

## **MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE**

**Climate Action Working Group: January 18, 2019**

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

Present: Chairman Doug Wilson; Carleen Cullen, Ed Mainland, Sarah Loughran, Michelle Julene, Tamra Peters, Bill Carney, Judy Ford, Dale Miller, Ken Strong, Pat Nelson, Nancy Benjamin, Annika Osborn, Bruce Bell, Kiki La Porta, Veronica Pearson, Felecia Chavez, Natalie Urquhart, Jodi Timms, Jeff Rhoads, Bob Archer, Paul Jensen, Tom Flynn, Dan Segedin, Belle Cole, Kate Powers, Bob Miller, Pam Reaves, Greg Thomson, Lawrie Mott, Terry Thomas.

Guest Speaker: Bob Brown, Community Development Director of Novato; Paul Jensen, Community Development Director of San Rafael; Chris Choo Principal Planner, County of Marin.

Chairman Doug Wilson called the meeting to order at 9:07.

### **Brief Introductions**

**Agenda and minutes approved by consensus.**

#### **9:10 Discussion 1: Planning for Sea Level Rise**

Chairman Doug Wilson introduced the topic and speakers, Bob Brown, Paul Jensen, and Chris Choo. He stated that sea level rise is inevitable and will be exponential. The consequences will be profound, involving major relocations, expenditures, and agonizing political decisions that require careful advance planning. Doug noted that in 50 years, there will be no transit center in downtown San Rafael and the SMART tracks will be under water periodically. General Plans are the ruling documents that address the larger perspective. He asked the speakers to discuss their cities' planning for sea level rise and how they intend to engage the public and anticipate issues.

Paul Jensen: The City of San Rafael has a steering committee in conjunction with the 2040 General Plan Update. They are in the middle of considering how sea level rise fits in the planning process. They are not tackling climate-change adaptation. That is a separate planning process involving more than sea level rise—additional issues such as wildfires, etc. An adaptation report will be part of the plan. It will summarize resources. We have recent resources. For example, the city cooperated with the County in creating a vulnerability assessment. There is a map with an overlay of vulnerable areas. Resilient by Design proposed a roadmap for addressing issues at a grander level. There are good projects, such as the Marin Audubon restoration of Tiscornia Marsh, that are addressing the problem in increments. San Rafael will work with the County.

Bob Brown: The City of Novato will develop a sea level rise plan later, when all of the environmental regulations are in place. The Baylands are protected. With the exception of Highway 37, Novato does not have much critical infrastructure in areas subject to sea level rise.

The city is in good shape in terms of water availability. Lake Sonoma is a buffer. Our steep water connection fees pay for reclaimed water. New development pays for itself. Wildfires are part of a multi-hazard plan—a strategy and funding plan. This is expensive, controversial because of issues of cost and cost distribution. The General Plans have been focused up to now on mitigation. This will shift to adaptation.

Chris Choo: We conducted a county-wide vulnerability assessment. We are working on adaptation. Funding opportunities include two Caltrans grants: one addressing issues facing Highway 37, and one addressing work on the creeks. The County's changing policy guidance will integrate evolving knowledge and alternatives such as triggers and thresholds, zoning, easements, etc. Issues include deciding on the location of public works projects, working with utilities: How much to save, and at what cost, and the necessity of preserving county assets. The funding is complex, coming from different sources. Existing infrastructure is a challenge, and there are different triggers for sea level rise adaptation. There is a zoning map with an overlay of areas vulnerable to sea level rise and wildfires.

### **Questions and Comments**

Doug: There is also the complexity of acquiring approvals from different agencies—for housing, particularly, which may amount to a veto power. Is there a structure that could deal with adaptation more nimbly? We want to avoid the typical process of procrastination followed by panic. How do we deal with threats that are 20-50 years out?

Jeff: There are three aspects of the problem:

1. Local decision-making and planning: Bring together all of the silos and work on producing a collective vision. We can control local, community-based planning.
2. Regulatory issues: Issues regarding the Bay are complicated. BCDC is gathering parties to deal with applications. This might take legislative change.
3. Financing: There are different needs and objectives, with funds coming from lots of places. The way we implement projects costs four times as much as it does in Europe, because of regulation, silos, and litigation.

Start with #1. Help the regional authorities address this. Financing in San Rafael has a transportation and resilience nexus that can attract funding.

