MCL business breakfast. Sup. Damon Connolly will speak on the progress of quarterly climate meetings, and Bob Archer of the Citizens Climate Lobby will speak on carbon pricing.

Meeting adjourned 11:10.

Minutes: PN.