Kate: Adaptation to rising tides requires support for planning and bringing groups together. A. (Chris): This is a BCDC focus. It encompasses transportation, inclusion of disadvantaged communities, priority development, as reflected in the Plan Bay Area strategy. Marin is not well represented.

Kiki: We need to have a calm discussion now. Critical infrastructure is under threat now, including sewage and landfill. A. (Paul): This is at the top of the list: What utilities and services are in vulnerable areas, and what are the problems that can be tackled now. Regarding Jeff and his remark about silos, BCDC had a no-fill policy, but now fill is a part of the sea level rise strategy. One example is horizontal levees. The County BayWAVE effort has legs.

Bob Brown: I'm more optimistic. Chris's study advised regarding vulnerabilities. There is a higher probability of getting funding. Utility issues will be addressed within 5-10 years. There will be little new development in vulnerable areas. The insurance industry is a game-changer. An insurance crisis drives private property.

Bob M.: There is a pattern regarding disasters and thinking/responses to disasters. The Paradise rebuilding plan was "no plan." Developing a plan takes time. How do we piece together a rebuilding plan for catastrophes? Or do we do it de novo? A. (Bob B.): New Orleans is another example. After the San Francisco earthquake, an advance plan was ignored. Napa River neighborhoods are protected by a patchwork of different levees. They concluded that they can't afford to maintain the neighborhood with a system in which effectiveness is determined by the lowest common denominator.

Chris: We are trained to plan around assets, such as transportation. Bringing people together around a single objective is challenging. There are different interests and issues regarding transparency. The North Bay Watershed Association has a comprehensive asset protection plan. They plan regionally around long-term goals, and then acquire funding. The process is hard when it gets to private homes. It's hard to get consensus about costly decisions. Low-income housing in vulnerable areas is a public good.

Pam: Have a plan not for relocation but for micro grids, etc. Regarding the General Plan and San Rafael's thinking about the new transit system: Sea level rise is not considered. The current General Plan does not require it; therefore, it does not get done. And there is a new hotel planned for the Canal District. How does the General Plan apply to this? A. (Paul): The issue is how to prioritize. It is planned around traffic. Decision-makers must make sea level rise and wildfires priorities, and then tackle them in tangible ways. The Transit Center won't address sea level rise short term.

Ed: Novato does have critical infrastructure approximately a foot above sea level: Gness Field and Redwood Landfill. They are protected by dikes. Has the City addressed this? A. (Bob B.): Yes, it is being considered. The airport and landfill are in County jurisdiction, as is Bel Marin Keys. Vintage Oaks is within the City's jurisdiction. Hamilton is protected by dikes. Long-term engineering solutions are being considered. Ed: Is their vulnerability assessment in the plan. A. Vulnerability is assessed in general; it's not site-specific.

Bill: In the overlay districts, what might be included? What regulations apply? Also, there is a general displacement issue: How do you get powers to offer carrots as well as sticks? To requisition uninsured properties? A. (Paul): The overlap is a good start. In San Rafael, redevelopment covers the same areas that are vulnerable to sea level rise. Tools include special regulations, zoning, building height, funding assessment districts, purchase of land, levee reinforcement.

Bob Brown: Zoning criteria are still to be developed. We need to give people notice.

Chris: The challenge is that we've already built in many of the most vulnerable areas. Creating an assessment district is difficult with sea level rise. You can't easily collect fees for a changing problem.

Doug: Drawdown Marin draws from a wide range of interests and goes beyond silos. We're in the early stages of planning for adaptation. We look at long-range planning in stages and in different horizons.

Paul: Regarding the struggle to be proactive, look at the San Rafael Fire Actin Plan. Go to the City of San Rafael website. There are selective techniques for different areas. It's a good template.

## **Discussion 2: Drive Clean Marin Campaign (Carleen)**

Doug: Carleen, what bang-for-the-buck do we get from EVs?

Carleen: Drive Clean Marin is following the example of One Tam. Our goal is to have one EV in every garage by 2030. We are meeting with MCE, TAM, and the Air District this afternoon, involving them to propel this effort forward. Fuel shifting is the low-hanging fruit, and everyone need to get involved. There are more EV models, battery prices are dropping, and charging infrastructure is increasing. There will be price parity with gas-powered vehicles by 2025. The batteries are useful for storage on the grid even after they are no longer useful in the EV.

The state goal is five million EVs by 2030. Marin's goal is double the state goal. There is a potential to reduce 317,000 tons of annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. There is a big opportunity to go Deep Green at the same time an EV is acquired and increase the benefit. We can show that we don't need Big Oil and loosen their grip on politics.

We are working with other organizations. Consumer awareness is critical. There has been no movement in consumer interest. The numbers are flat. We need to implement a behavior change campaign. What we drive is visible, and we can leverage consumer norms. We are forming a nonprofit partnership addressing social and community input, an incubator where we can come together, in our own ways and in various venues, to create pilot programs and formulate best practices. It is an 18-month pilot to test what works.

## **Questions and Comments**

Kate: What is the "ask" to MCE and TAM? A. Funding and a marketing channel. Kate: Infrastructure is key in MCE advertising. A. We are talking to parties about getting infrastructure. We envision a hand-off.

Greg: Infrastructure is important. It is difficult to get EV chargers in place. The cost to underground is prohibitive. Make it simpler and less costly. A. Policy and technical implementation should be part of the common campaign.

Q. Is there a state mandate?

Terry: Is there a map of infrastructure? A. Yes. Q. MCE doesn't have a map. Do they have a mapping process? A. Getting agencies out of their silos is important. It is a stretch for them to act outside of their core area.

Bob A.: Is there interaction with PG&E? A. No. That is down the road.

### **Discussion 3: Drawdown Marin (Doug)**

Doug: Progress report: The Energy Group met one time. The Transportation Group met one time. Next week, the Built Environment Group will meet. Each group is underway in its own process. Information-gathering will take approximately one year. In the second year they will take the information to the community.

Carleen: In the Transportation Group meeting, they split into groups.

Doug: TAM is on the task force.

Terry: A two-year process. We don't have two years. There should be more of a sense of urgency.

Doug: Good point. Drawdown came out of MCAN.

Pam: It did not start with MCAN, but from CAWG discussing transportation with Damon. The process is not transparent yet. We can't find out when the meetings are being held. This could easily be fixed.

Tamra: Alex intends that it be transparent. It's just a matter of time.

Kiki: The understanding was that it would be posted to participants, not the public.

Carleen: People are pressing for public access. Alex agreed.

Doug: We can't have affected people excluded.

Lawrie: The plan may be formulated in less than one year. We need to keep our eye on the end game. What is the minimum funding, and is it regulation-dependent?

Ed: Regarding the need for urgency, consider attracting more professional and financial resources.

Doug: We thought about reaching out to academia. It's difficult to get people in the same room.

Kiki: The energy and transportation groups met. And the community partnership. The building and infrastructure group will meet. What other committees are planned?

Doug: There are six groups, with topics that are already set. Other topics are food and agriculture, carbon sequestration, and resilient communities. Drawdown is primarily about mitigation. Theoretically, there could be a second phase addressing adaptation.

Bill: The Resilient Communities Group is the right container for adaptation.

Tom: Regarding financing, this is tremendously expensive. We are committing the next generation. We need cost-benefit analyses and some effort to make projects pay for themselves. Start to develop the financial picture, and frame it this way.

Doug: There are MCE and PG&E issues.

Greg: The initiatives addressing energy and resilience are critical. The state legislature is being approached with a bill regarding infrastructure. Resilience and security are part of planning. Compensation of utilities should be performance-based. It should not be based on compensating them for the construction of infrastructure. We should form teams, get good feedback. Get Marin leaders on board to support this. It will be a process to gain support. Get Cal CCA on board.

Belle: How would a PG&E bankruptcy affect this? A. It's incredibly good timing.

Sarah: MCE is no longer a leader. Between the 2018 and 2019 IRP plans, they lowered the percentage of renewables and increased the percentage of energy that will come from large hydro sources. Other CCAs have a similar strategy. Between wet and dry years, the percentage of large hydro varies from 6 percent to 18 percent. This is not sustainable.

Greg: If we continue to think in terms of long-term/long distance transmission, no. We need local and community-supported sources.

Ed: On January 31, the CPUC is voting on the resource adequacy issue. They are moving toward centralized procurement. The Clean Coalition is shopping a bill for transmission access charge (TAC) reform, which would promote distributed energy resources (DER).

Ken: Bankruptcy has a significant effect on resource adequacy.

Doug: There's a CCA-hostile environment at the CPUC. Restructure the CPUC.

Ed: CACE has a rollback campaign for the PCIA.

SN: The other incentive in the system is renewable energy economics. MCE is oversupplied with solar in the afternoon. They have to sell it. This is not apparent from the aggregate numbers. There is a CAISO settlement process.

Kiki: There is a California state mandate for battery storage. Is MCE planning for this in the resource adequacy planning process?

### **Reports and Announcements**

Bob: You are all invited to a screening of the movie *The Human Element* on Feb. 10 at the George Lucas Theater on Kerner Blvd. Register at Eventbrite.

**Environmental Forum of Marin (Sarah):** There is an event upcoming on Feb. 27, *Building to Cool the Planet: Beyond "Green Building."*

**350 Marin (Jodi):** A climate emergency resolution will be considered by the Fairfax Town Council, obligating the government to move forward. See the Town Council website. This could be a template for other cities. There is a climate discussion upcoming in the Fairfax library Fourth Monday series.

**Sustainable Novato (Ed):** The Novato Green Film series is screening Wilder Than Wild: Fires, Forests, and the Future on January 24.

**Sustainable Marin (Kiki):** Sustainable Marin is discussing an accelerated County response and will propose a collaboration similar to the Deep Green effort, which would entail dedicating more resources to the effort. An energy resolution is also in process.

**Sustainable San Rafael (Bill):** San Rafael has adopted the Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) 2030.

**Golden Gate EV Assoc. (Dale):** We are planning Drive Electric presentations for Earth Day. Some large employers have asked us for assistance. MCE has not been responsive. They do not allow Tesla vehicles in their rebate program.

**Sonoma State University (Judy):** SSU will host the North Bay Sustainable Enterprise Conference in April 2019, “**Regional Resilience: Thriving in a Changing World.**”

**Resilient Neighborhoods (Tamra):** New teams are starting in Mill Valley, San Rafael, and Novato. Our annual CO<sub>2</sub> emission reductions have now topped 6.1 million lbs.

**OFA Marin (Belle):** OFA is undertaking a Marin “Firestorm 2” effort. There will be a forum in the spring, and then a town hall meeting featuring Jared Huffman. This will bring together the interested parties in the community, to look at where we are now regarding wildfires and where we need to go. “Firestorm 1” took place in 2017.

Nancy Benjamin: The Environmental Forum is co-hosting a film on food waste on Jan. 25.

Doug: Our next meeting will take place on Feb. 15. Please contact me re suggestions for discussion topics.

Adjourned: 11:15/

Minutes: PN.

**Drawdown Marin and MCAN (Robert and Doug).** The stakeholder group considering renewable energy has met once. They are assembling data and then going into the community. An Executive Steering Committee has formed; also, a community-facing group. There’s a lot underway. They are learning as they go, fleshing things out. There’s an effort to collaborate. The

earlier groups start moving right away, not waiting for the subsequent groups. It's a balancing and coordination act.

**Environmental Forum of Marin (Norma).** The Master Class student projects are ramping up.

**Resilient Neighborhoods (Bill).** The program has reached the level of 6 million pounds of annual CO<sub>2</sub> reduction. There are three classes starting in January, in San Rafael, Novato, and Mill Valley. Check the website.

**Sustainable Novato (Ed).** On January 24, the Green Film Series will screen "Wilder than Wild" at 6:00 at City Hall.

**Cool The Earth (Carleen).** Cool The Earth is focusing on marketing messaging. This is an opportunity to collaborate. We will be hosting EV house parties. There will be more outreach to businesses. There will be EV car demonstrations at College of Marin.

**Citizens' Climate Lobby (David).** We've had success in the House and Senate. The Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act has been introduced in the House and there is a similar bill in the Senate.

**Sustainable San Rafael (Bill).** The Climate Action Plan has been revised, setting a goal of a 40% reduction from 1990 levels. Approval is anticipated in February or March. On January 17, at 4:00, the quarterly meeting will be held at City Hall.

**Town of Corte Madera (David).** The Town of Corte Madera has passed its current climate action plan. It will undertake adaptation planning with sales tax funding and a grant from Cal Trans.

**Mothers Out Front (Carleen).** Mothers Out Front is working with the Health Department and schools' Parent Ed. Days to address the problem of smoke and solutions. Solutions include driving EVs.

**Organizing for Action (Belle).** OFA is undertaking a collaborative effort, Firestorm 11, which will focus on climate change. They have the report from the previous collaboration and will go forward on follow-up.

Doug requested that participants let him know re suggestions for future speakers and ideas to be covered. He noted that there may be an MCL event addressing the issue of fire. Fire accounted for 10% of emissions last year.

Next month's meeting will take place on January 18.

Meeting adjourned 11:00.

Minutes: PN.